CHAPTER IV

FANTASY IN KIPLING'S HISTORICAL STORIES
Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies are probably, next to the Jungle Books, Kipling's most popular collections. Though the fairy Puck appears in all these tales, yet they are not fairy-tales in the traditional sense of the term. These tales belong more to the genre of Fantasy than to the genre of fairy-tales. Eric S. Rabkin and Tzvetan Todorov point out that in fairy tales we have a world of Enchantment. Here people show no astonishment at the talking flowers or beasts. They live in a world with foreknown and stable ground rules. Miracles, astonishing and central to the legends, are a matter of course in the fairy tale. The fairy tale hero does not ponder over the mysterious forces or where the helpers come from; everything he experiences seems natural to him and he is carried along by this step, which he has earned often without his knowledge. In other words, the world of the fairy-tales is more fantastic than the world of true Fantasy, yet it is a stable world that does not produce continuing astonishment. In Fantasies, the supernatural occurrences like the appearances of fairies and ghosts produce astonishment in the main characters who then
hesitate between believing or not believing this occurrence. This is what happens in Puck of Pooks's Hill and Rewards and Fairies.

We learn in the first tale "Weland's Sword" that Una and Dan were enacting the play Mid Summer Night's Dream to an audience of three cows in a meadow. As the young actors play the scene of the enchantment of Bottom - Dan playing Puck, Bottom and the fairies, Una Titania - the bushes part and out of them steps a "small, brown, broad-shouldered, pointy eared person with a snub nose, slanting blue eyes, and a grin that ran right across his freckled face." [PK. P.H., P.12]. It is the fairy Puck. Dan and Una don't take this appearance of fairy as something natural as the people of the Fairy-tale would have done. "The children looked and gasped. The small thing - he was no taller than Dan's shoulder - stepped quietly into the Ring....Still the children stared at him - from his dark, blue cap, like a big columbine flower, to his bare hairy feet." [PK.P.H., P.13]. Una said, "We always said we'd know exactly what to do; but - but now it seems all different somehow." [PK.P.H., P. 15]. Dan answered, "She means meeting a fairy. I never believed in them - not after I was six, anyhow." [PK. P.H., P.15]. Thus Dan and Una feel quite astonished at the appearance of the Fairy Puck and it is after a great hesitation that they accept this occurrence as real and are ready to listen to what Puck says.
Puck then introduces them, in separate yet connected stories to Romans, Normans, Saxons, Picts and Englishmen from different periods of the English history; and the Chief of these characters tell their own stories - grim, humorous and pathetic, in a manner illustrating the respective period of each. According to Eric S. Rabkin,

"Most Fantasies are atavistic, they hearken to an earlier historical era or an earlier personal era; both times are distinguished from the adult present in that they are not progressive times laden with responsibilities and future death. In atavism lies stability, and in atavistic times, imagination may play safely. Most Victorian authors, creating their own escapes, chose instead to seem to be addressing children."

Thus in Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies, we move back into time with the help of Puck's magic. Puck introduces Dan and Una to so many famous persons. His magic enables them to see many of the exciting events that have occurred over the past two thousand years. With the children, we the readers also escape from the present into the distant past.

Kipling has successfully used the fantastic idea of "time travel" in Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies. Puck, first of all, by means of the magic of Oak, Ash and Thorn, gives the children power,

"To see what you shall see and you shall hear what you shall hear, though it shall have happened three thousand years" [PK. P.H., P.18].

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The result is that from time to time, and in different places on the farm and in the fields, and the country about, they see and talk to rather interesting people. One of them is a Knight of the Norman Conquest, another a young Centurion of a Roman Legion, stationed in England, another a builder and decorator of King Henry VII's time; and so on and so forth. A year or so later, the children meet Puck once more and they are then older and wiser, and wear boots regularly instead of going barefooted when they get the chance. Puck is as kind to them as ever, and introduces them to more people of old days. Thus Kipling has used "history" for "content" and "fantasy" for "form" in these tales of Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies.

Moreover these stories are immensely packed and complex and go further than most novels, as does Wuthering Heights. They are rich in meanings like the animal tales of The Jungle Books. Dixon Scott has rightly said, "If the reader will turn back to those wise fairy-tales, he will see that each is really four-fold; a composite tissue made up of a layer of sunlit story (Dan's and Una's plane), on a layer of moonlit magic (plane of Puck), on a layer of history stuff (Rene's plane and Gloriana's), on a last foundation of delicately bedimmed but never doubtful allegory." We can take up a few stories from Puck of Pook's
Hill and Rewards and Fairies to see how they can be read on more than one level.

