Chapter V

Tales for Children

The short stories written in Vermont initiate a phase of Kipling's career in which he can be considered as having become a writer for children. In Something of Myself, he has more to say about the group of children's books than about any other. It is his main point that only in a limited sense ought they to be regarded as children's book at all as they have a lot to offer to the adult readers also. Most mature readers who like Kipling agreed with this opinion and the books are most keenly appreciated by those who read them first in childhood (or listened to them being read) and have then come back to them in later life. This is the road to finding those layers of significance which Kipling, in fact, claimed to have put into them.

These stories are categorized under three groups. A) Animal Tales) School Tales 3) Historical Tales. The collections of stories studied under these categories are,

I) Animal Tales-The Jungle Books (1894), Just so Stories (1902)

II) School Tales-Stalky&Co (1899).

III) Historical Tales-Puck of the Pook’s Hill (1906), Rewards and Fairies (1910)

I. Animal Tales

Rudyard Kipling’s Jungle Books are a blessed province of fancy and imagination where the readers can flee and be at peace. Rudyard Kipling wrote the stories with extraordinary power of imagination and flashes of unforgettable description virtuosity. The Jungle Books consist of a strange world where animals talk. They are admirable because the animals are the same as Kipling’s mankind. Mowgli and his wolves are delightful to read about, for grown-ups as well as the children.

An interesting thing about Kipling’s Jungle Books is that Kipling never commented on the Jungle Books. He never called them children’s tales as he called his collection Puck of the Pook’s Hill. On his other books, he commented quite freely. This
has given a sense of ambiguity to this work of Kipling’s. In these books, we are always haunted by a sense of further meaning. The readers feel that there is symbolism or allegory involved in the two *Jungle Books*. Nobody resented the books because the stories are fundamentally interesting. The presence of Mowgli in the *Jungle Books* added the human link which was needed to bring readers into sympathy. The animals talk credibly and it is natural because they talk as Kipling makes them talk.

The *Jungle Books* could be considered as books in the line of *Aesop’s Fables*, *Jataka* and *Panchatantra Tales* which Kipling knew very well. The only thing that is different in *Aesop’s Fables* is that they have no human presence in them. *Panchatantra Tales* is a collection of Indian Animal Fables exhibiting animal stereotypes. It illustrates the central Hindu principles of *Niti* for the benefit of three Hindu princes. The concept of law appears in the form of fable in the *Jungle Books*. It consists of rules of conduct like keeping the promises, loyalty to friends, bravery, generosity and respect for the elders. It exemplifies a code of honour based on hard facts, with tooth and claw for its practical sanctions and necessity of courage, endurance, observation, good faith, dexterity, physical and mental fitness.

The grip of these stories is extraordinary. Kipling found the fable a congenial form at all stages of his writing life. The fun of this fable lies in inventive and appropriate details. In the *Jungle Books* Kipling used the form of fable to express the importance of law. The animal fable is a very old and recurrent literary type. This form has been found strong to convey sardonic humor and hinted horror of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. But there is human presence in *Animal Farm*. This type of form has a long tradition and there is reference in Kipling’s *Something of Myself* of his having read two books in his childhoods, which were, in the form of fable. Those books are *Uncle Remus* and *Parables from Nature*.

The concept of Law appears to be central in nearly everything that Kipling wrote. In the *Jungle Books* too, we can search for the principle called ‘Law’ which dominated Kipling’s philosophy of life. The projection of Law in the *Jungle Books* expresses some of Kipling’s intimate convictions about life. In the hierarchy of Law, certain codes of
action are expected and many of them are manifestations of certain virtues. Kipling’s Law includes the maintenance of honour and qualities such as magnanimity. The Law is anthropomorphized and the agreement among the animals to observe something like a code is well authenticated in the *Jungle Books*.

The aspect of Law in the *Jungle Books* is Kipling’s honest attempt to explain the importance of Law and the necessity of obeying it. For Kipling, the obeying of this Law makes way for order and harmony. In the *Jungle Books*, it is said “The Law of the Jungle – which is by far the oldest law in the world – has arranged for almost every kind of accident that may be fall Jungle people, till now its code is as perfect as time and custom can make it” (171).

Baloo, the old prophet – like bear of the Jungle, teaches Mowgli the importance of this Jungle Law which no one could escape. He says, “The Law is like the Giant Creeper because it dropped across every one’s back” (*Jungle Books*172). The Law seems to put unnecessary restrictions on impatient Mowgli but in the tale “How Fear Came” he is made to see the necessity of obeying the Jungle Law if the jungle is to survive the disasters which time has allotted to them. The tale opens with the fear of death in the form of severe drought in the jungle. Hunger and thirst may result into the extinction of animals, when the river Waingunga dries, it reveals the “Peace Rock” which is a divine sign which it is duty of Hathi to interpret – he declares the Water Truce. As Hathi comments, the truce ensures continuance of life in a time dominated by the enemy who is common to all animals – death. Thus, according to the Truce, “it is death to kill at the drinking place when once the Water Truce has been declared. The reason of this is that drinking comes before eating” (*Jungle Books*173). So it is that “the Jungle People came up starved and weary, to the shrunken river – tiger, deer, buffalo, and pig, all together, - - drank the fouled waters” (*Jungle Books*174). The Law reduces all distinctions in times of crisis, all the animals being forced into altruistic concern for one another.

The necessity for a law in the jungle is the direct result of the misbehaviour of animals. In the story “How Fear Came” the Hathi reveals, before the misbehaviour of animals, there was no law that confined the animals. There was a Law of Harmony. Then
the Jungle people did not know anything about man. Before the animals misbehaved, the animals lived as one people in the land of plenty where there was no drought and leaves, flowers and fruits grew on the same tree. But one fateful day, First of the Tigers, who was the Judge of the Jungle, while watching a dispute between two bucks forgot that he was Judge and master of the Jungle and killed one of the bucks. Thus, harmony was disturbed and was displaced by anarchy. Tha, the Hathi, created a Law which no one was supposed to break. Tha said that from that time onwards, every one shall know Fear and when they would find him, they will come to know that he is their master. Every one will have to follow him then. So, it is that the Law of Fear separates the animal species. “Like keeping to the like”. But the memory of life before fall or misbehaviour of animals continues in the midst of the Jungle People. So, when a common fear casts over jungle, they lay aside their small fears and unite. The Law of the Jungle ensured the continuity of life and individuality is kept subordinate to the basic desire for ongoingness. This is the lesson which Mowgli has to learn. While the strength of the Pack is the wolf, as the Law of the Wolves states, the strength of the wolf is the Pack. Mowgli is full of self-importance, so he conveniently forgets the latter half of the Law. In ‘The Spring Running’ he is forced to see the fact that the Jungle will continue to exist irrespective of his existence or non-existence. It is in the first few days of spring that Mowgli loses his power over the Jungle because his friends are following the Laws of Spring. At such time, Mowgli’s calls to his friends go unanswered. He is angry at his inability to dictate the Jungle People. He poses himself a question. “Is he Master of the Jungle or is he not?” (Jungle Books 175)

He has to find the correct answer which is more negative than affirmative. He discovers that he is not only not the master of the Jungle but the Laws of Jungle are no more meaningful to him. This starts his journey away from the Jungle. The Jungle folks are busy in ensuring new life in the Jungle as spring recreates nature. Mowgli is an outsider to such expression. He is thus alienated. He is made to realize that he may be the “strength” of his “Pack” but it is only the “Pack” of Man that can be his strength.

Mowgli’s self seems to himself to be a chaotic mass of contradictory impulses. His beloved home, the Jungle, no longer satisfies him. “Not accustomed to cerebral
introspection, Mowgli – who thinks through his stomach – believes that he has eaten poison” (Kamra 89)

It is the burden of self-fulfillment which is weighing on Mowgli’s mind. It is this Law that turns Mowgli from the Jungle as Kaa in his wisdom knows. “Man goes to man at the last, thought the Jungle does not cast him out” (Jungle Books349). There is nothing Mowgli can do to prevent his growth into manhood. His stomach has been changed in him as he tells Bagheera. Everything that pleased him before is meaningless to him in his new condition. It leaves him unhappy and ten times worse than before. His explanation of this condition is that he is approaching death. This death is not going to be physical. Akela’s dying words predicting this approach death reverberate in his mind. “Thou art a man” he had said, “Go to thine own people.”

His reply at the time comes unbidden to Memory. “When Mowgli drives out Mowgli, I will go” (Jungle Books328) and the time which he thought would never come has come. He is desperate. He thinks that he is of the Jungle, though in his mind, he knows he does not belong to the Jungle any more. A psychological war goes on in his mind. Mowgli goes to Man-Pack, to Messua, for relief. It is facing her that he achieves a moment of realization. There he learns the Law of the Family, and “all manners of strange feelings that he had never felt before were running over him” (Jungle Books345)

The “return” is not possible. When he attempts to go back, he is aware that he must return. The sight of a girl helps seal his fate. As Kaa states in one of his many moments of wisdom in Jungle Books, “Having cast the skin, we may not creep into it afresh, it is the Law” (262). Back in the Jungle, Mowgli is forced to admit that it is not any ‘poison’ which has changed him but it is his own-self which is demanding release from the Laws of Jungle to create Laws of his own. He expresses this in metaphors. “I run the spring running, but I am not made still. I bathe but I am not made cool -- --- and I know not what I know (349).

The departure from Jungle is going to be heartbreaking. He is unhappy to leave the Jungle but at the same time, knows that it is necessary, so, Mowgli follows the orders
of his own consciousness in order to create laws of his own. He does not go alone. He
takes with himself the knowledge, mysteries of existence, which Baloo has taught him, to
the world of experience of men. The years of learning under the patronage of Baloo
provide foundations for his new life. He is sure that he has knowledge of the Law. With
this assurance, Mowgli leaves the land of innocence to find self-fulfillment in the land of
the unknown. With him goes the blessing of the Jungle.

In the dawns when thou shall wake
    To the toil thou canst not break,
Heartsick for Jungle’s sake
Wood and Water, Wind and Tree
Wisdom, Strength and Courtesy
Jungle favour go with thee! (Jungle Books353)

The law binds the Jungle world into an integrated whole. It also allows and
enjoins ruthless individual action within admitted bounds. The Law constitutes Mowgli’s
brothers as the Free People.

As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk,
the law runneth forward and back –
for the strength of the Pack is the wolf.
And the strength of the Wolf is the pack.
The Jackal may follow the Tiger, but, cub,
When thy whiskers are grown
Remember the wolf is a hunter –
Go forth and get food of thine own
Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle –
The Tiger, the Panther, the Bear “
“‘And trouble not Hathi, the Silent and
mock not the Boar in his Lair
Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and
Many and mighty are they’
But the head and the hoof of the Law and
The haunch and the hump is – Obey! (Jungle Books190).

The Law in the Jungle Books is a code of behaviour in the Jungle which is immutable and hard as a pike staff and demands obedience. By the Law of the Jungle, no one has right to change quarters without due warning, thus keeping peace in the territory. The Law of the Jungle never orders anything without reason and it forbids every beast to eat man, except when he is killing to show his children how to kill and then he must hunt outside the hunting grounds of his pack or tribe. The reason for this is that man-killing would be invariable followed by arrival of white men on elephants for revenge and the whole Jungle suffered. Because of that Kipling instructs that basically animals are peace loving and do not want enmity with Man-pack. Theirs is a positive attempt towards a harmonious relationship with the Man-pack.

The animals believe that man is the most defenseless and weakest of all living things and it is unsportsmanlike to kill him. They also have a belief that man-eaters become mangy and loose their teeth.

The Law of the Jungle allows any wolf to withdraw from the Pack but he must bring his cubs to the Pack council when they are able to stand on their own feet. It is necessary because the other wolves should be able to identify them. After this inspection, the wolf cubs are free to run anywhere. Mowgli is introduced to Pack in the same way on a full moon night at the council rock.

No one is allowed to kill these cubs until they have killed their first buck. If anyone kills them, death is the punishment. Thus, Mowgli is protected by Law in his childhood from wild animals like Share Khan.

The Law of the Jungle says that if there is any dispute as to the right of a cub to be accepted by the Pack, it must be spoken for by at least two members of the pack who are not his father and mother. Mowgli’s entrance was defended by Baloo and Bagheera who were to become his teachers.
Law of the Jungle instructs that if there is a doubt which is not a killing matter in regard to a new cub, the life of that cub may be bought at a price. The Law does not mention who should or should not pay the price. Thus, Mowgli’s life was exchanged at the price of a bull. Thus, Mowgli is forbidden by the law to kill the cattle because he was bought into the pack at the price of a bull’s life.

Kipling’s Jungle Law has no regards for the leader when he misses a kill. He has no right to be a leader. Such wolf is called a Deed wolf for the rest of his life, Akela becomes a Dead Wolf but this law is protested by Mowgli and he speaks against it.

Mowgli was taught these Laws by Baloo. Mowgli was taught to understand wood and water Laws. He has taught to distinguish rotten branch from a sound one, to speak politely to the wild bees when he came upon a hive of them fifty feet above ground, what to say to Mang, the bat, when he disturbed him in the branches at midday, how to warn water snakes in the pools beforew he splashed down among them. Baloo informed him that no Jungle folk liked being disturbed. He was also taught the most important “stranger’s hunting call” which was to be repeated until the call is answered. It was. “Give me leave to hunt because I am hungry ,and the expected answer would be, Hunt then for food but not for pleasure”(Jungle Books 36)

Mowgli was also taught Master-Words of the jungle to protect him from the birds and the snakes. He would say these Master-Words by saying them in their language.

Kipling has skillfully portrayed the code of Behavior in the Jungle by making it acceptable to human beings. The law is framed in such a way that it would enable Mowgli’s survival in the Jungle.

Another important aspect of the Jungle Books which comes almost on the surface is Kipling’s close observation of India and his descriptions of the Indian lifestyle. Rudyard Kipling had a power to make men see what he saw. He poured out into his tales what he knew about India and what he saw in India. He embraced everything in the Jungle Books from palaces of Oodeypore to the Himalayan Heights. Kipling wandered
through out India during his journalistic career. He exploited his knowledge about India in his writings. He was entranced by India. His travels around India had deepened his knowledge of her. He relished the strange scenes he had seen in his works. He had a profound knowledge of Indian life and character. He had studied Indian ways, languages, trades and customs. He was extraordinarily accurate in his Indian details. The local colour has given two whole generations of men an understanding of the Indian Jungle was acquired by Kipling at second hand, according to Charles Carrington (136). The Mowgli stories in the *Jungle Books* are placed in a part of central India which he never visited, the banks of Waingunga river in the Seonee district. But I think that such comprehensive details about anything are not possible without first hand knowledge of things. It may be true that some details might have been borrowed from books and descriptions from photographs but the fact that he had a close association with the land can not be denied. His keen insight into the Indian society could be seen in his depiction of the caste system, superstitions, ignorance and simplicity of the Indian customs. Charles Carrington has also said that Kipling must have counted on his father Lockwood Kipling’s knowledge of jungle lore and ways of wild animals or on Sterndale’s *Mamalia of India*, where Sterndale calls stories of nursing of abandoned infants by wolves not improbable.