There are ten stories in Puck of Pook's Hill and ten in Rewards and Fairies. In one of these stories Puck takes the children back into the past. The other stories are narrated to the children by some figure from that time - three for example, by Parnesius, the Roman legionary officer; three by Sir Richard Dalyngridge, a Norman Knight; two superbly narrated by Pharaoh, the Anglo-French smuggler turned Pennsylvania tobacco merchant in the seventeen nineties; one by Culpeper telling of the plague in a Seventeenth Century Village, and one by St. Wilfrid - and so on through a wonderful array of voices.

Many of Kipling's most cherished themes are embodied in these stories - the obligation of obedience in the Roman wall stories; the special civilising contribution of the Jews to society in "The Treasure and the Law"; the terrible price to be paid by the individual for society's advances in "The Knife and the Naked Chalk"; the whole debate about the gipsy trail in life in "Brother Square Toes" and "A Priest in spite of Himself", where the super-gipsies Talleyrand and Napoleon are given life in a small time smuggler's tales; the tragic quality of loyalty in "The Tree of Justice."
Moreover, Kipling has presented a cyclical view of history in these tales. Angus Wilson believes that in these tales, Kipling has "most satisfactorily expressed through English history, his sense of civilization's constant renewal, and, in description, the English, especially the Sussex countryside, as the one constant." This cyclical view of history was a well-established theory of the nineteenth century, deriving, as Kipling derives his, from the decline of the Roman Empire. During the late nineteenth century, men who had lost faith in a benevolent ordering of the universe and could see nothing but chance where once had been the Divine Plan felt that their pessimism could be limited, at any rate in the short run, by a picture of historical civilizations rising and falling and being replaced by others. For imperialists, perhaps, to make such a comparison between Britain and Rome gave a comforting sense of accepting one's worst fears (the end of the British Imperial System) and yet having faith that the torch of law and order, decency and culture would not be for ever extinguished. As has often been pointed out, Kipling's arrangement of the stories in the collection Puck of Pook's Hill is very significant. The first story, "Weland's Sword" tells of the old heathen god's adaptation to a Christian world, and the next three stories show the return of law to the land after the Norman Conquest; only then does he go back to the fading out of law and order with the Roman
legions on the wall in the fifth century. Thus renewal is asserted from the start.

Another thing to be noted about these historical tales is the fact that Kipling has beautifully captured the spirit of Sussex and the country in a different way. The grasp and understanding of history which he displays in these tales is apt to be overlooked, since the stories are told to children - even after his direct statement in *Something of Myself*:

"Since the tales had to be read by children, before people realized that they were meant for grown ups... I worked the material in three or four overlaid tints and textures, which might or might not reveal themselves according to the shifting light of sex, youth and experience."\(^4\)

But as eminent a historian as G.M. Trevelyan declared his belief in the outstanding excellence of these stories in his Clark Lectures to the University of Cambridge in 1953:

"When he fell under the charm of rural Sussex, its folk like Old Hobden and their traditions, he had a sudden vision of the whole length of our island history. *Puck of Pook's Hill* is natural, beautiful, gentle - if you like childlike. In a setting of fairyland and childhood, the very opposite of brutal [Trevelyan was answering Raymond Mortimer's condemnation of Kipling as a 'boy who never grew up' with 'a morbid interest in cruelty'], he tells us tale after tale of the ancient history of England, as he imagines it, with a marvellous historical sense, I think.... Above all the tales are alive and they are beautiful. The story about Drake called 'Simple Simon' and the story about Harold called 'The Tree of Justice' in *Rewards and Fairies* are very striking. As a piece of
historical imagination I know nothing in the world better than the third story in Puck of Pook's Hill called 'The Joyous Venture', in which the Viking ship coasts Africa to find gold and fight gorillas in the tropical forest; I can see no fault in it, and many a merit."

Kipling's historical sense is given an even more vivid reality by the Sussex background so subtly woven into the fabric of the Puck stories. Thus, for example, the Roman Centurion Parnesius is on his way to Hadrian's wall but camps for the night in the valley below Pook's Hill. England is conquered by Duke William, but the clash between the Normans and the Saxons and the beginning of their fusion into 'English' is shown happening on the Manor of Pevensey, while the most moving story of the series 'The Tree of Justice' is set in the very spot near Bateman's where the children are hearing about it—though the actual legend of King Harold's survival after Hastings places his death at Chester. And one may still find 'Panama Corner' in Burwash Church, where Una and Dan met St. Wilfrid, the patron Saint of Sussex. In the same way Kipling adds an extra touch of reality to one of his best tales with a historical background, "The Eye of Allah", by the suggestion of Sussex or Hampshire scenery that identifies the medieval abbey in it with Romsey or Beaulieu.

In fact, after settling at Rottingdean in 1897 Kipling began to strike roots into the Sussex soil and reach the conclusion that he had come home at last—a feeling
which he was able to express once and for all in verse six months before moving into his real kingdom at Bateman's, with the poem "Sussex". By 1904 he could already have said with his Norman Knight in Puck of Pook's Hill: "But now England hath taken me", as he shows for the first time in "They" with its detailed loving description of the mysterious house in the woods which could well be Bateman's. Two stories written at about the time when he was moving into the house, "Steam Tactics" and "Below the Mill Dam" show how the awareness both of the county of Sussex itself and the deeper meaning of the historical background of the land, were growing in his consciousness - but those were only to know full fruition in Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies.

Thus we find that Kipling's historical tales draw a vivid picture of rural England, as it appeared in the South. All "real" events either happen in the south or are transmitted through it (the Roman Centurion for example in 'On the Great Wall'). Crucially in Kipling the South, therefore, in some sense England itself, becomes Sussex. This is done deliberately. Sussex becomes the cradle of history because there the real virtues of Englishness are preserved in people like Hobden and of course the very spirit of England - Puck. These virtues of Englishness produce in turn the virtues of an organic society based on a
human nexus of friendship and loyalty rather than class. This in turn is represented through customary behaviour and 'old' agricultural practices which like those who carry them through link the modern world and even the future (Puck speaks to the children as a kind of mentor) to the better past which is the precise opposite of the contemporary urban/industrial world. As the 'handful' of English earth 'heals' the individual's sickness in "A charm" at the beginning of Rewards and Fairies, so will the history heal society, "cleanse and purify it", by revealing among familiar English things the real greatness of the English — "Everyman a king indeed." Angus Ross has rightly said," Kipling's project in Rewards and Fairies and Puck of Pook's Hill is to create an alternative truly 'English' history which validates the rural virtues and constructs the rural and the southern as the essence of Englishness."6

Next thing to be noted about the tales is that Kipling has placed the real power of England in the hands of the poor or at most the middling sort, not in the hands of kings or queens as a historian might have done. In Rewards and Fairies he writes:

"Take of English earth as much
As either hand may rightly clutch
In the taking of it breath
Prayer for all who lie beneath
Not the great or well - spoke
But the mere uncounted folk"

[R&F., P.ix]

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It is the "uncounted folk" who really make history and who are only dimly aware of their role. "Old Hobby" knows about Magna Carta; it guarantees the rights of the "freeborn Englishman", but Puck through his stories explains to the children how it comes about:

"Well", said Puck calmly. "What did you think of it? Weland gave the Sword! The Sword gave the Treasure, and the Treasure gave the Law. It's as natural as an oak growing." [PK. P.H., P.251]

At each stage of the process the stories show how it was not the "great" who made history, but the "mere uncounted folk" acting not through selfish interest but either through some dimly perceived sense of destiny (De Aquila in 'Old Men at Pevensey') or more usually through honesty or loyalty (Kadmiel in "The Treasure and the Law").

But these historical tales can be enjoyed not only as powerful expressions of Kipling's moral ideas or beautiful pieces of British history or splendid pictures of Kipling's Sussex, but also as illustrations of Kipling's views on British Empire. In a rare comment on his own work in Something of Myself, Kipling observed that Puck of Pook's Hill has to be "a balance to, as well as a seal upon some aspects of my 'Imperialistic' output in the past."7 It is a characteristically crypic statement, but it seems reasonable that what he chiefly meant was that he had put India into a
wider context. Most of the readers cannot avoid thinking of the British Empire when they go through these stories.