Kipling’s observation of Indian seasons could be best seen in ‘Miracle of Purun Bhagat’ Kipling has come out with the most exotic descriptions of Indian seasons in Himalayas. “The fields changed their colors with the seasons; the threshing floors, filled and emptied, and filled against and again, when the winter came, the langurs frisked among the branches, feathered with light snow, till the mother – monkeys brought their sad-eyed little babies up from the warner valleys with the Spring” (*Jungle Books*202).

Kipling is interested in giving details of everything he had seen. Kipling had served in Simla for a short period. He used his experiences in his tales. The summer is equally fascinating in Himalayas for Kipling.

All that time he heard nothing but the sound of million little waters, overhead from the trees, and underfoot along the ground, soaking through the pine-needles, dripping from the tongues of draggled fern, and sprouting in newly – torn muddy
channels down the slope. Then sun came out and drew forth the good incense of the devdars and the rhododendrons, and that far-off clean smell which the Hill people call the smell of the snows (Jungle Books 202).

A keen observer like Kipling is not likely to miss out the operation of caste-system in India and he does not miss it out. He has observed the inner workings of the Indian society and portrays it with expertise. In ‘Miracle of Purun Bhagat’ he notes down unmistakably that Purun Bhagat was of “So high caste that caste ceased to have any particular meaning for him (Jungle Books191).

Kipling has, surprisingly, given an account of the Ashrama System in the Hindu society and the four stages of life a man has to undergo according to that system. This system asks for abandonment of the material life in favour of becoming a Sunnyasi a holy man. The same thing happens to Rudyard Kipling’s Purun Bhagat. Purun Bhagat gives up his active life because. “He had been, as old law recommends, twenty years a youth. Twenty years a fighter and twenty years head of a household” (Jungle Books193)

Purun Bhagat becomes a Sunyasi, a houseless, wandering mendicant.

But Kipling would have to explain it to the West, how Purun Bhagat will survive. He does not fail to give explanation that such mendicants could depend for their daily bread on the villagers. “And so long as there is a morsel to divide in India, neither priest nor a beggar starves”(Jungle Books193).

But the deal is not one-sided. Though the people do not ask for return, Purun Dass recognizes their debt. He saves them from a landslide. He does it because.

“They have given good food daily since – since I came – and if I am not swift, tomorrow there will not be one mouth in the valley” (Jungle Books204)

So, the act is done just because of moral obligation. Again, Kipling refers to the typical Indian ideology which is to protect the life and interests of the persons whose food
they eat. Everything is done by mutual understanding. No one demands anything. It’s just a matter of ‘give and take’ in India.

With Mowgli’s return to the Man-pack, Kipling enters into Indian households and does not forget to portray the paraphernalia of Messua’s house. It is new to Mowgli as well as to the people for whom India is a riddle. “Red lacquered bedstead, a great earthen grain-chest with curious patterns on it, copper working pots, looking glass, image of Hindu god in a little alcove”(*Jungle Books*65)

With Mowgli, Kipling goes to graze the buffaloes on the open marshes. The Indian grazing grounds are described as being full of rocks, scrub, tussock and ravines among which the animals disappear. But the herding boys pass their time singing songs and making castles. The village boys are said to take cattle and buffaloes out grazing in the early morning and bring them back at night. The whole affair is described with subtle humour. “Herding in India is one of the laziest things in the world. The cattle move and crunch, and lie down, and move again, and they do not even low. They only grunt, and the buffaloes very seldom say anything, but get down into the mud till only their nose and staring china-blue eyes show above the surface and there they lie like dogs”(*Jungle Books*70)

Kipling does not fail to refer to the celebrated ignorance of the Indians. “but India is one place in the world where a man can do as he pleases and nobody asks why”(*Jungle Books*193)

There are plenty of references to Indian religiousness and the extensive use of marigold flowers as a sign of reverence across India. There are descriptions of Indian Gods. There is a reference to Brahma who put a mark on Nag’s head, in ‘Rikki-Tikki-Tavi’ song of Shiva in Toomai of the Elephants’ Goddess Kali in ‘Miracle of Purun Bhagat’ The references to the Kings of India and snakes who make homes in almost all the abandoned homes are recorded without fail and why not, India had always been portrayed as a land of kings and Snakes by the English writers. The people, their strange beliefs, their superstitions, their relationships with each other, their God-fearing nature,
everything is there. He has unraveled everything he could about India in his *Jungle Books* and that too, with supreme gift of narrating and in a surprising and dramatic fashion.

Kipling was not an advocate of wild-life preservation, but I find him desperately trying to establish a harmonious relationship between Man and Animals. Kipling records that animals work very positively towards this dream but man holds back. Kipling wants men to leave animals on their own, if they can not be friendly with animals. He finds that man has proved troublesome to animals. The man becomes cruel and invades the animal world. It is interesting to note what the animals have to say about man. In “The White Seal” the seals are irritated by the men-folk who trouble them. Their peace is disturbed by the human beings. Moreover, the life of the seals is threatened by men, The little while seal kotick is in search of an island where men have never stepped on. ‘ The undertakers, expresses the same irritation as the seals. They firmly believe that men are all alike. There is nothing such as ‘ good ‘ or ‘bad’ in them. Men are just men for them. The seals think that some of their own counterparts are equally annoying because. “They are just as stupid and unaccommodating as men” (*Jungle Books*87)

“The Undertakers” gives an account of a friendly and philosophical conversation between a crocodile, a crane and a jackal. They too, have certain things to say about man. “Ah, Shame! Said the Jackal, ‘So noble a heart, tool, But men all alike to my mind” The elderly Mugger who is experienced has all praises for mankind. “---- They are very good. Men, Women and Children – I have no fault to find with them” (*Jungle Books* 241) He does not forget to give advice to the Jackal and perhaps to everyone. “And remember child, one who rebukes the world is rebuked by the world…” (*Jungle Books*241)

The fights between the people for land are also emphasized, which obviously is a strange thing for the animals. Kipling observes that carelessness and indifference to suffering and apathy aree the tendencies of man towards animals in India.

There is magic as well as terror in the *Jungle Books*. The unique magic of *Jungle Books* starts from the moment child Mowgli enters in the wolf lair. The cave of the wolves, at the mouth of which Shere Khan is arrogantly demanding his prey is magical
too. The magic shows itself in its danger-hunted thickets, the strange behaviour of monkeys and the land of which Mowgli is to become a master. There is magic about his animal friends and advisers Bagheera, the wise old bear, Hathi, the elephant, Kaa, the friendly python Akela, the leader of the Wolf-Pack; Bandar – long, the chattering, leader less and lawless outcasts.

The magic is combined with the terror in the Jungle. The terror is experienced in the ruined honeycombed city where monkeys live, where Kaa takes Mowgli to see the white cobra. The cobra is a mysteries underground custodian of the King’s treasure. The Red Dogs are so ferocious and devastating that even tiger and panther turn aside at their approach. There is terror of these Red Dogs. Mowgli lives in the midst of these animals which are wild. There wild animals help Mowgli solve his dilemma whether he is a man or an animal. But in the end, he is sent by his mentors away from the animals on a new trial, to do his duties in the world of man.

In his revenge, Mowgli lets in the Jungle on the village no human blood is shed. But in “Kaa’s Hunting”, “The King Ankus”, and “Red Dog” there is a strong note of the terrible. The corpse – laden waters of the time of Mutiny in “The Undertakers” are as horrible as the gluttonous old crocodile in it. The “Red Dog” gives a sense of terrible as well as heroism. Here, the hunting grounds of Mowgli’s pack are overrun by the inferior but more giant pack of the Dholes from Dekkan, and the wolves fight to the death for their lairs and their cubs.

In these stories, the reader is presented with ancient patterns of desperate valour, like the threat of Barbarian horde, the sacrificial exploit, the fight in the narrow place, the death of the old leader. These strong spells work on the reader’s mind. In the ‘Red Dog’ Won-Tolla, the maimed outlier, whose mate and cubs have been killed by Red Dogs asks for a fight and heroic death. Won-Tolla runs three – legged along the river bank as his enemies come downstream. He seeks revenge on them. ‘The bone is cracked’ says phaon as the Dholes retreat. Won-Tolla dies fighting with his enemies. Akela dies and Mowgli sings a death song to him. The tales are filled with heroism. The laws of life and death
have their way with Mowgli’s brethren. All this is conveyed with astonishing conviction and intensity by Kipling.

A sense of strange and wonderful embraces the *Jungle Books*. Up the Arctic, the pack-ice grinds and roars round the unseen shores and the sorcerer sings charmingly in the snow-hut. The wise elephants are tame as well as wild. They live in the Assamese Hills, meet at night to trample their dancing ground. There is an incident of Himalayan mountainside loosened by rain and the animals sense the coming of the landslide and save the holy Purun Bhagat who has shown them kindness and hospitality. And in all places in the *Jungle Books*, the people live with strange skills and stranger beliefs. Kotuko buckles himself into his belt for the long watch by the seal’s breathing hole, old Baldeo assumes that the Lame Tiger embodies the spirit of a dead moneylander, the seasonal round of a Himalayan villages takes place at a great depth below the shrine where Purun Bhagat meditates. The refinement of human senses to meet special conditions and the intuitive knowledge of ancestral habit are often brought to notice. In the Jungle, Mowgli weaves huts of straws like his woodcutter forefathers. The world which unfolds before the readers is varied and wild. Toomai’s mother and even Matkah, the Seal, sing their lullabies which is highly a human trait. Big Toomal and Sea-Catch grumble, and Kotuko’s little brother gnaws a nutty strip of blubber.

In “Kaa’s Hunting” the strange Bandar-log are found to sympathise with Mowgli when he is under punishment. They abduct him into tree-tops. They are important figures in this story. It is thrilling for a child to read about the green roads through which the monkeys take Mowgli, his presence of mind when he gives masterword to Chil, the Kite, and pleads him to mark his trail. This is raised to an exciting pitch. Before the adventures begin, there is humorous description of the Bandar-log as irresponsible, chattering, and animals without law, shame or memory. Kipling has presented the Bandar-log as a direct contrast to the Jungle virtuousness. Their dangerous futility is brought out by their doings at Cold Lairs, Baloo and Bagheera are beloved animals in the Jungle who are companions of the Man-cub, Mowgli. They are also the mouthpieces of Law. They teach morals to Mowgli and so to the children reading the *Jungle Books*. “The King’s Ankus is also an exciting tale of hidden treasure and of the following of a trail. A
mysterious white cobra guards the treasure which includes King’s Ankus. But Mowgli fails to comprehend the value of jeweled Ankus, for which men kill each other. The power of this tale is awe-inspiring. In “Tiger! Tiger!” The young wolves desert their old leader Akela to accept Shere Khan’s new ideology. But in the end, Shere Khan’s skin is pegged out on the Council Rock. The note of heroism of Mowgli runs through this narrative. There is mythological imagination in Hathi’s tradition of how fear came. The story is told mysteriously in the setting of the Water-Truce and there is Kotick’s search for the shore where man has never come to destroy the seals. The magic and wonder is all around us in the *Jungle Books*. It is beast represented by the ruined city where king’s treasure is hidden in “The King’s Ankus” and the sacred cobra and the dexterity of little Gond hunter with the sharp axe in the same story.

According to J. M. S. Tompkins, in the later Mowgli stories, there is a majestic shadow of Adam, the King of the Jungle (65). It is only a shadow because Mowgli moves in place and time, suffers the ill-temper of Buldeo and stones of Man-Pack, lets Messua comb his hair and helps her to escape to the unknown English at Kanhiwara. He has drawn the milk of a woman and a wolf. Messua considers him a wood-god. But to the children, who will read this, Mowgli is just a boy who is helped by kind animals. He establishes a fine communion with his foster brothers. Mowgli supposes himself to be a Master of the Jungle because he spoke to animals in their own tongues and showed his superiority to them by cursing the Red Flower in a firepot and using it against the tiger.

A delicate stream of humour and pathos runs through the last Mowgli tale ‘The Spring Running’. It is filled with a strange grimness and melancholy, because Mowgli goes back to the human kindred. The time of new talk disturbs Mowgli. This time sends the wild creatures singing and roving through the jungle alienating Mowgli. The compulsion that is driving Mowgli away from the Jungle is hard to convey to children who would not understand it, like Mowgli who too fails to understand it. Mowgli thinks that he has eaten poison and his unhappiness brings tears to his eyes. His wolf-mother explains it as a sign of manhood. But the melancholy is not felt severely as it is felt in the beginning of the story because Mowgli goes with the favour of the jungle and with the company of his four-footed brothers.
Though Mowgli is an interesting as well as central character in the *Jungle Books*, there are other stories which do not include Mowgli. Some of these non-Mowgli tales are impressive because in these tales, animals play an important part. These are the stories of human beings and interestingly, animals do not speak in these tales. There is exception of “The Undertakers, and “Her Majesty’s Servants”. The stories like “Miracles of Purun Bhagat” are not particularly children’s tales but Kipling was considerate of his childish audience and was often explanatory to them. He used familiar idioms but in the second Jungle Book, they become very few and the descriptions expand.

“The Quiquern” is a story of the people of Eastern Ice, Southern Ice and elder Ice and their sufferings. In this story, the jungle is mentioned nowhere in the scene and Kipling’s detailed descriptions of the Antarctic flash on the pages of the *Jungle Books*.

And all this happened far away to the North, beyond Labrador, beyond Hudson’s strait, where great tides heave the ice about, north of Melville Peninsula- north even of the narrow. Fury and Hecla straits – on the north shore of Baffin Land, Where Bylot’s Island stands above the ice of Lancaster sound like a pudding bowl wrong side up (*Jungle Books*85)

It is a story of Kadlu, the Insuit or Esquimou. It was fascinating descriptions of the lifestyle of Esquimoes, their hunting of seals. Quiquern is a dog-spirit which leads Esquimou to a safe land when the ice is breaking.

The white seal, shows, again, Kipling’s interest in giving detailed descriptions of the land, its inhabitants and the natural phenomena of that part of the world. There are fabulous descriptions of the beaches where there are hordes of seals gathered on the shores. Kipling has given a human trait to these seals, which is of singing lullabies. The lullaby which Matkah sings to her baby is full of sea metaphors.

Where billow meets billow,
There be thy soft pillow;
The storm shall not wake thee..
Asleep in the arms of slow swinging seas (*Jungle Books*85)
The children are provided with a world which is quite similar to theirs. The seals have mothers and moreover, they too sing lullabies to their babies. They too care for their children. The reference to man’s strange beliefs is here also. This time, it is the belief of the English-men. Kerick Booterin and his Patalamon consider Kotick, who is a white seal, to be old Zaharoff’s ghost. The cruelty of men towards animals is expressed by giving accounts of skinning of the seals. This cruelty of men drives Kotick to take up a search of a land which is untrodden by human beings. Kipling comes out with a happy resolution when he gives Kotick success in finding an island untrodden by human beings, Kotick leads his friends to that land which is beyond sea-cows, tunnel.

“Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” stresses on the usefulness of animals to the human beings. It is a story of Mongoose, who with the help of a tailor bird, Darzee, wins a terriable fight with the Nag, Mongoose, thus saves the John’s family from a big Nag and Nagina. This story fails to make impact on the mind of the reader, except the scene of the heroic fight put up by Rikki-Tikki-Tavi against the Nag.