Last, but not the least, important thing about these tales is that Kipling devotes by far the most extended discussion of his literary work in Something of Myself to these two collections of stories about the English History. In these, despite the fact that they are historical fictions, his most personal experience is to be found: the stories belong, many of them, to the small patch of England that he had elected to live in; they are told to his own children who, he hoped would inherit not only the place that he had made for them but the special understanding and sympathy that he had for it. A number of them are stories of artists of different kinds and hence fables of his own experience. They express the living connection between the past and the present that is at one of the deepest levels of his imagination. As we know, in his presentation of himself as an artist, Kipling does not talk about the imagination. He emphasises instead the element of craftsmanship and the link between the artist in literature and artist in all sorts of crafts: stone-cutters, masons, hedgers and ditchers, horsedealers, ship captains, soldiers and anything else demanding a secure knowledge of how to do something. He did this not in any spirit of self-deprecation but out of a real pride in the sense of craft and commitment. The line he drew between those who were the real thing and those who
only played at it, was unyielding, as he wrote of his hard-
earned status as a newspaperman in India, "the difference
between me and the vulgar herd who write for papers, was, as
I saw it, the gulf that divides the beneficed clergyman from
ladies and gentlemen who contribute pumpkins and dahlias to
Harvest Festival decorations." Like a good craftsman, he
paid special attention to his materials: "I made my own
experiment in the weights, colours, perfumes, and attributes
of words in relation to other words, either as read aloud
so that they may hold the ear, or, scattered over the page,
draw the eye." Thus we learn something about Kipling as an
artist from the stories of the artists that appear in Puck
of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies.

(II)

The stories in Puck of Pook's Hill are arranged to
give a historical pageant: from "Weland's Sword", through
the conquest and the assimilation of Norman into Saxon, "The
Joyous Venture", the voyage to the African coast, "Old Men
at Pevensey" to "The Treasure and the Law." Interposed in
the middle are the three stories of the Roman Britain, "A
Centurion of the Thirtieth", "On the Great Wall", and "The
Winged Hats." In these tales, Kipling is at his best so far
as his art, sense of construction and power of description
are concerned. Kipling's moral values are set out steadily
but less obtrusively than usual, in Puck of the Pook's Hill.
There is continued emphasis on the power of friendship and integrity - of Hugh for Richard, Parnesius for Pertinax; on craftsmanship and the virtues of tolerance in "Hal O' the Draft." There is the constant and justified insistence on the power, the mystique, of the individual leader.

In "Weland's Sword", the first story of Puck of Pook's Hill, Kipling recounts the adventures of an ancient pagan God Weland, who remains hidden in the English woods even when all the idols have been destroyed with the advent of Christianity. Instead of making his escape through the trees, Weland continues living under the disguise of a smith. He cannot return to Valhalla because he is under a magic spell. Only when a human being recognises his true identity will he be permitted to rejoin his comrades among the servants of the Great God Thor. The spell is broken by the monastic novice Hugh who receives as his reward a "dark grey wavy lined sword" [PK.P.H., P.28] made by Weland, cooled in waters and evening dew; its blade carved with prophetic runes.

Through this tale, Kipling has hinted at the theme which recurs in most of the tales of Puck of Pook's Hill - England's power to absorb and assimilate all those who came to it. Kipling wishes to say through these tales of Puck of Pook's Hill that England has accepted and assimilated all those people who came to it, whether they were neolithic.
workers of flint, Romans, Saxons, Danes or Normans. The Norman knight later sings:

"I followed my Duke ere I was a lover
To take from England fief and fee;
But now this game is the other way over -
But now England hath taken me!"

[PK.P.H., P.57]

Through "Weland's Sword" Kipling prepares us for the fact that not only men but gods and fairies too become English; once they had come to England, they could not leave it. Thus the theme of the steadfast and enduring marriage of land and people, which was to be developed in the later stories of Puck of Pook's Hill, gets beautifully hinted in the first story.

The Sword also makes an appearance in the stories "Young Men at the Manor" and "Old Men at Pevensey", which are set in the reign of William the Conqueror. These tales are told by the Norman Knight, Sir Richard Dalyngridge. The Normans are a conquering and occupying power. De Aquila, lord of Pevensey, the statesman who thinks for England, "for whom neither King nor Baron thinks" [PK. P.H., P.101], envisages the blending of conquerors and conquered in one nation, and fears the pull of the old home interests on the Norman baronage. His knight marries a Saxon lady and rules his manor by Saxon custom, and De Aquila gives her disinherit brotherland. Here what happened in England in
the eleventh and twelfth centuries seems to be presented by Kipling in accordance with his hopes for South Africa after the Boer war. He tells the story and sings the song of the conqueror who is taken captive by the land he conquers. The future of the conquering race will depend on the devotion and dedication with which they may serve the land and the people. What throve in England he might well hope would thrive in South Africa. Three years before, at the close of the Boer war, he had written "The Settler", verses put into the mouth of an Englishman, turning the furrows of the land he has fought over and now serves; and two years later "The Prairie", written for "Letters to the Family", an account of his tour in Canada, was to repeat part of the same tune. The new earth, the new seasons with their unfamiliar beauty, can be trusted to take the settler and wean him from his earlier life.

But the most remarkable are the three stories which revolve round a Roman Centurion named Parnesius. These famous tales are "A Centurion of the Thirtieth", "On the Great Wall" and "The Winged Hats." These tales give as good an imaginative picture of Britain in the last century of Roman rule as any in existence. The Roman Knight Parnesius, who narrates these stories, comes of a Roman family long settled in the Isle of Wight. At the end of his boyhood he goes to Aquae Sulis:
"The best baths in Britain. Just as good, I'm told, as Rome. All the old gluttons sit in hot water, and talk scandal and politics. And the Generals come through the streets with their guards behind them; and the magistrates come in their chairs with their stiff guards behind; and you meet fortune-tellers, and goldsmiths, and merchants and philosophers and feather-sellers, and ultra-Roman Britons, and ultra-British Romans, and tame tribesmen pretending to be civilized, and Jew lecturers, and - oh! everybody interesting." [PK. P.H. P.126].

It appears that Kipling must have had Simla, the Summer Capital of British India, in mind when he wrote this description for Aquae Sulis.

While there, Parnesius decides to be a soldier. Then we see him marching north in charge of a draft intended for the garrison of the wall:

"The hard road goes on and on- and the wind sings through your helmet- plume - past altars to Legions and Generals forgotten, and broken statues of Gods and Heroes, and thousands of graves where the mountain foxes and hares peep at you. Red - hot in summer, freezing in winter, is that big, purple heather country of broken stone. Just when you think you are at the world's end, you see a smoke from East to West as far as the eye can turn, and then, under it, also as far as the eye can stretch, house and temples, shops and theatres, barracks and granaries, trickling along like dice behind - always behind - one long, low, rising and falling, and hiding and showing line of towers. And that is the Wall." "Ah", said the children taking breath. "You may well", said Parnesius, "Old Men who have followed the Eagles since boyhood say nothing in the Empire is more beautiful than first sight of the Wall." [PK. P.H., P.146-147].

Kipling seems to be at his best when he writes such graphic description as has been quoted above.
Eventually it falls to Parnesius and his friend Pertinax, whom he first met in one of the 'caves' of Mithras, to be responsible for the defence of the Wall, while their general, Maximus, who wants to be Emperor, denudes Britain, and even the ultimate rampart itself, of troops, so that he may fight Theodosius on the continent. They understand the Picts beyond the wall and manage them well enough. They even contrive first of all to drive off, and then to temporise with, the "Winged Hats" from the dark unknown North. At last the news comes that Maximus has failed and is dead. It is plain that they will have to withstand the attacks of Picts and "Winged Hats" without reinforcements and with a lively chance that, if they survive so long, Theodosius will kill them as he has killed their master. Then Parnesius says, "It concerns us to defend the Wall, no matter what emperor dies or makes die." [PK.P.H., P.179].

In this story about Parnesius, Kipling has elevated the wall to the position of a major symbol. It is the bulwark of peace and good administration. Were it to be pierced there would ensue, first, all the brief horrors of conquest and rapine and afterwards worse still, the long horrors of generations of incompetent barbarian rule. Although Parnesius and Pertinax know the defence to be well nigh hopeless yet they must die rather than abandon it. Thus
these tales become Kipling's supreme presentation of one of the major themes that fired his imagination - the defence of civilization against savagery by men whose chosen duty it is to spend themselves in such a cause.