“Toomai of the Elephants” could be surely placed among one of the best stories in the Jungle Books. The atmosphere in this story is enchanting. The event is magnificently described by Kipling which is of Toomai’s witnessing the Elephant Dance. The achievement is extraordinary for a little Indian Mahout boy like Toomai, because he has seen what the great hunter of Elephants Peterson Sahib has also not seen. A wonderland is opened to the readers. The prize for Toomai is something a common Indian could not have dreamt of. He gets a crashing salute of the Elephants which is given only to the Viceroy of India. The descriptions of the Mahouts, their skills in their profession, the hunting of the Hathis is remarkable. But the dance of elephants which Toomai saw in the night is shown to the readers by Kipling.

Then an elephant trumpeted, and they all took it for five or six terrible seconds. The dew from the trees spattered down like rain on the unseen backs, and a dull booming noise began, not very loud at first... but it grew and grew.... The elephants were stamping all together now and it sounded like a wardrum beaten at the mouth of a cave.
The dew fell from the trees till there was no more left to fall and the booming went on and the ground rocked and shivered (Jungle Books 142)

In “Her Majesty’s Servants”, the troublesome and savage horses of Afghanistan’s Amir come to visit the Viceroy of India. It is a conversation between a mule of screw-gun battery, a troop-horse and the gun-bullocks. Though the imperialist tones are not very significant in the Jungle Books. It is not completely devoid of them. In “Her Majesty’s Servants”, the mule boasts himself of having a white driver. The pride of an Englishman could be perceived when the Amir’s Central Asian chief asks an English Officer the secret behind the wonderful parade of the animals. The English Officer tells that the secret lies in following an order and working in proper hierarchy. He says that if they want to be like Englishmen, they should not behave according to their own wills and should follow the chief, which suggests that they should come under the English Flag. So, if they want to have law and order, they must follow the English. The same note is continued in the “Miracles of purun Bhagat” when purun Dass is made to understand the importance of English very early in his life. Purun Dass is presented as a wise man because he is a man who senses the importance of English and imitates all that English believed to be good. It pays and he becomes the Prime Minister of the Kingdom. So his first step of the ladder to success starts with imitation of Englishmen. Above all, he is given the title ‘K.C.I.E.’ – Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire.

As for the language, the Jungle Books have their basis in the Urdu idiom, which even all animals speak. “The Quiquern” has credible idiom of the Esquimau language.

These stories of humanized animals fill the Jungle Books with enhancement. The Law, which is the most important factor of the Jungle Books, appears in the form of fable. In his fables, Kipling explored a spontaneous habit of imagination for its artistic potentiality. The fleeting likeness was fixed and a congruous world elaborated round it. It is only a small part of the appearance and behaviour of animals and things that can really be compared to those of human beings. The fun arises from a simultaneous perception of likeness and unlikeness. A world of mystery, magic and wonder unravels before the eyes of the readers.
Just So Stories

Another collection of fascinating animal stories in *Just So Stories* (1902). It is like a nursery book. The stories show that Kipling possesses the art of telling stories to child. These are the stories of genesis which tell the readers as to “How whale got his throat”, “How camel got his hump” and “how leopard got his spots” and many more.

In the story “How Whale got his Throat” it is described how the Whale ate fishes of all kinds and sizes in the beginning. At last there was only one left in the sea, a small astute fish that hid behind the whale’s ear and advised him to eat a shipwrecked mariner, to be found at Latitude 50 North and Longitude 40 West. The Whale swallowed the mariner and the raft he was sitting on. But once inside, the mariner jumped about so much that the Whale got hiccups and asked him to come out. He answered that he would not, unless he was taken to the shore of his British home, and danced harder than ever. So the Whale took him to the beach and the mariner came out. But in the meantime the clever mariner had made his raft into a grating which he fastened in the Whale’s throat with his suspenders. Forever after, the Whale could only eat the smallest of fishes.

In “How Camel got his Hump” the children read when the animals began to work for Man, the Camel lived in a desert because he was idle and refused to help. The Dog, the Horse and the Ox all urged him to join in their work, but he only answered “Humph!” They complained to the Man, who said he was sorry, but they would just have to work longer hours themselves.

Then they complained to the Djinn in charge of All Deserts. So the Djinn went to see the Camel and told him to work, but still all he would say was “Humph!” The Djinn made a magic that puffed up the Camel’s back into a humph (or hump) and condemned him to work for three days without eating, living on his hump instead, to make up for the days he had missed. He still has his hump, he never did make up the lost time, and he still behaves badly.

This is a very interesting story. The expansiveness of Camel’s superior is nicely delineated in the story: “Whew!” said the Djinn, whistling. “That’s my Camel, for all the
gold in Arabia! What does he say about it?" *(Just So Stories)* 45) He is swift to investigate, and swift to ensure the Camel’s contribution to the work force. Reprisals are tempered with diplomatic bluffness. The children are taught that there is the necessity to bow to the Law, to follow rules and to obey superiors through this story.

The narrative style, seemingly so naive and spontaneous, represents in fact one of the most notable triumphs of Kipling’s craft. The *Just So Stories* are often compared with Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* as the greatest English achievements in writing for young children. Carroll shares with Kipling the faculty of appealing to children and adults alike. With each there is a certain hit-or-miss element to be observed, since there are some children and adults upon whom the magic of one, or both, fails to work. Each inhabits what must be called a real world, although it is certainly not an actual world. Carroll’s is the world of dream, although of dream at once drastically censored and cunningly intellectualized. Kipling’s is the world of myth.

Carrington says that most of the *Just So Stories* are myths of the kind known as *aetiological* *(67)*. An aetiological myth is one evolved generally in a more or less 'primitive' society—to explain and render intelligible some existing state of affairs which in itself perplexes and challenges the human spirit. The most famous of all aetiological myths is that of the Creation and Fall of Man as it is recounted in the Book of Genesis. In this, answers to nearly all the great riddles are bound together within a single narrative satisfying to the imagination—and satisfying, too, to the intellect working within the limits of a 'pre-scientific' cultural context. *The Just So Stories* are little myths solving little riddles: how the camel got anything so strange as a hump and the elephant anything so strange as a trunk. It is true that, to be quite accurate, one must qualify the description of these stories as myths. “They have been invented for the satisfaction not of a primitive people but of modern children, who are 'primitive' only in the metaphorical sense that their intellectual development does, to some extent, recapitulate the course of human evolution.” *(Carrington 66)* This is why the stories are made to hover between a level of fantasy and a level of simple conviction. So in one aspect they are like make-believe
games which children love. In another, they are an introduction to one of the great literary kinds reflecting something radical in the development of the human imagination.

II. School Tales

*Stalky & Co.* is a book published in 1899 (following serialisation in the Windsor Magazine) by Rudyard Kipling, about adolescent boys at a British boarding school. George Sampson called *Stalky & Co.* “An unpleasant book about unpleasant boys at an unpleasant school” (959). These comments have dogged *Stalky & Co.* since the stories first appeared in book form in 1899. And this was by no means the harshest. From Well’s condemnation of the heroes as “self-righteous bullies” ‘little beasts’ to “a more odious picture of school life can seldom have been drawn” the disapproval of Kipling’s contemporaries was made thunderously clear. “Mr. Kipling obviously aims at verisimilitude; the picture he draws is at any rate repulsive and disgusting enough to be true” wrote Robert Buchanan, his most virulent critic. ‘Only the spoiled child of an utterly brutalized public could possibly have written *Stalky & Co.* It is simply impossible to show by mere quotation the horrible vileness of the book describing these three small fiends in human likeness; only a perusal of the whole work would convey to the reader its truly repulsive character. The vulgarity, the brutality, the savagery reeks on every page” (Buchanan 244).

There are more recent comments in much the same vein. Edmund Wilson, for instance says `a hair-raising picture of the sadism of the English public-school system'(21) and even today the book can arouse passionate feelings of dislike, resentment, even disgust.

Yet its supporters have been quite as fervent, and its popularity with the young has never waned. Intensity and exuberance in the hands of a writer like Kipling can hardly fail to arouse partisan attitudes, and the immediacy of *Stalky & Co.* is one of the most remarkable things about it. Its outlook, its central characters, its ideals and ideas, still hold lessons for us today. The world it belonged to may have gone, but the points it makes still have relevance to ours, and the exuberance with which it makes them hammers this home. Kipling started to write his school-stories after giving up his home in Vermont and it was
like going back into pre-adult experience of a mind in some way held up in its natural progress towards fully matured accomplishment. But if the Stalky stories concern adolescence and make their greatest appeal to adolescents, Kipling appears to have regarded them as addressed as much to educators as to those suffering education. “There came to me,” he records, “the idea of beginning some tracts or parables on the education of the young. These, for reasons honestly beyond my control, turned themselves into a series of tales called Stalky & Co.” And then, as if he feels that he has allowed too much to this; involuntary element of transformation, he adds of the book: ‘It is still read and I maintain it is a truly valuable collection of tracts.’(Stewart 125)

Although Stalky & Co belongs to the school-story genre, it is unlike any other school story. The most famous of all such stories, Thomas Hughes's Tom Brown's Schooldays, is in some aspects a firmly realistic picture of life at Rugby under the headmastership of Thomas Arnold, and it contains episodes of schoolboy brutality which exceed anything Kipling was to produce; its main purpose, however, was to display Arnold as an inspired educator of Christian gentlemen. And Hughes's Christians are of the 'muscular' sort admired by his friends F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley; he had himself written a book entitled The Manliness of Christ. Two other famous school-stories of the age—Eric, or Little by Little, and St. Winifred's, or The World of School—were the work of a clergyman, Dean Farrar, who took the very darkest view of a schoolboy's chances of salvation.

Tom Brown's School Days (1857) started a literary industry which produced hundreds of school stories over the next century, all dealing with the self-contained, rule-ridden world of the Victorian - and later the Edwardian and Georgian - public school. Twenty-five years later Talbot Baines Reed with The Fifth Form at St Dominic's and other books gave the genre a recognizable popular form. His many followers were undistinguished and mostly indistinguishable, and stuck closely to the conventions he laid down. Parallel with their books went a more literary, more seriously intentioned brand of school story, aiming to give a more realistic or more romantic, sometimes a more adult, view of public-school life. Between the two and quite unlike either the popular or the more individual, more ambitious stories came Stalky & Co. It appeared in 1899, exactly
in the middle of the genre's century of life, several stories coming out at various dates after the early ones had appeared in book form, and the whole being collected as The Complete Stalky & Co as late as 1929.

The fact that Kipling was an incomparably better writer than the others (only P. G. Wodehouse, whose earliest books were school stories, can be mentioned beside him) makes Stalky & Co. unlike the other school stories in quality. In Kipling's, the school story managed to cross the often uneasily described division between adult life and boyhood, and between the mature attitude of the writer and the unripe outlook of his heroes (a transition no other school-story writer coped with adequately). For all its `committedness' of mood, its sense of sharing totally the everyday life and outlook of fifteen-year-olds, looking back on them became not an exercise in nostalgia but a way of understanding and working out what was to come, what they were to grow into.

*Stalky & Co.* is the only school story which shows school as a direct preparation for life. Most others actually make the world outside school seem irrelevant, an anticlimax, an unimaginable void. Kipling, for all his intense feeling for the school atmosphere and the moods of adolescence, shows school as the first stage of a much larger game, a pattern-maker for the experiences of life. This is mainly what makes it unlike the others, with their narrow, school-centred preoccupations and their belief, often implied and sometimes even stated, in the overwhelming importance of this preliminary stage of life, which was actually presumed to outdo the rest in importance. In Kipling, not only is a later life envisaged very clearly at school, but the divisions between school and the world outside are less clearly defined than they are in most other school stories. The boys make free with the surrounding countryside and hobnob happily with the locals, bilingual in standard English and broad Devon. The school teaches the boys how to live; but above all, the boys teach one another.

But *Stalky & Co.* was unlike the other school stories not merely in quality, or even in form. It was unlike them in kind. It dealt with an odd school, based on the United Services College where Kipling was sent, and it had few of the interests, accepted few of the conventions, of other school stories. The Coll, as it is called in the book, was a raw
new foundation set up for boys destined for the army or the colonial service in some form, whose parents could not afford the smarter Haileybury, of which it was an offshoot. Those who came expecting the familiar features of school life barked their shins on the reality soon enough. The Head should have warned Mr. Brownell of the College's outstanding peculiarity, instead of leaving him to discover it for himself the first day of term. “The United Idolators” begins, and this oddity is stressed again and again with a sort of sly pride. Difference, oddity, practicality, even poverty: these made for a certain truculence in Kipling and in the boys he describes, and brought a feeling of modernity and a sense of facing up to the facts of life and of careers that are noticeably absent from other school stories.

King was a master who disliked and reluctantly admired keeps'talking round and over the boys' heads, in a lofty and promiscuous style, of public-school spirit and the traditions of ancient seats'. But Flint, one of the prefects, puts this sort of thing into perspective. “As I told King, we aren't a public school,” he says. “We're a limited liability company paying “four per cent. My father's a shareholder too ... We've got to get into the army or - get out, haven't we? King's hired by the Council to teach us. All the rest's flumdiddle. Can't you see?” (Stalky125) To mention money, the importance of exams, the need for cramming, the non-public-school qualities and even status of one's own school - all this was heresy in the late nineteenth-century school story.

Kipling puts himself into the book as the central character called Beetle, he was sent to the United Services College almost by chance, because the headmaster, Cornell Price, was a family friend. It was not really his sort of school. He was not really the sort of boy it catered for. As the only boy who wore glasses (and who was almost blind without them), he was the only one there physically unable to do what the others were being prepared for. However boyish and exuberant the mood of Stalky & Co, the future looms over all its action. This or that boy, we are told now and then, quite casually as he enters the story, will die in action in such-and-such a place, within the next three or four years. Danger, initiative, heroism, death: Kipling could write of them all but was not, unlike his schoolfellows, to be involved with them physically, factually. At sixteen he left school for a job on a newspaper in India, news of his remarkable gifts having gone ahead
of him. If he was not to have the military glory of some of his friends (the model for Stalky himself ended as a general), he could at least be their chronicler.

Between his imaginative genius and their gifts as men of action - physical and psychological attributes he would never have himself - he was torn throughout his life and perhaps particularly at school; therefore even more so in writing about school, where the two collided most noticeably. The United Services College trained boys to become practical, efficient, brave and effective leaders throughout the Empire, and Kipling envied them for their practicality and efficiency, admired their courage and competence (qualities he was to celebrate in all he wrote). His own time at the USC was successful, fulfilled, and apparently happy, his standing high with the other boys, his gifts recognized and encouraged by the headmaster and two other masters who had some influence on his early writing. But he did not and could not fully belong there. The ardour, vehemence, even aggressiveness and violence of his tone when he looked back to his school-days must surely have been a compensation for this, a sign of his wistfulness in the face of the privileged society of ingenious, daring, hardy future rulers in which he spent his curious early and middle teens.

He was curiously unlike the central schoolboy of fiction, so odd, that it is surprising, and a sign of the school's open-mindedness, to find him accepted, even admired there. “Anything that Gigger did “went” ’, G. C. Beresford, the model for M'Turk, assures (202). He also mentions the `Gigger regime' (Gigger was Kipling's school nickname, from giglamps, an allusion to the spectacles he wore). Kipling's high status at school was odd considering what an unlikely candidate for school importance he was. The public schools of the time were aggressively athletic, as book after book (memoirs as well as fiction) makes often wearisomely clear, and Kipling was hopeless at games and made no pretence of enthusiasm for any sport but swimming. The intellectual or cultivated boy, the aesthete, the poet, the swot, was generally despised, whereas the school heroes, or `bloods' as they were called, were almost invariably athletes, with the qualities that went or were thought to go with athleticism: physical strength, a masterful personality, and good looks. With them, even moral qualities were supposed to march,
qualities of leadership, straightforwardness, a clean-cut presence and style of life. The boy the other boys admired and the masters respected was almost invariably a sportsman. Whereas Kipling was the very opposite of all this: brilliant and devious, intellectual and precocious, and very odd-looking indeed - which, in particular, counted at school. His difference from the rest lay not only, or not so much, in his poor eyesight (that on its own would have handicapped him, but made him a figure of pathos, perhaps likely to arouse sympathy) as in his presence and his looks. Small, plump, peering and furry, with a perceptible moustache when he arrived at twelve, a full-grown one in group photographs at fifteen, he was anything but familiar-looking or reassuring.

As a series of stories, *Stalky & Co.* scores over most other school stories because it keeps up interest and emotional intensity in energetic bursts of narrative, each complete in itself, each worked out to make a satisfactory pattern. Most school stories sag because their plots are not interesting or convincing enough to keep up interest or conviction long enough. Stalky & Co. has the same characters and situations throughout but very different things happen to them in each chapter. Each story, or nearly each one, is a carefully constructed tale of come-uppance, or who it is who gets it. It is about (on the whole lighthearted) revenge.

The first tale (of the Complete Stalky) is simple enough and serves to give Stalky his nickname. Officially he is Arthur Lionel Corkran, or Corky to his friends. But Corky becomes Stalky when he manages a particularly neat rescue of some silly boys who, unprepared, stumble into trouble with an angry farmer and his cattle; because in USC slang the word 'Stalky' meant clever and cunning. In the stories it stands for survival, success against the enemy regardless of what means are used, a sense of power, joy, fun, even dignity in the achievement of victory. It stands for everything the schoolboy needs in order to keep his end up against authority and the school ethos. And this is perhaps mainly why *Stalky & Co.* seemed a disruptive, subversive, and disturbing book to adults when it appeared, and why the young, girls as well as boys, so often find it exhilarating.

Most school stories, certainly the approved ones, were really on the side of the status quo and the conventions of school life. Their passionate devotion to athletics and
the athlete, their championing of those with a roaring enthusiasm for what was then thought important at school - rivalries, house matches, matters of schoolboy honour and face-saving - showed that school-story writers were anxious to be on the winning side, the side that had adult approval. Whereas Kipling makes his schoolboys the winners, while the adults are often discomfited. Mainly these adults are masters, but occasionally a local farmer or a priggish prefect (who in school terms counts almost as an adult) is spiked on the sheer stalkiness of Stalky.

Stalky is unlike other school-story heroes because he is indeed heroic, as the boyish Tom Brown and his imitators never are; he is outsize in cleverness, in leadership, in improvisation, and these qualities, which he learns and then hones with endless patience and practice at school, are going to stand him in good stead later, in amazing feats not just of dash and courage but of deviousness and ingenuity. 'Stalky stalked,' one of his friends says admiringly in the final chapter. `That's all there is to it.' (Stalky 231)

When one of the book's critics (Buchanan 245) complained that the boys were `not like boys at all, but like hideous little men', he had a point. Kipling's biographer Charles Carrington remarked that in Stalky & Co. he shows “a world of work like manhood, not a world of play like childhood”(Carrington 63). Stalky's school successes scored over others, although put across in the language of young uproariousness, are exactly like the imperial successes we hear of in the final chapter. In undermining the alliance between his two enemy groups, the Khye-Kheens and the Malots, he uses exactly the same tricks that he used at school to undermine King or the prefects. Even the song from the house pantomime - `Arrah, Patsy, mind the baby' - is played on a bugle to rally troops and sort out allies from enemies. Details of school life and language are vivid after fifteen years and used with effect to describe, to make images of, the present. If this is adult life, working life, imperial life, then school life prefigures it exactly.

Stalky and his friends M’Turk and Beetle have few of the usual schoolboy interests - sporting success, the prestige of being prefects, cheering at house matches or even achieving (as Beetle is well able to achieve) academic success with the likes of King. (Unless, as happens in "The Propagation of Knowledge", they achieve it in a
roundabout way by sharing the results of Beetle's wide reading among several boys, and thus teasing the unsuspecting King.)

What concerns them is their private, even secret life, sometimes led in defiance of authority, as when they find a cliff-top hiding place where they read, smoke, and escape the pressures of communal life; sometimes in laudable or at least harmless pursuits, like writing poetry (in Beetle's case) or producing the house pantomime; but most often in keeping their end up and quietly - or not so quietly - gloating over the downfall of their adversaries.

No one discovers what trick they use or even that they have used any at all, except their friend the chaplain, who sees round them all too well, and the headmaster, a great man who knows everything. The others merely know that, if Stalky is thwarted, something happens, someone else suffers for it. Stalky and Co always have alibis, unshakeable excuses, a look of injured innocence if accused. King's study is wrecked by a drunken villager, and no one can know that Stalky enraged him into wrecking it. When the three are turned out of their study, Prout's House is mysteriously disrupted. Accused by King of being unwashed and smelly, they make his House stink to high heaven by sliding a dead cat in between attic floor boards and the ceiling below. In a notably nasty chapter two bullies are tortured as they tormented their young victim. A prefect too big for his boots is humiliated before his fellows by being accused of immoral conduct, Stalky and Co having got a village girl to kiss him in public. It is purest one-upmanship in action.

Some of their ideas for these tricks come from books. Galton's The Art of Travel (1872) gives them `the bleating of the kid excites the tiger', which suggests that bullies may be lured by the noise made by their victim. Mrs. Oliphant's Beleaguered City (1880) gives them an idea for misleading Prout. Isaac D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature (1838) is a mine of miscellaneous information which can be spread among his friends by Beetle for the confusion of King. Viollet-le-Duc shows him how a house is built and therefore where a dead cat may be stowed. But, as with Stalky's military manoeuvres in India, the best results come from the application of experience, the pattern of repeating something
already done: in "The Propagation of Knowledge", for instance, a boy tells how a sapper uncle of his discovered that the colonel examining him on field fortification had a passion for the Lost Tribes of Israel, and by interested discussion on the subject with the old fellow got top marks in a subject he knew nothing about. The boys seize on the idea when they face an outside examiner in English Literature, who, they discover, is much taken with the Baconian heresy (that Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare), which they have been swotting up to annoy King. When the examiner finds they can discuss it with him all goes smoothly, and they pass with flying colours.

Other themes are less dramatically and exuberantly introduced. The most controversial story of all is “The Moral Reformers”. Sefton and Campbell are among the biggest boys in the school, and a hint from the chaplain reveals to Stalky, M'Turk and Beetle that they have been bullying a small boy so cruelly that he has been reduced to dumb misery— just as Beetle (who is Kipling) was in his first term: “But I got it worse than any one, said Beetle. 'If you want an authority on bullyin', Padre, come to me. Corkscrews — brush-drill — keys — head-knuckling' — arm-twistin' — rockin’—Ag Ags—and all the rest of it.”(Stalky81)

The bullies are too strong to be tackled head on. So Stalky and Co. adopt a stratagem which results in their being able to tie up their victims helplessly—and then, over many pages of the story, they put them through all the tortures (which seems to be the proper word) that Beetle remembers. 'Corkscrews' has nothing to do with opening bottles; 'brush-drill' doesn't need a brush, nor 'keys' a key. This long passage is a masterpiece of sinister reticences. Sefton and Campbell are only released when they have been so much hurt that they are likely to remain broken and abject for keeps. Even so, and when the three executioners are all 'dripping with excitement and exertion', there is a moment when Beetle wants to go on. 'I've had it done to me,' he says, and when he has been stopped, Stalky's verdict is: 'This moral suasion biznai takes it out of a chap.'(Stalky91)

Not surprisingly, 'The Moral Reformers' has horrified a good many people— including H. G. Wells, who viewed it as an involuntary give-away of the hideous
wickedness of the British Empire. But Kipling was trying to write, of 'things as they are'. Violence breeds violence, and cruelty suffered leads to cruelty inflicted. Early in the story, Beetle shows himself quite clear-headed about bullying. “Bullies like bullyin’”, he says. “They mean it. They think it up in lesson and practise it in the quarters.” (Stalky81) At the end he just stops himself from thus bullying for the sheer sake of bullying. All moral reformers are at some moral hazard. The very title of the story carries a muted irony.

The first-written of the stories, 'Slaves of the Lamp', is in two parts. In the first the boys are rehearsing a school pantomime, and make so much noise that they incur the wrath of Mr. King, a house-master who, although an able teacher, is represented as never addressing his pupils except with a fluent and stinging sarcasm. (Beetle, although his sworn enemy, is a close student of King's superb rhetorical performances, since Beetle is himself resolved to be a lord of language.) The boys swear revenge—but it has to be revenge in terms of that maxim of Stalky's which marks him out as a great tactician: “Not the least good having a row with a master unless you can make an ass of him” (Stalky31)—and without his even knowing that it is you who have done it. Stalky ingeniously engineers a flare-up of temper between King and Rabbits-Eggs—which is the name the school has given to the local carrier, a rustic character of primitive intelligence and violent instinct. Rabbits-Eggs hurls stones at King in his study window so accurately and pertinaciously that the room is in shambles. In the confusion, Beetle furthers the good work by scattering ink and (apparently) scarring with a flint the spines of King's particularly handsome set of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Moreover, Manders minor, who had offended Stalky & Co., is found to be 'bleeding profusely from a cut on the cheekbone', so that, as well as ink and gum, there is 'blood on the books and papers'. This is a most satisfactory affair. 'Everybody paid in full- -beautiful feelin” (Stalky31), is M'Turk's verdict on it. The second part of, 'Slaves of the Lamp' is set among a gathering of Old Boys of the school several years later. They learn how Stalky, as an officer fighting on the North-West frontier of India, gets his troops out of a trap by ingeniously exploiting the enmity between two of the hostile tribes, so that they turn upon each other, with Stalky himself remaining invisible. Stalky has brought off his old trick again, and soldiers, who might have been annihilated, escape with minor casualties.
'Slaves of the Lamp' is an exuberant story, but it is not difficult to distinguish its serious aspect as a 'tract'. E. M. Forster, who does not greatly care for Kipling, will be found to employ much the same symbolism in describing the fate of Lucy Honeychurch's photographs in A Room with a View. If we are to preserve the achievements of our civilization we must be prepared to fight for them. And we shall do this most effectively if we have been bred not too soft. That is what is happening at Westward Ho! In 'In Ambush', the first story in the book, we are told that the boys 'were learning, at the expense of a fellow-countryman, the lesson of their race, which is to put away all emotion and entrap the alien at the proper time' (Stalky4)

In "The United Idolators" an entire community is stirred almost to mass hysteria by a craze for a particular book, - Uncle Remus - its slang and oddities, its fetishes and characters. In "Regulus", we learn what school stories very seldom tell us, that school work may be vigorously done and sometimes even enjoyed, that a little Latin may actually 'stick' and the master may therefore feel his uphill task is worthwhile. In "The Flag of their Country", we see adult falsity disgusting the young, when an MP the boys nickname the Jelly-bellied Flag-flapper talks of forbidden subjects like Honour and Patriotism, matters too close to their hearts and too delicately felt to bear talking about.

In the story 'The Flag of their Country' an elderly General who is on the governing Council of the school tries to insist that there should be a cadet corps. The Head clearly disapproves, but agrees that an experiment shall be made. The plan has a very poor reception from the boys, but eventually gets under way with some of them on the purely practical score that a knowledge of elementary drill will cut down the time they have to spend on this rather boring part of an officer's training when they go on to Sandhurst. So Foxy, the school's gym instructor (a retired N.G.O.), is given charge of the parades. These go tolerably well until a frightful thing happens. The General sends down a certain Mr. Martin (he is a Member of Parliament, which is something never to be much loved by Kipling), who harangues the boys about the time when they shall be 'leading their men against the bullets of England's foe confronting the stricken field in all the pride of their youthful manhood'. (Stalky125) The boys are staggered:
With a large and healthy hand, he tore down these veils, and trampled them under the well-intentioned feet of eloquence. In a raucous voice he cried aloud little matters, like the hope of Honour and the dream of Glory, that boys do not discuss even with their most intimate equals; cheerfully assuming that, till he spoke, they had never considered these possibilities. He pointed them to shining goals, with fingers which smudged out all radiance on all horizons. He profaned the most secret places of their souls with outcries and gesticulations (Stalky124).

All this is bad enough. But now Mr. Martin does an incredible thing. This, he says, is the concrete symbol of their land—and let no boy look on it who is not resolved to add to its imperishable lustre. By this time, Mr. Martin has produced, and is waving, 'a large calico Union Jack'. And he is waiting for the thunder of applause that should crown his effort:

They looked in silence. They had certainly seen the thing before—down at the coastguard station, or through a telescope, half-mast high when a brig went ashore on Braunton sands; above the roof of the Golf Club, and' in Keyte's window, where a certain kind of striped sweetmeat bore it in paper on each box. But the College never displayed it; it was no part of the scheme of their lives; the Head had never alluded to it; their fathers had not declared it unto them. It was a matter shut up, sacred and apart. What, in the name of everything caddish, was he driving at, who waved that horror before their eyes? Happy thought! Perhaps he was drunk. (Stalky125).

Only Foxy, a man of the people, is touched and edified by Mr. Martin's flag-wagging. To gentlemen such pawing-over of sacred things is an unspeakable act.

It is simply that something about which one feels like that can readily be cheapened. Stalky, certainly, feels so degraded by the visitor's disastrous performance that—for the first and last time in his saga—he is discovered in tears. We feel that Kipling-is putting all he has into this story. Some of the effects are a little broad; for example, we are several times told in a parenthesis that such or such a boy now suffering
Mr. Martin's eloquence will within a few years be dead on one battlefield or another. Anybody who sees what this story is about likes the whole book.

It is a constant theme of *Stalky & Co.* that ours is a world in which we are lucky if even the roughest justice comes our way. The Head is represented as seldom caning a boy without trying to convince him that the punishment is, at least in some degree, arbitrary and unaccountable. He says: 'I'm going to execute you without rhyme, Beetle, or reason', or 'There's a certain flagrant injustice about this that ought to appeal to—your temperament'. (The break in this last speech is meant to mark a moment of impact.) Yet Stalky & Co., and all their companions, admire the Head enormously—quite as much as the real boys admired the real, and very much gentler, Cormell Price. The inflicting of physical pain had a morbid attraction for Kipling, and that he exploits its being meted out as punishment to make it respectable. Some evidence can be brought forward to support this view; for example, in *Something of Myself* he tells us the result of his having heard of Dante's nine-ringed Hell:

I bought a fat, American cloth-bound notebook, and set to work on an Inferno, into which I put, under appropriate; torture, all my friends and most of the masters. This was really remunerative because one could chant his future doom to a victim walking below the windows of the study which I with my two companions now possessed. (*Myself* 90)

But this confession fails, somehow, to come to us as particularly unwholesome. And if the 'Proosian Bates' disconcerts us, it is not because he is a sadist. It is because he has been made so concentrated a symbol of two ideas which might be better un telescoped. He stands (as does his school) both for the universe as a play of natural forces—unaccountable as a cyclone—and for the human wisdom which knows best how to temper us to take that universe's strain. And he certainly seems to believe that we are likely to put up a better show if we have been allowed in youth to behave in a fairly cyclonic way ourselves. Kipling made several additions to the 'Stalky' saga quite late in life.
It is otherwise with 'Regulus', a story to be found in *A Diversity of Creatures* (1917). Kipling prefaces the story with a little Roman history: Regulus, a Roman general, defeated the Carthaginians 256 B.C., but was next year defeated and taken prisoner by the Carthaginians, who sent him to Rome with an embassy to ask for peace or an exchange of prisoners. Regulus strongly advised the Roman Senate to make no terms with the enemy. He then returned to Carthage and was put to death.