This tale is more than the imaginative recreation of an historical event. It is also an allegory of contemporary problems. It refers to the circumstances of his own day: the parallel between the Great Wall and the North-West Frontier has often been remarked upon - so has the resemblance between the Winged Hats and the Prussian menace. Kipling seems to be raising certain questions regarding contemporary circumstances and contemporary pressures. Would the Wall fall before the democratic hordes of little men and the Prussian Winged Hats? Were not the younger rulers F.E. Smith and the renegade conservative Winston Churchill, tainted by the ambition of Maximus? Were not the financiers manipulating trade and industry to their ends? Were not luxury and wealth corrupting the ruling class and turning their children into flannelled fools at the wicket? What then would be the fate of England - an England rent by class warfare and in a few years time to be meditating civil war in Ireland?

Besides allegorical or symbolical interpretation, these Roman stories can be interpreted in another way also. Kipling indirectly expresses his fears that Anglo-India
might be attacked by forces from Central Asia. In fact, Kipling's fears of an attack on Anglo-India from Central Asia had increased manifold after Britain's isolation in the Boer War. For one of what Kipling described as the "three or four overlaid tints and textures"\textsuperscript{10} of his historical tales in \textit{Puck of Pook's Hill} and \textit{Rewards and Fairies} is undoubtedly a re-examination of this particular anxiety in terms of an account of the later stages of Roman Rule in Britain. And the fact that Kipling saw these stories as a "Seal" upon his "Imperialistic output", \textsuperscript{11} and his choice of the terminal stage of Rome's presence in Britain, suggest how pessimistically he had come to anticipate the outcome of foreign designs upon India.

Kipling goes to great lengths to establish affinities between Parnesius's Britain and contemporary Anglo-India. Rome has had its ascendancy for four hundred years, a period almost identical with that of the British presence in India. A crisis of religious faith has recently been experienced. This is akin to the one which had begun to be apparent in Victorian culture a few decades before Kipling himself left England for India. The implications of this confusion for the future of the British Empire greatly preoccupied Kipling, just as the earlier crisis seems, to Parnesius's father, to have ramifications for Rome's hegemony overseas. There are inescapable similarities between Roman Britain's favoured holiday town, Aquae Sulis,
and the hot-weather resort of Simla. The mixture of political intrigue and pleasure-seeking, set off by concentrated cosmopolitanism, characterises both. The climate of England's border region is adapted to evoke the desolate nature of northern India: "Red hot in Summer, freezing in Winter, is that big purple heather country of broken stone." [PK. P.H. P.146]. Parnesius's men even complain of the dangers of sunstroke and fever as they march towards the Wall.

These details prepare us to discover analogies much more fundamentally significant. The Roman army in Britain is complemented by and dependent, to a large extent, upon its auxiliary forces. The Gauls and Iberians of Puck of Pook's Hill have their counterparts in Anglo-India. The existence of distinctly divided groups of Picts, loyal and hostile, is paralleled in the divisions of race and religion, in the sub-continent. Most importantly, perhaps, Roman Britain evinces deep insecurity about its northern frontiers. Hadrian's Wall is built as a defence against the Painted People who, ethnically identical with the loyal Picts, harry and raid across the frontier.

In "A Centurion of the Thirtieth", Kipling seems to comment indirectly upon the necessity of keeping a strong British army in India. Parnesius's father reminds Maximus that political power in Britain depends directly upon
military presence and that revolt in the north will be encouraged by the withdrawal of cohorts. The story is also relevant, moreover, in that it deplores the extent to which hegemony in the colony is undermined by metropolitan factions pursuing their own political interests, as represented by the duels between Maximus and his rivals. Thus "A British - Roman Song" suggests that the future of the Empire can only be ensured by guarding against "home-born ills" as vigilantly as those engendered by the local political situations.

 Nonetheless, it is the external threat which the Roman stories in Puck of Pook's Hill are most concerned to illuminate. As in prior Anglo-Indian commentaries upon Russia's designs on India, "On the Great Wall" suggests the attractions that an invader from the North may have for a disaffected native population. This threat is alluded to in discussions between Pertinax and the loyal Pict Chieftain Allo who, despite his personal loyalty to the young subaltern, cannot guarantee the fidelity of his people, given the context of international rivalry within which they find themselves: "Then he laughed his laugh. What would you do if you were a handful of oats being crushed between the upper and lower stones of a mill?" [PK. P.H., P.155]. Allo is himself frank enough to admit that victory for the Winged Hats would give him no real cause for lament. And
Parnesius recognises that the Picts have economic as well as political reasons for their hostility towards the Roman rulers. This makes combination with the northern power even more of a danger. Parnesius admits that the times when conciliation might have been effected, through greater measures of devolution, have passed: "They have been too oppressed by us to trust anything with a Roman name for years and years." [PK. P.H., P.158]. This seems an extraordinarily bleak and revealing prognostication from Kipling given that Puck of Pook's Hill appeared in 1906, in the middle of the worst three years of Indian unrest since the Mutiny. B.J. Moore - Gilbert has rightly said, "It is Kipling's final statement of concern about the dangers of Russian combination with Indian dissidents." 12