In point of fact, Regulus faced no simple death—and he knew it. In Kipling's story this only comes to us in the Latin lesson with which it starts (and which is given nearly in full). 'Now then,' Mr. King says, 'for atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus tortor pararet'—and a boy called Winton addresses himself to the task of translation.

Winton is to be the central figure of the story: 'a long, heavy, tow-headed, Second Fifteen forward, overdue for his First Fifteen colours, and in aspect like an earnest, elderly horse'. Winton enjoys the respect of King (who is more sympathetically presented in the later stories)—and also, with a reservation, of the Head. 'Winton's only fault is a certain costive and unaccommodating virtue,' the Head says. 'So this comes very happily.' Just what 'this' is takes some explaining. Winton, 'rigid and angular', had not come very well out of the Latin lesson—partly because, for the meaning of the one word he had not looked up during prep, he had rashly trusted to Beetle, whose approach to ancient languages tended to be imaginative rather than scholarly. Winton has partly retrieved himself—he has been all right on 'Well though he knew what the savage torturer was getting ready for him'—but his earlier howler has produced roars of laughter from the form, and this has upset his rather anxiously self-regarding nature. Matters are made worse when Beetle cheerfully mocks him: 'Don't be too virtuous. Don't brood over it. 'Twon't count against you in your future careeah.' (This adds to our sense of Winton's character; he is, as King calls him, 'prudential': anxious about his future, and 'virtuous' in order to safeguard it.) But now—and goaded in this way—Winton does a seemingly unaccountable, and certainly uncharacteristic, thing. He lets loose a live mouse in the form-room of Mr. Lidgett, the drawing-master. Winton is much too old to do such a thing with any propriety, and his fall from grace is the more evident because Mr. Lidgett, being no more than the drawing-master, is allowed very little power of punishment. Winton is at
once overwhelmed with rather fussy remorse, declaring that he has played a cad's trick—and being, in fact, the virtuous Winton to rather a boring extent. Eventually he arrives in the Head's study—'penitent, perturbed, annoyed with himself'—and is told to produce five hundred lia's of Virgil by tea-time. King is distressed, and with good reason. 'The seemingly mild penalty in fact masks something direly different. And it is because of this that the Head has said: 'So this comes very happily.'

At the United Services College—as it existed, and not merely in Kipling's imagination—it was an absolute law that any boy who missed his football for any reason whatever, and had no written excuse, should be beaten by the Captain of Games. By setting an imposition that must be done during the time appointed for football, a master could be sure that a boy would be so beaten. And it is this sanction that the Head himself has invoked upon the virtuous Winton. As it happens, Winton shares a study with the Captain of Games, who is a boy of his own age, his cousin, and his closest friend. But it is a matter of honour that the law should be obeyed, and Winton (or, for that matter, his cousin, Tot' Mullins) obeys it—as Regulus had done. But he does not do so before, wrought upon by the rather tactless taunting of his fellows, he goes berserk (as Beetle calls it) and does a glorious amount of damage to everybody around him. As he has never fought before, this takes a good deal out of him, with the result that, seconds after the three strokes have been faithfully delivered, he astonishes Pot by stretching himself out on the window-seat of their study, and falling deeply and placidly asleep. This is the moment at which the Head's wisdom is presented as vindicated. He has acted only just in time, for Winton's 'Cap' has actually been delivered on the same day. He is still recognizably Winton; as he and Pot go off amicably to tea together, he is tiresomely disposed to reiterate once more his day's sins, and to speculate as to whether they will 'count against him'. But his 'moral joints' have been a little loosened up. Or so the Head hopes. Perhaps it is excusable to misestimate 'Regulus' at a first encounter. But when we reconsider it, we may judge it to be a more subtle fable than we had supposed, and certainly one based upon real penetration into the psychology of boyhood.

The most prominent theme in the Stalky stories is that of the punitive rag or practical joke; and the achieving of one or another feat in this kind tends to be
accompanied by the release of orgiastic laughter. Both these elements are to be found widely dispersed throughout Kipling's work, often in stories keyed to a note of boisterous farce, but at times modulating into something quite different. Readers who dislike Stalky & Co. are almost certain to condemn the whole species. Others will maintain that to omit notice of this kind of story is to ignore something which at least delighted Kipling and which is always likely to betray into momentary delight critics even of the most censorious temper.

The choice of theme, the intricacies of plot, the treatment is so far from the form or content of most school stories that it seems another genre, certainly part of another world. Hardly surprising, when one considers that at Beetle's age of fifteen or so Kipling was already a prolific poet (published, albeit reluctantly) and an omnivorous reader in French as well as English, with the run of the headmaster's library. As nephew of two famous contemporary painters (Burne-Jones and Poynter), he had intellectual friends in London and a stimulating out-of-school life when he wanted it (including a cultural trip to Paris, much enjoyed) and was, as his biographer Charles Carrington puts it, 'a rebel and a progressive, which is to say, in 1882 - paradoxically - that he was a decadent. His friends, his teachers, were liberals,' Carrington goes on; 'his tastes were "aesthetic", the writers he most admired were the fashionable pessimists." Then his headmaster and hero, Cormell Price, was anything but a mainstream Victorian pedagogue: not in orders, like most headmasters then, not even a strong churchman, and anti-Establishment enough to organize a Workmen's Neutrality demonstration in Islington to protest against Beaconsfield's imperialism.

Kipling's study-sharers, too, were readers if not intellectuals like himself. 'Stalky' a fanatic for Surtees, 'M'Turk' for Ruskin, with the aesthetic interests this implied (he was the study decorator, the acknowledged expert on visual matters). L. C. Dunsterville, the original of Stalky, and G. C. Beresford, the original of M'Turk, both much later wrote books about their schooldays and their friendship with Kipling. Beresford's account is long-winded and uninspired and (although his drawings of 'Gigger' and others in the book are naturally interesting) adds little to what we know from Kipling. But Dunsterville's exploits in the army provided a remarkable example of stalkiness in real life and justified
all that Kipling felt and said about the school's capacity to train boys for the future; in Dunsterville's case, a very particular future. Kipling himself wrote about the school - the 'real', not the fictional, school - six years before Stalky & Co. first appeared, in an essay entitled "An English School", first published in 1893 and later collected in *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides*; and in *Something of Myself* the chapter called "The School Before its Time" has more to say about it. The discrepancies between 'real life' and fiction closely based on memories of it, and between Kipling's own memories and those of his friends, are, for the enthusiast, fascinating to follow in detail; and there is plenty of detail available. What is clear from both the real-life accounts and from Stalky & Co. itself is that the atmosphere of this unusual school, or at least of *Stalky and Co's Study No. 5*, must have been remarkably unlike that of the average public school of the time. For one thing, there were none of the usual compulsory parades, uniforms, bands, flags, and propaganda; there was no obvious militarism in spite of the school's army connections; and there was no fagging.

Nor was either school - the real one or the fictional Coll which, physically, was exactly the same - in size and shape and general appearance like the conventional public school. No elms or quadrangles or spaciousness, no ancient buildings or ivy-covered walls. 'Twelve bleak houses by the shore' Kipling called it in his dedicatory verses to the book; in other words, a row of seaside boarding houses, which had been adapted for this purpose. He seems to have enjoyed stressing its difference from other schools, its roughness and even scruffiness, the untamed boy material it was given to work on. In atmosphere and effect he made it tougher and coarser than it need have been, noisier, more violent, and deliberately more excitable. Why was this and what was Kipling trying to say by using what Andrew Rutherford has called 'a sophisticated Philistinism, a deliberate brutality of speech [which he suggests] is one of the most unpleasant features of *Stalky & Co*. (183) Partly, of course, it was for dramatic effect, the effect achieved with less artistry by children's comics, by all knockabout narrative. High spirits and excitement arouse a response in the reader and many readers of all ages and certainly both sexes have been moved, like the velvet-suited hero of a once-famous school story, *The Bending of a Twig*, to a partisan passion for Stalky's doings and to shouting 'Go it, Stalky!' as he does, if only to get back at authority. Partly it is an excuse to mock, not the boys Kipling
approved of, who went through the system and came out on top in the Empire, but the
prigs and conformers, those who lacked the aggressive, extrovert qualities he admired,
who cheered at house-matches and behaved like the good boys of mainstream school
stories. But partly, it may have compensated for his own sense of inadequacy in a
community where he could not belong, being psychologically an outsider, an artist in the
wrong place, and physically incompetent: `trained as an officer who could never have a
regiment, a ruler with no one to rule, an artist who must on no account betray his
emotions,' as Philip Mason puts it (310).

And clearly, for all its loud-mouthed, even knockabout qualities, the writing in
_Stalky & Co._ is on a very different level from that of other school stories (as it could
hardly fail to be, coming from Kipling's hand). Edmund Wilson called it `from the artistic
point of view, certainly the worst of Kipling's books: crude in writing, trashy in feeling,
implausible in a series of contrivances that resemble moving picture "gags" (Rutherford
23) But his dislike of it made Wilson blind to some of Kipling's finest descriptions of
natural scenery (the sea, above all) and a fluent, intensely observant style that is anything
but crude in its use of detail and of certain aspects of boy behaviour, seen not exactly
from boy-level but with a persuasive understanding of boy nature.

Of course _Stalky & Co._ was selective, as public school itself was selective in
taking boys out of their natural surroundings and subjecting them to one of the most
artificial disciplines and rule-ridden systems ever devised as a training of the young. It
took, as school took, only certain parts of a boy's nature, spirit, and personality. The
domestic, the familial, the feminine, the humdrum, everyday, uncompetitive aspects of his
being were all discarded and life was lived in dramatic, highly charged, competitive
circumstances where keeping one's end up mattered supremely and the lonely,
uncomfortable eminence, the responsibilities and urgencies and decisions that would be
part of an administrative or military life in the empire (or indeed anywhere else in the
world, away from home) were all foreshadowed.

School was like that, in Kipling's day, and _Stalky & Co._ reflected the reality. Self-
respect, a proud reserve, a decent degree of loyalty, keeping one's mouth shut when
necessary was counted. The values are described by words like honor, truthfulness, loyalty, manliness, pride, straightforwardness, courage, self-sacrifice, and heroism in Stalky & Co. These virtues exist as active and credible possibilities in the world of Stalky & Co. The selectiveness of Stalky & Co was a direct result of the age - its taboos, its restrictions, even its schools - but because Kipling’s gifts always took him, sometimes despite himself, beyond these restrictions, his pin-hole view of the world from Stalky & Co. opened out on to an immense panorama of life and experience beyond school.

III. Historical Tales

Kipling’s *Puck of Pook's Hill* is a historical fantasy book containing a series of short stories set in different periods of English history. In *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) two English children, a boy Dan and a girl Una, have a series of magical encounters, round and about their father's estate, with people of many races—British, Pictish, Roman, Saxon, Norman, Jewish—whose stories are woven into the continuing texture of English history. These are books for children in so far as nothing is admitted to them that is unfit for the knowledge and attention of children. They are books for mature readers because Kipling has written into them convictions to which his own mature faith is given. It is a faith that a nation and a civilization, once painfully forged, will survive only through as many generations as are prepared to meet new conditions and new challenges armed with all the strength and wisdom that tradition and custom provide. *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies* are classic children's books which speak powerfully to adult readers.

Kipling’s approach, as a writer, to the past, and especially to the English past is presented in *Puck of Pook's Hill* and its sequel; *Rewards and Fairies*. Kipling’s achievement was intensely individual and was also shaped by his times. In few eras history has been taken more seriously, by more intelligent people, than it was in Victorian Britain. It studied the events of the past, the record of those events, the evolution of human societies, or the investigation and discussion of events, records and evolution by great historians. This preoccupation with history began with the Romantics, Walter Scott being in this respect much the most influential of them, but it was reinforced by countless other stimuli. It was a European-wide phenomenon, as such names as Marx, Hegel,
Ranke, Tolstoy, Dumas and Tocqueville (among many others) sufficiently demonstrate, but the researcher will glance merely at the British background. In Britain, then, historical consciousness was largely coloured by such factors as awareness that Britain (the Victorians always said 'England') had become the greatest power in the world; and that the British Empire was the largest in history; and the belief that this greatness was both caused and validated by the evolution of British law, British freedom, and British Protestantism. The British were intensely nationalistic, and looked to history to vindicate their nationalism by providing suitable myths (King John signing Magna Carta at Runnymede, for instance; the House of Commons defying King Charles when he tried to arrest the Five Members; Queen Elizabeth rallying her troops at Tilbury). At the same time, antiquarianism was giving way to professional and scientific historical writing and investigation; and the great debate over evolution meant that some of the best minds of the age were beginning to look to history for help in investigations (such as that into the Industrial Revolution and its consequences) more searching than had ever been attempted before. In the late nineteenth century, when Kipling was young, history was one of the most exciting of all the arts and sciences.

In the Puck books there was an intellectual world in which Kipling worked, but it does not explain his inspired imaginative response, which was an essential part of his genius, almost as much as his instinct to convey his responses in memorable words and inventions. He was so successful in this undertaking that he compels his readers' imagination in their turn. His vision of the past, as he realized it on paper, still becomes ours as we read and surrender to his spell. When he turned to the past, in verse or in prose, he always made sure that he was adequately informed for the job: well-information which stimulated his writing, as when his settlement at Burwash, in the Sussex Weald, stimulated the Puck stories:

Just beyond the west fringe of our land, in a little valley running from Nowhere to Nothing-at-all, stood the long, overgrown slag-heap of a most ancient forge, supposed to have been worked by the Phoenicians and Romans and, since then, uninterruptedly till the middle of the eighteenth century. The bracken and rush-patches still hid stray pigs of iron, and if one scratched a few inches through the rabbit-shaven turf, one came on the
narrow mule-tracks of peacock-hued furnace-slag laid down in Elizabeth's day. The ghost of a road climbed up out of this dead arena, and crossed our fields, where it was known as The Gunway and popularly connected with Armada times ...Then, it pleased our children to act for us, in the open, what they remembered of A Midsummer Night's Dream... And in a near pasture of the water-meadows lay out an old and unshifting Fairy Ring. You see how patiently the cards were stacked and dealt into my hands? (Myself186).