It is, however, in "The Winged Hats" that Kipling presents the worst fears of the British rulers in India. The forty-seven ships spied in the previous story by Parnesius and Pertinax do in fact presage the dreaded incursions from the north, and constitute an advance party consolidating vantage points before the main attack. Its deterrent force emasculated by metropolitan intrigue, the British - Roman Colony has become an irresistible target for the Winged Hats, as the frustrated Parnesius laments: "Maximus has emptied Britain behind us, and I felt myself to be a man with a rotten stick standing before a broken fence to turn bulls." [PK. P.H., P.176]. While Amal's barbarians are
beaten off in the end, it is at great cost to the defenders. Indeed, the uneven struggle is only terminated by an unexplained withdrawal of the invaders at a moment when Parnesius and his friends seem certain to be overwhelmed. The chronic uneasiness about the political future of India implied in this has been recognised by Edward Shanks also in his perceptive commentary upon the collection of stories. One must agree with Shanks’s conviction that the essential point of the volume is that Kipling "makes his eulogy of the Roman spirit at the same time an elegy on it." It can thus be seen that Kipling’s doubts about the security of Anglo-India align him with a long tradition of similar concern. It would be legitimate to suggest that it was British apathy or misguided interference from Whitehall which the community perceived to be at the root of all its problems.

Parnesius’s tale can be appreciated in another way also. We find that Parnesius is a Roman Centurion, born in England and detailed to help defend Hadrian’s Wall against invaders from the North. On the other side are Rome’s enemies, the Picts, but Parnesius sees them as brothers, from the same island stock. This is an original way of presenting the Roman occupation as a single soldier’s crisis of conscience. Parnesius is a hero with human problems arising from confrontation between an occupying power and a
native culture, suggesting a parallel with the British in India.

These Roman tales have always remained most popular with the readers. Charles Carrington has praised these stories in the following words: "In the whole range of Rudyard's work, no pieces have been more effective in moulding the thought of a generation than the three stories of the Centurion's defending Hadrian's Wall during the decline of the Roman Empire."14 "There is no hope for Rome", said the wise old father of the Centurion, "She has forsaken her Gods, but if the Gods forgive us here, we may save Britain." [PK. P.H., P.130]. 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 their own careers. It strengthened the nerve of many a younger soldier in the dark days of 1915 and 1941, and, if that was its intention, it mattered little that Rudyard's Roman soldiers of the fourth century too much resembled subalterns of the Indian Army.

III

The great achievement in Puck of Pook's Hill was the tracing by a strong imagination of brilliantly conceived episodes in the English history, with a continuity that interlocks from story to story just enough not to be obtrusive, yet forming a link between and among them.
Rewards and Fairies, the sequel taking its title from Bishop Corbett's poem quoted in Puck of Pook's Hill, is, like many sequels, a little less successful. Some of the stories are written primarily to fill in the gaps left in Puck of Pook's Hill; "The Knife and the Naked Chalk" for Stone Age Man; "The Wrong Thing" for Freemasonry and craftsman's work. "The Tree of Justice" returns to the Norman Conquest; "Simple Simon" concerns Sir Francis Drake. "Brother Square Toes" is the story of Washington and Philadelphia, and has for a pendant the famous poem "If". "Marklake Witches", the story of a young girl dying of consumption, is told with tact and gaiety and pity. "A Doctor of Medicine" concerns the plague and the Civil War and its main character is Nicholas Culpeper the herbalist.

The one story on which we must dwell is the first of Rewards and Fairies, which is called "Cold Iron." Dan and Una creep out of the house to look for an otter early in the morning of Midsummer Day before five O' clock. They take off their boots so as not to wet them in the dew. They have forgotten all last year's adventures - waved off by the magic of oak, ash and thorn - but something suddenly brings them to the threshold of remembering, and then Puck is with them again. They talk of how last year he had made them forget, and Una asks him if he could turn her into an otter. She has not tied her boots round her neck - there is cold
iron in them. She throws them away. Puck's magic is not like Kaa's - it is as homely and earthy and kind as Puck himself. They didn't wear boots last year; Cold Iron has begun to separate them from the innocence of childhood. They hate their boots, but would they go back? "No-o. I suppose I should n't - not for always. I am growing up, you know", said Una [R&F., P.7]. And we begin to get a hint at what Cold Iron stands for.