But Kipling never renounced the freedom of the artist. All his work is notable for what has often been called his knowingness - his hoard of recondite facts, eagerly collected, which he uses to give interest and conviction to his narratives. This is as true of Kim as of his Great War stories; as of Captains Courageous. Yet if the work in hand required him to take liberties with facts, he took them. His frequent historical inaccuracy was like that of his limitations in depiction of India in his stories. His characteristic way with the past is demonstrated in one of his early tales, “The Dream of Duncan Parrenness.”(Life's Handicap399-407). In it, young Parrenness (a name presumably adopted, or invented, because of its suggestion of 'barrenness') meets in a dream the spectre of his older self, the self he will become, to which he is forced to surrender his trust in men, his faith in women, his soul and his conscience: receiving in return only a dry piece of his daily bread. As a tale of the supernatural it is quite as effective as Henry James's “The Jolly Corner” which it strongly resembles. It is also noteworthy because Kipling very carefully locates Parrenness in time. He is identified as a writer for the East India Company in the days of Warren Hastings (Governor-General of Bengal 1773-85) and Kipling uses the tale to sketch a thoroughly unflattering account of Calcutta at that time. He is challenging his Anglo-Indian contemporaries to ask themselves if they are any better than their forerunner, Duncan Parrenness, who went to India in the 18th century solely to make money, and gave as little to the country as he received. Parrenness is the very antithesis of the kind of disinterested zealous Indian Civil Service officer that Kipling so admired. The past is used to make a strong political point about the Late Victorian present. This approach dominated most of Kipling’s subsequent writing about history.
'Duncan Parrenness' is a rare story. Kipling did not again turn to a subject from the past for many years. He was too much caught up in the great tide of contemporary history which was sweeping the British Empire to the highest point of its splendour and prestige. But he was not one to be taken in by mere glitter, and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 filled him with apprehension, famously expressed in "Recessional":

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre...

"Recessional" is not exactly an historical poem, except in the sense that its great impact on publication made it a part of British history, but it is full of apprehensive historical awareness. It is not surprising that it was, apparently, in the same year that Kipling began to think of writing something about the Roman Empire and started reading Edward Gibbon's classic account of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* written between 1776 and 1788 (Lycett 357).

But it was not until 1904, when he was well-established at Burwash, that he seriously followed up the idea. At about that time his cousin Ambo Poynter, after hearing him talk of Roman stories, suggested that he write about 'an old Centurion of the Occupation telling his experiences to his children;' and he gave Kipling the name 'Parnesius'. It may be significant that Ambo's father, Edward, was the painter of that famous work, 'Faithful unto Death', which shows a heroic Roman sentinel in Pompeii stoically abiding his death at his post, as Vesuvius erupts. The rest was suggested by the land, waters and place-names around Burwash. The eventual outcome was *Puck of Pook's Hill* published in 1906, and *Rewards and Fairies*, published in 1910.

It is important to remember that Kipling's use of the past in the Puck books is that he is writing fantasy, not history. Kipling claimed that he was simply trying to give children a taste for the past, and for such readers as the young Rosemary Sutcliff, later a distinguished historical novelist, he succeeded (Sutcliff 53). But he also did much more,
and his method was poetic, not academic. It was also characteristic of his genius. Such late stories as "The Janeites" and "Fairy-Kist" are celebrations of particular writers and their influence on life, but the same might almost be said of Puck. The world of the fantasy is saturated in books.

She is not any common earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye
Where you and I will fare. (Puck93)

The book-magic: grammar, Latin, literature; understanding, power, and delight. This is the standard which Kipling set himself.

The first figure to step out of Gramarye is Puck himself, heralded by the noise of a watermill at work 'which sounded like bare feet running on hard ground.' (Puck 6) As a literary achievement he is surely flawless: his epiphany to the children, Dan and Una, is entirely convincing, though not, apparently, to everyone's taste. There was a great vogue for demigods in Edwardian literature, as the works of E. M. Forster, Kenneth Grahame, James Barrie, Max Beerbohm (Zuleika Dobson) and Thomas Hardy (The Dynasts) all attest. Puck was apparently inspired by E. Nesbit's *Phoenix and Psammead*, magical and immortal creatures who intrude on the commonplace lives of modern middle-class children. Kipling's sprite is the most convincing of the lot, largely because Shakespeare has done most of the work: we have met Puck before, and recognise him as soon as he appears out of the bushes. Historical accuracy may not be there but the literary accuracy is perfect.

In 1907, a year after the publication of Puck, E. Nesbit brought out The House of Arden in which the white Mouldiwarp, "badge of Arden's house", takes three children into various past epochs. He strongly resembles Puck.

The first story which Puck tells, "Weland's Sword" has great charm, but to a historian it is such a jumbled up thing that one is tempted to suppose that Puck made up
the whole thing. The informed adult mind {Kipling did say that the tales were meant for
grown-ups as well as children.} (Myself/190) must be bothered by Kipling's high-handed
invention, which seems to invite us to believe that the Anglo-Saxons were invading
Britain (always called Old England) round about the time that Jesus was born, if not
earlier, and brought a god called Weland the Smith with them. Kipling establishes
Weland in the Burwash valley by a piece of false etymology (deriving modern
Willingford from Wayland's Ford); his version of Weland (Volundr) is a travesty of the
original, a grim figure in one of the grimmest legends of the North. In all this the liberty
of the artist seems to have turned into licence: he is deliberately misleading about history.
From Kipling’s point of view the gallimaufry was necessary to establish the machinery of
his tales, and some of their symbolism: the magic sword had to be forged and given to
Hugh the Saxon, and the whole business is related with happy skill. It almost convinces,
and anyway it is mere prologue: the book does not get really under way until the
appearance of the first revenant called up by Puck, Sir Richard Dalyngridge.

The invention of Sir Richard, a Norman knight who, it is imagined, became Lord
of the Manor of Burwash (though that name is nowhere used in the Puck books) after
William the Conqueror's victory at Hastings, seems to have been inspired by another
once-famous painting, Millais's "Sir Isumbras at the Ford" (which in turn was inspired by
a mediaeval chivalric romance). So much would have been palpable to many of Puck's
first readers. Kipling exerts all his literary art and power to paint the little river Dudwell,
its meadows and waters and over-hanging trees, in the best pre-Raphaelite manner, and
his description of Sir Richard and his horse advertises the identification, though Millais's
Sir Isumbras wore plate-armour:

A huge grey horse, whose tail-hairs crinkled the glassy water, was
drinking in the pool, and the ripples about his muzzle flashed like melted
gold. On his back sat an old, white-haired man dressed in a loose glimmer
gown of chain-mail. He was bare-headed, and a nut-shaped iron helmet
hung at his saddle-bow. His reins were of red leather five or six inches
deep, scalloped at the edges, and his high padded saddle with its red girths
was held fore and aft by a red leather breastband and crupper (Puck/36)
Una spots the likeness to Sir Isumbras at once: Kipling, throughout the Puck books, was eager to acknowledge his debts. (Sir Richard's resembles to Lewis Carroll's White Knight). The children meet Sir Richard in a dreamlike summer afternoon, but the knight's tale is not dreamlike at all. Nor is it particularly historical, if by that we mean true to the probabilities. The story is set going by a string of coincidences, but the real difficulty, is the unlikelihood that on the very morrow of Hastings the Conqueror would have allowed one of his knights and thirty men-at-arms to abscond from the march on London to establish themselves on a Sussex estate. Kipling probably realised this, but must have felt that it didn't matter: all he wanted was to show how, with decent behaviour on both sides, conquerors and conquered could come together to live as one people. 'I am not Norman, Sir Richard,' says his overlord, the great baron Gilbert De Aquila, 'nor Saxon, Sir Hugh. English am I' (Puck119) There is no historical precision here.

To begin with De Aquila himself: the name has been Latinized but there actually was a Gilbert de L'Aigle (L'Aigle being a place in Normandy). It was his grandfather, not his father, who was killed at Hastings. He had a wife and several sons, one of whom, Richer, figures in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, where the account of his career precisely illustrates the sort of problem that led Kipling's Gilbert to cry (most improbably for a Norman baron) 'a pest - a pest on Normandy, for she will be our England's curse this many a long year!' (Puck107). Richer rebelled against King Henry I, King Stephen and King Henry II in turn, was twice deprived of his lands in Sussex and had his castle in France burned down. He was a pious man, a great benefactor of monasteries, but on the whole seems to have been a steady disruptor of the public peace, in both England and France. No historian would have treated this information in Kipling's cavalier fashion: that of an imaginative writer, claiming the same liberty as would a composer of opera, a playwright, a painter, or a screenwriter for a movie. He was within his rights, but a historian cannot quite approve. The larger picture also contradicts Kipling's fiction. The Conqueror tried at first to rule with the co-operation of his new subjects, but after two years of plots and rebellion abandoned the attempt: by the year of his death the ruling class was almost exclusively Norman. Yet Kipling's fable need not be condemned by these details. He wanted to show that the Saxons and the Normans were destined to become one people, as they did; he crammed a process that took three
generations into the span of the lifetime of Sir Richard (and Sir Hugh, and De Aquila), and taught the lesson in such a way that his readers would never forget it. He also wanted to show that the basis of the eventual English identity was respect for the custom of the country, the necessity to which all intruders, even Norman knights and barons must adapt. It was a parable for imperialists: no doubt Kipling wanted to believe that the British in India and elsewhere behaved like Dalyngridge, at any rate at their best. It is the same message implied in "The Dream of Duncan Parrenness."

Next to this noble myth-making Kipling's inaccuracy about details can, and perhaps should be discounted. Throughout the Puck books he refers to the battle of Hastings as the battle of "Santlache" (though he slips into using "Hastings" once or twice in "The Tree of Justice", the last of the Puck tales). This, it is safe to say, was a name never used by anybody else, in any century. E.A. Freeman, historian of the Norman Conquest (his great book was published in 1875), following Ordericus Vitalis, insisted on calling the battle "Senlac", for which he was severely and convincingly criticised by J.H.Round (333-40). But even Freeman never called it "Santlache". However, he did mention "Santlaches" as one of several names for the south-eastern part of the town of Battle. It is easy to guess what happened. Kipling knew better than to use "Senlac", but he liked the idea of a French name for a French victory which would add a touch of distance, even mystery to what is, after all, the greatest cliche in English history. "Does that mean the battle of Hastings - Ten Sixty-Six?" Una whispered. (Kipling, Puck 39). He liked to use what, according to Freeman, was a local name; as a fluent French speaker he may also have liked its simultaneous connotations of cowardice, health and sanctity; and he may have reflected that he was taking no more of a liberty with the facts than had the professional scholar, Freeman himself.

The Dalyngridge story, "The Knights of the Joyous Venture", stands somewhat apart from the others. In Puck of Pook's Hill as a whole Kipling was trying to suggest the character of ancient, mediaeval and early modern history as it impinged on Burwash. So he may have felt that he had to say something about the Danes (or Norsemen, or Vikings) who, whatever their piratical misdeeds, became part of the English people. If so, he is to be commended for his ingenuity: he plunges Sir Richard and Sir Hugh into a Viking
expedition down the west coast of Africa in quest of gold. This gives the Norsemen full credit for their courage and seamanship (qualities which were to recur in the English story) but evades the need to say anything about their bloodthirsty raiding propensity, which terrorized the coasts of northern Europe for more than three centuries. These Vikings are traders. The device also implies the excellent point that Norse voyaging did not cease after the battle of Hastings. But such considerations were probably, at best, secondary to Kipling, if he thought of them at all. As is demonstrated by his earlier tale, "The Finest Story in the World", he had long been fascinated by the Vinland sagas and by Longfellow's handling of the material. In the nineteenth century Longfellow was as popular as Kipling was to become in the twentieth, but his popularity is now much less comprehensible. But his influence is as palpable, and as frankly acknowledged, in the "Joyous Ventrure," as it is in "The Finest Story." He is the link between the children's exploring games (they call their canoe "The Long Serpent", from "King Olaf's Saga", and read "Othere" to Sir Richard) and the knights' voyage south. The quest for gold leads to a fight with gorillas on the banks of the river Volta, gorillas frankly borrowed from another nearly-forgotten author, R.M. Ballantyne. The only respectable historical source which Kipling may have used is "The Seafarer", the Old English poem which seems to lie behind the wonderful "Harp-Song of the Dane Women", perhaps the best poem in "Puck", and one of those most accurately evocative of a past: "What is a woman that you forsake her, And the hearth-fire and the home-acre, To go with the old grey Widow-maker?"

If Kipling really was drawing on "Seafarer" it suggests an extra historical depth to his tale, for the first Angles and Saxons were in their time piratical seafarers like the Vikings, and perhaps the "Harp Song" hints at this. And so, perhaps, does the name given to the Viking skipper, "Witta", which is English rather than a Norse name, and suggests its bearer's cunning and sea-skill.

The last Dalyngridge story in "Puck" (the last of all ends Rewards and Fairies) tells of the fate of Sir Richard's African gold. "The Treasure and the Law" always struck the author, he says, as "too heavy for its frame."(Myself189). He may have meant several things by this (his habit of discussing his work in pictorial metaphors is not always enlightening) but among them he surely intended the judgement that "The Treasure" was
too large and sombre a theme for the light-hearted world of Puck and the children. The tale introduces Magna Carta as the culmination of the process that Kipling saw flowing from 1066 onwards by which Normans and Saxons, barons and commoners, kings and people, came together under law. ['Weland gave the Sword! The Sword gave the Treasure, and the Treasure gave the Law. It's as natural as an oak growing,' is how Puck puts it.] By a fine stroke of the historical imagination the coming of the Great Charter is linked with the persecution of the Jews under King John: a Jew helps to write the Charter and, by denying John the treasure, coerces him into accepting it. In this way Kipling makes the point that the story of the Jews was part of the story of Britain.

He was wise, but he was not wise enough to overcome his anti-semitism. When he wrote of Kadmiel, the hero of "The Treasure and the Law", he exercised what Rosemary Sutcliff was to call one of his greatest gifts, 'his extraordinary power of getting under the skin of man or beast, time or place or situation; he entered fully into Kadmiel's point of view (that of a lifelong victim of persecution), gave him perhaps the fullest idiolect of any of the characters in the Puck books, and through Kadmiel's mouth makes a trenchant case against the violent, ignorant, bigoted English of King John's time. He performed a similar feat a couple of years later, writing of a Jewish family in "The House Surgeon." (Sutcliff 34)

But with the other side of his head Kipling seems early to have picked up a set of cheap and ugly notions about Jews that he never had the sense to discard. In the late nineteenth century it was widely believed in Europe and the United States that "the Jews" through their command of high finance exercised an occult influence, even control, over states and nations. Traditional hatred of the village money-lender (a job which had been forced on Jews rather than sought by them) began to masquerade as modern economic analysis. Kipling subscribed to this nonsense, as "The Song of the Fifth River," the poem which he attached to "The Treasure and the Law," as well as the story itself, demonstrates. Still more inexcusably, he exploited one of the oldest popular libels by having Kadmiel actually poison a well. Admittedly, the poison is not lethal and Kadmiel's cause is good, but that hardly justifies Kipling.
Worst of all, when in his story he shows Jews gathering behind locked doors in Spain to settle the fate of the world (‘...peace or war decided, not once, but many times, by the fall of a coin spun between a Jew from Bury and a Jewess from Alexandria’) (Kipling *Puck* 290). He lets his otherwise excellent illustrator, H.R. Millar — who was also E. Nesbit's illustrator, illustrate it with a sinister drawing of fur-robed, hook-nosed plotters which would not have been out of place in a Nazi propaganda sheet.

Nor does Kipling improve matters by making Kadmiel and his associate Elias mouthpieces for his deep suspicion and dislike of modern democracy: "The people are tenfold more cruel than Kings." (*Diversity* 44) Quotations from Magna Carta ("To none will we sell, refuse or deny right or justice"), or a vivid vision of Kadmiel as like 'a Moses in the picture-bible' hardly make up for such tendentiousness. (*Puck* 296). This story disfigures *Puck of Pook's Hill*. Its only historical value is that it illustrates the muddle and obstinacy of the anti-semitic mentality.

The central chapters of *Puck of Pook's Hill* are devoted to the tale of Parnesius the centurion, the figure with whom the idea of the book began. They seem by all accounts to be the most popular portion among readers. In his biography of Kipling Charles Carrington remarks:

In the whole range of Rudyard Kipling's work, no pieces have been more effective in moulding the thought of a generation than the three stories of the centurions defending Hadrian's Wall during the decline of the Roman Empire ...The story of the centurion's task is told as a panegyric of duty and service which press their claims all the more urgently when leaders fail to lead and statesmen study only their own careers. 'Kipling', he says elsewhere, created 'a dynamic myth', which strengthened the nerve of many young soldiers in 1914, and therefore 'it mattered little that Rudyard's Roman soldiers of the fourth century too much resembled subalterns of the Indian Army.' (381)

The power of the centurions' story cannot be denied, but it is almost pure romance. Parnesius and Pertinax are historically incredible, like the Three Musketeers, and just as fascinating. Their inauthenticity bothers no-one. It is hardly worth demonstrating this
proposition at length, and everyone will make allowances for all the archaeological
discoveries made in the century since Kipling wrote: there were many things that he could
not know. Sometimes he guessed correctly: recent scholarship has established that,
contrary to what was long thought, Roman control of the Wall was re-established after the
fall of Magnus Maximus, and was perhaps not lost during his reign (Salway 405)

But it must be plainly stated that Kipling's picture of Roman Britain in the late
fourth century is misleading but it isn't inaccurate. For instance, Kipling has much to say
about the Germanic immigrants and invaders who eventually settled thickly in the east
and south of Britain and founded the realm of England. They are a much-debated
historical topic, and Kipling is not to blame for simplifying it by presenting the
newcomers simply as barbarian invaders, when in fact many of them may have been
mercenaries in the service of Rome. But his characters invariably refer to the intruders as
"The Winged Hats", in allusion to the headgear that he bestows on them. This is absurd:
Romans and Picts knew the difference between hats and helmets, and so do English
children. And even "Winged Helmets" would have been erroneous: it was nineteenth
century painters and stage designers who gave the Anglo-Saxons (and, for that matter, the
Goths, the Franks and the Vikings) winged helmets: the barbarians of history never knew
such things. The Romans referred to all their Northern seafaring enemies as, simply,"Saxons" - the People of the Knife. It would have been in better taste for Kipling to do the
same - but knives are not nearly so picturesque as winged helmets. He also describes the
Winged Hats as coming in fleets of "raven-winged" ships to land in what is now Scotland.
He is wrong on two counts: none of the ships of the North was rigged with sails until
c.600, and the thrust of the Saxon attack was usually directed at Gaul and Kent, as the
story of Hengest and Horsa implies. The thrilling tale of the Saxons' assault on Hadrian's
Wall is therefore unlikely to the point of impossibility (the Picts and the Scots were the
enemies there).

Similar objections could be made to Kipling's presentation of many other matters,
but Kipling was creating a myth, and as Carrington says, "A myth-maker has the right to
arrange his material (Carrington, 8), more than anywhere else in Puck of Pook's Hill, we
can see what he meant when he said .Eventually everything he wrote between the Second
Boer War and 1914 was intended to strengthen the British Empire. Ever since the Diamond Jubilee he had been haunted by the knowledge that empires and their glory are transient, and that Britain might already be following Rome, as in the poem which serves as the Prelude to *Puck of Pook's Hill*:

Cities and thrones and powers  
Stand in Time's eye  
Almost as long as flowers,  
Which daily die (139).

Ever since "Recessional" he had been afraid that the British might bring about the fall of their empire through the degeneration of their character and society:

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget - lest we forget!

It had happened to Rome. And everything which occurred in the decade between "Recessional" (1897) and the publication of *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) - Britain's less-than-impressive conduct of the war in South Africa, for instance, or the installation of a Liberal government, which happened while he was actually writing *Puck of Pook's Hill*, confirmed him in his fears. More, he was becoming increasingly apprehensive of the threat from imperial Germany, a threat to which most of his countrymen seemed blind. Ever more stridently he strove to warn them. The Parnesius tales were part of his campaign of admonishment: 'Kipling claimed he did not intend to write parables, 'but when situations are so ludicrously, or terribly, parallel ...what can one do? (Gilmour 173).

But perhaps the parallels were not quite what he thought. They may have been between interpretations, not events. Kipling was devoted to Gibbon, but in "Parnesius" he was putting to work, for the sake of the British Empire, an un-Gibbonian, universally accepted nineteenth-century myth, that the Fall of Rome could be explained entirely by the moral degeneracy of the Romans.

Given these concerns, it isn't surprising that once more literature, not history, is in
the ascendant. "A Centurion of the Thirtieth" opens with an invocation of Macaulay's Horatius, who kept the bridge "in the brave days of old." Horatius himself is not mentioned in the quotations from the lay which bears his name, (Puck141-2) but all Kipling's likely readers in 1906 would have recognised them and their source, and some of them might later have reflected on the aptness of the allusion, for Parnesius and Pertinax kept the Wall. (Kipling could easily have written a new Lay of Ancient Rome on the subject). Heroic legend was an excellent instrument for instilling patriotic virtue. But Kipling's art may have sabotaged his message. Romans, like Jews, were a subject that he could only approach imaginatively, and the results could be disconcerting. Young readers might be inspired by the example of Parnesius, and no doubt many of them noticed Kipling's carefully detailed parallels between the Roman and the British empires (British schools at that period were full of imperial propaganda). But they may have been perplexed by, for example, the portrayal of Maximus, the military commander in Britain who, according to Kipling, emptied Britain of soldiers so that he could follow his destiny, (Puck160) and make himself Emperor, with the inevitable result, as he was warned by the father of Parnesius, that the Picts and the Winged Hats attempted an invasion which nearly succeeded. Parnesius and Pertinax are devoted to Maximus, admire him all but blindly, and serve him to his death and beyond; but readers wondered if Maximus deserved their devotion, and was not in fact the architect of all their troubles. Kipling was well aware of the contradiction, and underlined it; but it rather destroys his moral. He could not help sympathising with the Napoleonic grandeur of Maximus, but is forced to raise the question, whether the cause of Rome and Maximus really a good one. The issue was made more difficult by what seems to be a contemporary reference, made in "A Pict Song." The Picts figure prominently in the stories, particularly through their leader Allo. They bear little resemblance to the Picts of history but in "A Pict Song" they speak eloquently for all colonised peoples, and especially for the Irish, whom Kipling almost certainly had in mind:

No indeed! We are not strong
But we know Peoples that are.
Yes, and we'll guide them along,
To smash and destroy you in War!
We shall be slaves just the same?
Yes, we have always been slaves,
But you - you will die of the shame,
And then we shall dance on your graves! (Puck 226).

He also included "A British-Roman Song (A.D. 406)", which can be read as implying that Parnesius was deluded. Borrowing his form from Horatius Flaccus (the poem may be reckoned the first of his many pastiches of Horace) Kipling celebrates the greatness of "the very Rome", and proclaims it:

Soon to send forth again a brood,
Unshakeable, we pray, that clings
To Rome's thrice-harnessed hardihood
In arduous things.. (Puck 163).

But the date attached to the poem is confusing. The prayer was to be denied. 406 (fifteen hundred years exactly before the publication of "Puck") was followed by 410, when the city of Rome was sacked by Alaric the Goth and the Emperor Honorius found himself unable to help the beleaguered British-Romans, now naked to their enemies because another ambitious general (Constantine III) had again emptied the island of troops in another ultimately unsuccessful attempt to seize the purple. "A British-Roman Song" can be read as Kipling's appeal to the islanders of his own day to be true to their past and to their imperial mission; but it is hardly hopeful. In his zeal to drive home the virtues of duty and service, and to warn his contemporaries, Kipling has conceded too much for the good of his case. The readers can conclude from his presentation that imperialism was intrinsically oppressive, selfish and incompetent and in spite of his purpose to celebrate imperial virtues, Kipling, by the sheer force of his imagination, almost Shavian in its power to present both sides of the question, achieves a memorably powerful and convincing account of the fall of the Roman Empire, of virtue's failure; an account which in this way resembles and complements his optimistic account of the founding of the kingdom of England in the Dalyngridge stories.
Two more tales from "Puck of Pook's Hill", "Hal o'the Draft" and "Dymchurch Flit." have a strong claim to be rated the best stories in the book. Kipling himself seems to have thought so: in *Something of Myself* he recounts with pride how his father relished "Hal o'the Draft" sufficiently to insert the description of Hal's 'little ivory knife, carved in the semblance of a fish'; and how of "Dymchurch Flit" 'with which I was always unashamedly content, he asked: 'Where did you get that lighting from?' (Myself110) In these tales Kipling's conception of the Puck books reaches full expression. "Hal," as a story, is chiefly concerned to poke fun at artistic self-importance; it may even be read as a self-satire:

Prophets have honour all over the Earth,
Except in the village where they were born;
Where such as knew them boys from birth
Nature-ally hold 'em in scorn. (*Puck*229)

The background of great deeds is remote, and, such as it is, was found by Kipling in Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, which prints the ballad of the Scottish pirate Sir Andrew Barton. A brilliant conceit links both Barton and Sebastian Cabot (seaman of Bristol, cartographer, and son of the discoverer of Newfoundland) to smuggling ironmasters in Sussex, and though set in the reign of Henry VII the story gives rise to one of Kipling's most delightful poems, "A Smuggler's Song":

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson, 'Baccy for the Clerk.
Laces for a lady; letters for a spy,
Watch the wall my darling while the Gentlemen go by!

This leaps straight into the eighteenth century. The great purpose and achievement of "Hal o'the Draft" is to bring the society of the Dudwell valley fully to life for the first time. The opening chapters of Puck of Pook's Hill had made a beginning, particularly in the descriptions of the river and the meadows beside it; building on that Kipling now
brings in the church, "St Barnabas" (St. Bartholomew in actuality), the farms, the orchards and, above all, the people, especially the rascally ironmaster John Collins, whose name Kipling had found on a tomb in St. Bartholomew’s: Orate p. Annema Jhone Coline. This inscription itself was to be used in Rewards and Fairies by Kipling. ([Rewards](#) 224)

This is history of a new kind. It merges imperceptibly with human geography, and leaves another ineradicable impression, of how the Weald lived and worked in the fifteenth century: “The valley was as full o' forges and fineries as a May shaw of cuckoos. All gone to grass now!” ([Puck](#) 237).

Kipling also manages to convey his own views on the nature of art, and what was the place of artists and craftsmen (he makes no distinction between them) in the last years before the Reformation, when Catholic England was still vigorous: “Half Oxford was building new colleges or beautifying the old, and she had called to her aid the master-craftsmen of all Christendie - kings in their trade and honoured by Kings” ([Puck](#) 233)

It is good nourishing historical fare, and looks forward to the method that Kipling was to use consistently in Rewards and Fairies. So does "Dymchurch Flit", but in several ways the purely historical achievement of that tale is even finer, which at first sight is strange since the story is blatantly fictional, except for those who believe in fairies. In it Kipling continues to build up his picture of Burwash, centring it on the figure of Hobden, the hedger and poacher. His ancestors have figured slightly in the earlier tales (there is a Hob o' the Dean in "Weland's Sword" and Ralph Hobden of the Forge in "Hal o' the Draft") and his friendship with the children has been solidly established, but now he takes centre stage, working in the oast-house during the hopping season. To him enters Tom Shoesmith, 'a grey-whiskered, brown-faced giant with clear blue eyes' ([Puck](#) 258) He is an old friend whom Hobden had correctly supposed to be dead: he is the latest revenant, but he is also Puck in disguise. For the children's benefit he tells the story of the fairies' farewell, when they fled England because of the hatreds and cruelties bred by the Reformation: 'Good-will among Flesh an' Blood is meat an' drink to 'em, an' ill-will is poison.' ([Puck](#) 267). Kipling makes his own fairy-story, but uses the traditional elements so skillfully that it is impossible not to accept it as a genuine folk-tale. There lies under the...
fairy-tale a subtle historical vision of one of the greatest breaches and discontinuities in
the island story:

'Queen Bess’s father' (actually Edward VI or his ministers) 'he used the
parish churches something shameful. Just about tore the gizzards out of I
dunnanmany. Some folk in England they held with 'en; but some they saw
it different, an’ it eended in ‘em takin’ sides an’ burnin’ each other no
bounds, accordin’ which side was top, time bein’. (That was what terrified
the 'Pharisees', or fairies.) They couldn’t abide cruel Canterbury Bells
ringin’ to Bulverhithe for more pore men an’ women to be burnded, nor
the King’s proud messenger ridin’ through the land givin’ orders to tear
down the Images.' (Puck267-8)

So they thronged into Romney Marsh, and eventually, with the help of the Widow
Whitgift and her two sons, escaped to France. It is a moving tale, and implies a severe
verdict on religious fabaticism, but its deepest meaning lies elsewhere. The late mediaeval
English Christianity was profoundly taken up with the cult of the dead. The living, to
shorten their sufferings in Purgatory, made charitable provision in their wills for schools,
hospitals and alms-houses; for prayers and ceremonies to save their souls; they faithfully
executed the behests of their predecessors and in return hoped that the dead, particularly
the sainted ones, would watch over them. All aspects of religious life were shaped by this
cult; it was truly a world where the dead and the living co-existed and communicated; a
world where death was implicitly believed to be a mere step from one form of existence
to another. All this was shattered for ever by the Reformation. Kipling's Pharisees, then,
may rightly be understood as an exact and powerful metaphor for the dead who were
being driven out of the churches and out of the country. It was Kipling's genius which
intuitively discovered it, perhaps by reflecting on what Bishop Corbet (1582-1635) meant
when he wrote "The Fairies' Farewell" (Farewell Rewards and Fairies...) which, like Sir
Andrew Barton, Kipling may first have discovered in the Reliques:

By which we note the fairies
Were of the old profession;
Their songs were Ave Maries,
Their dances were procession.
But now, alas! they all are dead,
Or gone beyond the seas,

In "Dymchurch Flit" Kipling does far more than stimulate a love of the past: he is conveying the nature of the great Tudor convulsion, and delicately provokes sensitive readers to reflect on the price of revolution and the nature of human society.

It is not clear whether Kipling from the first intended to write two volumes of Puck stories. (Carrington 378) But by the end of "Puck of Pook's Hill" his invention was in full flood, making a sequel inevitable. Though Kipling says that he was of two minds about the project. The new tales might not have been suggested by the land and history of Sussex, but merely by the scheme of the first volume. It would have been all too easy to turn the Puck device into a formula like Sherlock Holmes. But nothing of the kind happened. The stories in Reward and Fairies are as authentic as those in "Puck": they too realise an original vision. But it is a vision of a quite different kind. "Rewards" is much more like a conventional collection of short stories than is "Puck". Various threads connect the tales it contains with each other and with the earlier book, for example, as Kipling points out, the central moment of each one comes when the main character acts upon a necessity, crying out "What else could I have done?" (Puck160)

But Puck of Pook's Hill has a musical and a symphonic quality: themes are stated, and develop, and recur, and intermingle. It has three movements, the Norman Conquest, the fall of Rome, and the church in Tudor England. Perhaps this quality is the reason why the last story in "Rewards", the last Puck story of all, "The Tree of Justice" brings back Sir Richard Dalyngridge and the Norman theme. And all the themes are historical.

Rewards and Fairies quite lacks this quality except where its stories are deliberate sequels to some in "Puck". "The Wrong Thing" is a sequel to "Hal of the Draft", "Simple Simon" to "Dymchurch Flit," (In "Simple Simon" Protestants fleeing from persecution in Flanders are carried to safety in England by the young Francis Drake; the appearance in the tale of a Whitgift, a wise woman, makes the link with that of the fairies' flight in the
opposite direction unmissable). On the whole, where "Puck" was historical, "Rewards" is biographical. The historian, contemplating the book, sees not issues but incidents, life-stories out of which Kipling squeezes the last drops of vivid characterisation, drama and significance, but which, while illustrating the history of England, do not explicitly illumine it. The only theme seems to be the rise of the British Empire, and even that is not insisted upon: there is nothing much for historians to argue about. For the most part all they can do is praise Kipling's sustained portrayal of Sussex society through the centuries, and, if so disposed, itemise still more factual blunders. Kipling boasted that he had done so much preparatory research, in order to get things right, that "my old Chief would have been almost pleased with me," but his confidence was misplaced. In one respect, however, "Rewards" is thoroughly original, and achieves something that perhaps only Walter Scott of all British writers, could match. The fact that all topics are proper for historical study is triumphantly demonstrated by Rewards and Fairies. Kipling advertises his love of the English language and English literature, and imparts his love historically in this book. His revenant characters talk in modern idiom. Parnesius in "Puck" had been an exception to this rule, but in "Rewards" there is none. Even St Wilfrid, scholar and gentleman, does not talk quite like a modern prelate, and at one moment breaks into Yorkshire dialect. Kipling gives each century its own idiom, and manages to be both convincing and comprehensible. His procedures can be glimpsed in "Marklake Witches". The heroine of this touching story, Philadelphia, is dying of tuberculosis, though she does not know it (and nor does the listening Una). Her pathos is reinforced by the reader's perception that here, as in "They" and "Merrow Down", Kipling was giving expression to his tormenting sorrow for the death of his daughter Josephine, which had happened less than ten years previously. There is nothing over-emotional about her; she is a spirited creature, and tells her tale in a lively, comic tone; but one evening she performs on the harp to a select audience which includes Sir Arthur Wellesley. Kipling takes pains to give her a suitable song, written in the insipid and artificial style of the day (the year is that of Trafalgar) which, nevertheless, will make everyone cry, including his readers: "I have given my heart to a flower, Though I know it is fading away, Though I know it will live but an hour And leave me to mourn its decay! Ye desolate whirlwinds that rave, I charge you be good to my dear! She is all - she is all that I have, And the time of our parting is near!" (Rewards111)
Kipling wrote about these verses to an admirer soon after "Rewards" was published: Kipling had "glorious fun" when writing "Rewards" (Myself 191). and it was partly a matter of putting the English language through its paces, and conveying to the ignorant a realisation of what it was, what it could do and what it had done through the centuries. This is perhaps clearest in "A Doctor of Medicine", which tells how Nicholas Culpeper, the seventeenth-century astrologer physician, ended an outbreak of plague at Burwash during the Civil War. Kipling had loved Culpeper's writings for years. He did not believe in the astrology, but he was fascinated by Culpeper's botany and his language, and the tale and its accompanying verses gave his fascination its head. Kipling catches the man's diction perfectly. His Culpeper characterizes himself with every word he utters, whether he is addressing Dan and Una as if they were a public meeting ('And now, good people, give me leave to be particular in this case') or correcting himself when he carelessly refers to "the King" (being a supporter of the Parliament, he should have said 'the man Charles Stuart) or proclaiming that his hypothesis has been vindicated by 'divine astrology and humble search into the veritable causes of things - at the proper time - the sons of wisdom may combat even the plague', or just coughing pompously 'Ahem!', as a trick to catch the ear of the vulgar crowd. The utterance of Kipling's Culpeper takes us into a lost mental world as completely as any learned, laborious historian could do in the twenty-first century (Rewards 247-76).

Kipling does not stop there. Culpeper is perhaps his greatest linguistic triumph, but he also gives Elizabeth ("Gloriana") convincing personal utterance, and his Talleyrand, with his allusions to Candide and Dr Pangloss and "the noble Huron" talks plausibly like an eighteenth-century aristo, though as a piece of historical characterisation he is a failure:

Talleyrand of the bland and frozen face (what a poker-player he would have made!) was not the man to lose his temper with such a gipsy lad as Pharaoh Lee and threaten to kill him, nor would he have compared himself favourably on the point of gratitude with Napoleon, still less to the man's face, at least not if he wanted to be taken seriously (Rewards 181-212).
The poems which Kipling crams into his book are impressive (twenty-two sets of verses as compared to fifteen in "Puck"). Verse came to him easily, perhaps more easily than prose, and may have been a relief to him after the strict discipline to which he subjected his daemon in writing the "Puck" tales. The poems enlarge, or even burst, the bounds setup by the prose ("A Truthful Song") carries us as far as twentieth-century London, with its reference to 'building flats near the Marble Arch'. The verses on Queen Elizabeth ("The Looking-Glass") and Napoleon ("A Saint Helena Lullaby") drive home Kipling's sense of the significance of these figures.

"If-" is considered one of the most popular poems in the English language. Its success seems to have startled its maker. (Mysel/191) He wrote it in honour of Leander Starr Jameson, and in "Rewards" attached it to George Washington: it seems inappropriate to both of them, though the third verse may contain an allusion to Jameson's addiction to gambling, as well as to his notorious Raid:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss...

Rather more successful as a contribution to historical understanding is a second smugglers' song ("Poor Honest Men") which not only shows that Kipling, the lover of the unregenerate, never quite reformed, but gives a remarkably full account of the trade that was forbidden only so that the state could raise revenue - a point central to the politics of the eighteenth century, being one of the causes of the American Revolution. This is true historical education.

It must also be pointed out that in Rewards and Fairies, even more than in Puck of Pook's Hill, Kipling is exploring and reporting on Sussex as, in his youth, he had explored and reported on India. He enriched his map with each tale. He stretched his reach geographically - by the end he has taken his readers from the North Downs to the sea, from Romney Marsh to Selsey Bill; he demonstrated the great arc of continuity from the age of the Saxon settlement to the early twentieth century.
Hobden is the central figure, but it is remarkable how many other trades and occupations are displayed in the Puck books: shepherds, sailors, ironmasters, masons, smugglers, hop-pickers, poachers, millers, wood-carters, gamekeepers, gardeners, parsons, bricklayers, millwrights, shipwrights and Mr Springett, a builder, contractor and sanitary engineer who, even more than Hobden, acts as a firm link between the modern world and what went before.

The rapport between him and Hal o' the Draft, as Hal tells the absurd story of how he came to be knighted by Henry VII, is beautifully suggested. (Reward 57-80) The deliberate moral of this approach is twofold: craftsmen and labourers are the real heroes, the real builders of Sussex; and England exists both in space and time, and cannot be understood historically without taking both into account. An intelligent reader of Rewards and Fairies would surely develop a sense of social history. Kipling never claimed to be doing more than introducing his child-readers to the English past, but his method - combining dynamic tales with thick description was all his own.

Eventually the series turned itself off just as Kim had done' (Myself 191). The last of the stories, "TheTree of Justice," reiterates an old theme: Norman and Saxon together honour King Harold. King Harold has somehow survived the battle of Hastings and spent forty years as a half-witted wanderer from shrine to English shrine. He is now under the protection of Rahere, King Henry jester, a memorably-conceived character based, very loosely, on the founder of St Bartholomew's Hospital. In a set of related verses Kipling uses him to convey his view of depressive illness (Lycett 383) He himself had suffered from a bad attack in 1908:

Suddenly, his days before him and behind him seemed to stand Stripped and barren, fixed and fruitless, as those leagues of naked sand When St. Michael's ebb slinks outward to the bleak horizon-bound, And the trampling wide-mouthed waters are withdrawn from sight and sound. (Debits 139).

This poem was not published until 1926, in Debits and Credits where it is attached to "The Wish House", to which, in its celebration of love, it certainly belongs. It
demonstrates that the figures and themes of the past which Kipling had conjured up in the Puck books never lost their hold on his imagination, and even when the Puck books were finished might occasionally drive him into verse (another example is "A Departure", which reverts to the Winged Hats and was published in "Land and Sea Tales"). It was most plainly demonstrated when Rewards and Fairies was barely finished. Kipling had got to know a professional historian, C.R.L. Fletcher of Oxford, whom he found all too sympathetic. Fletcher was both a deep-dyed reactionary and a writer with a bold imagination. He was bringing out a four-volume "Introductory History of England" which Kipling liked, not least because for it Fletcher invented a Sussex village called Tubney, which he used to illustrate the impact of events and social change on ordinary English people. It was perhaps an idea suggested by "Puck", but if so Kipling did not mind. He wrote to Fletcher:

I make haste to offer you my most grateful thanks. When I think of the historical baled hay (in Epochs of 40 pages) that was fed to me in my youth I feel like asking for the heads of all my schoolmasters. (Pinney 238)

He agreed to look over the proofs of volume 4, especially the chapter on India (Pinney 362) Thus encouraged, and Fletcher suggested that Kipling compose some verses to enliven an infant history of England which he was also writing. Kipling leapt at the idea, and produced seventeen poems. A School History of England, by C.R.L. Fletcher and Rudyard Kipling, was published in 1911. Except financially (the book sold in large numbers for years) it was an almost entire failure. Whereas the Puck books had been generally welcomed and praised, and are still admired, the "History," on publication, was generally abused. The Manchester Guardian, the great Liberal paper, said it was "as nearly worthless as a book can be." (Gilmour 177) It has been largely ignored by critics and biographers. Its only interest nowadays (except as a cultural symptom of its times) lies in his verses, which are on a plane far above Fletcher's prose.

Kipling may have thought he had done with history, but history had not done with him. The Great War broke out in 1914, and young John Kipling immediately volunteered, and after some difficulties, occasioned by his poor eyesight, received a commission in the Irish Guards. He was killed at the battle of Loops in September, 1915. It was a blow from
which Kipling never really recovered, but he was not a man to let himself be defeated by any grief. As a tribute to John, and to his comrades, and to the cause for which they died, he agreed to write a history of the Irish Guards in the war, a laborious and distressing task which occupied him for the best part of six years. It appeared in 1923 and was his one work of straight history.

He did not claim to be historian. The title page of the work reads: "The Irish Guards in the Great War edited and compiled from their diaries and papers by Rudyard Kipling..." In his admirable introduction he refers to himself in the third person as, simply, "the compiler of these records." (Kipling, *Irish Guards* vi.) But this modesty must not mislead posterity. If nothing else of his writings survived, "The Irish Guards" would demonstrate his literary powers in the complete success with which he carried out his design, and in the high intelligence evident in the design itself. Edmund Blunden, poet, while commending the "decision and skill" of the writing, was to accuse Kipling of not understanding "the pandemonium and nerve-strain of war," of being unconvincing about "the multitudinous enigma of war atmosphere," (Green 332). But Kipling had anticipated the criticism in his discussion of what his sources told, and could not tell.

'...the only wonder to the compiler of these records has been that any sure fact whatever should be retrieved out of the whirlpools of war' and, as to atmosphere, 'one of the marvels of that marvellous time'(he is talking of the first year of the war) 'was the silence of those concerned on everything that might too much distress their friends at home.' He knew that a mere civilian could never do justice to the soldiers' experience, and how defective the surviving documents were: 'the men of '14 and '15, and what meagre records of their day were safe to keep, have long been lost'; and of the Irish Guards' total experience:'nor can any pen re-create that world's brilliance, squalor, unreason and heaped boredom.' (*The Irish Guards* vi)

Kipling faced the historian's eternal problem, and like all honest historians came to accept its constraints and do the best he could. The result was a book which only those interested in Kipling or the Great War can find readable, but for those so interested (not a small number) it is absorbing and moving. Particularly impressive is the way in which
Kipling keeps both his political and his personal concerns under control. As to politics and the conduct of the war he had strong views, but did his utmost to leave them out, or to make such statements as could not be avoided as moderate as possible.

This was not the Kipling of the pre-war polemics, and the book is all the better for it. One point which he did not discuss, because he took it for granted, but which nevertheless permeated every page, was that the war had to be fought and that the Allied cause was just. It is perhaps the most instructive of all points for modern readers, brainwashed as so many have been into an unearned and sentimental belief that the war was nothing but a pointless Hell, created by jingoistic politicians and incompetent commanders. Kipling's sober chronicle of one part of the vast struggle leaves such readers with no excuse for evading the real complexities of the tragedy. As to Kipling's personal tragedy, the loss of John, he is equally or more reticent, mentioning only that '2nd Lieutenant Kipling was wounded and missing' at Loos, and listing him in an appendix among the officers missing in the whole war (*Irish Guards*225). But it is not hard to sense Kipling's love reaching out to know and understand his son's life in the regiment, or to detect what memories lie behind the characterization of the letters home already quoted, and in the description of home-leave: “...where, under cover of a whirl of `entertainment', they and their kin wearied themselves to forget and escape a little from that life, on the brink of the next world, whose guns they could hear summoning in the silences between their talk.”(*Irish Guards* viii)

That was as near as Kipling came to openly putting his own feelings into his book, but they are the unacknowledged ground-bass of all its music. He veiled his politics and his emotions; he also did his utmost to discipline his style. He was surprisingly successful: "The Irish Guards" is narrated in plain, unemphatic, almost colourless language. Blunden thought that he was not successful enough, but today it is interesting to observe Kipling's sense of the canons that would soon be laid down by Ernest Hemingway in *A Farewell to Arms* indeed, in the introduction he partially anticipates Hemingway. “...in a life where Death ruled every hour, nothing was trivial, and bald references to villages, billets, camps, fatigues and sports, as well as hints of tales that can never now fully be told, carry each their separate significance to each survivor, intimate
and incommunicable as family jests” (Irish Guards xiv). Where the approach to history was concerned, Kipling was perhaps more of an antiquarian than anything else - except an imaginative writer.

Overall, it will be seen that Kipling revelled in history, used it for his own moral and political purposes, and brought it to life for his own time. For that very reason, his vision cannot carry full conviction to a later age, and in the end, perhaps, tells us more about Edwardian Britain than any other period. In this it is of a piece with all his other work, and historians of Edwardian Britain will always find it invaluable. But all historians will agree that, whatever its flaws, Kipling's treatment of history will always be worth reading, since it is not only brilliantly executed, but is inspired. It is characterized by a disinterested love of the past for its own.
Works Sited