The inner story grows almost imperceptibly out of the frame of the outer as the conversation goes on. The People of the Hills - which is the proper name, of course, for those whom we call fairies - have always wanted to "act and influence on folk in housen!" [R&F, P.97]. So one day Puck suggests to Sir Huon, who was lost long ago on the road to Babylon and who succeeded King Oberon, that he should "take some human cradle-babe by fair dealing", bring him up "on the far side of Cold Iron", and send him out into the world with a splendid fortune.[R&F., P.9]. And before long, Puck finds a baby, born to a slave-girl who had died. He had been left at a church door, so that no one was wronged by his taking; he had never been into a house and so-as long as they could keep him away from cold Iron - the People of the Hills could bring him up as their own. Sir Huon and his Lady, the Lady Esclairmonde - welcomed the boy with as much wonder and excitement as a pair of human lovers with their first child. But, soon after The Boy had come, Puck heard a
hammering down at the Forge and saw a Smith forging something from Cold Iron. He saw him toss it from him "a longish quoit - throw down the valley", [R&F., P.12] and he knew that someday someone would find it because the Smith was Thor.

The Boy grew up and at first he was allowed to go on night-walkings with Puck "among folk in housen." But, though Puck never let him touch Cold Iron, they got into one or two scrapes together and the Lady Esclairmonde scolded Puck till at last he said he would let them bring The Boy up in their own way and he would leave him alone till he had found his fortune. So he kept out of the way - but he watched The Boy, very lonely, poring over the big black books of magic he was set to learn, and playing with boy's magic, filling the valley with hawks and hounds, knights and ladies and castles, hungering all the time, of course, for folk in housen, his own mortal kind, whom he was not allowed to see. "They always intended a fine fortune for him - but they could never find it in their heart to let him begin."

[R&F., P.18]. But one hot night, when the valley was full of his hounds giving tongue and packed with his knights in armour, and The Boy was roving about, "wrapped in his flaming discontents" [R&F., P.19], he stumbled in the fern on that "Something" which the Smith had cast down the valley. Sir Huon and his Lady and Puck were close at hand
but they could not save him. It was Cold Iron, and he had picked it up. Whatever it was, they knew it would be his fortune, so they called out to know. Was it a sword, a sceptre, a plough, a great book with iron clasps? It was none of those, but a slave-ring, such as his mother must have worn, and before they could stop him he had put it on his neck and snapped home the lock. What else could be have done? Puck explains what the fortune means for the boy:

"The Virtue of the Ring is only that he must go among folk in housen henceforward, doing what they want done, or what he knows they need, all Old England over. Never will be his own master, not yet ever any man's. He will get half he gives, and give twice what he gets, till his life's last breath; and if he lays aside his load before he draws that last breath, all his work will go for naught." [R&F., P.22-23].

So he went to work among folk in housen - doing what he knew they needed - and he married and had bushels of children.

The Cold Iron is thus a symbol of a life of toil and trouble that is lived for the sake of others without expectation of reward. A total identification with the humble "folk in housen", disinterested suffering and selfless work till the moment of death are the destiny of man under the Cold Iron. The poem "Cold Iron" which accompanies the story also brings out the value of suffering and sacrifice. The poem tells of a Baron (who seems to represent Man) taken prisoner for rebellion against the King, apparently Christ. The Baron blames Cold Iron, which
is symbolic of stern necessity or fate, for his fall, and he asserts that the King does not know what Cold Iron means. Then the King tells the Baron how he himself experienced Cold Iron when he went down to earth to redeem fallen Man:

"Look! these Hands they pierced with nails, outside My City Wall, Show Iron-Cold Iron - to be master of men all... I forgive thy treason - I redeem thy fall- For Iron - Cold Iron - must be master of men all!"

[R&F., P.26].

The reference here is obviously to the crucifixion. Through this powerful Christian symbol, the poem sets forth the value that Kipling attaches to suffering and sacrifice.

"The Cold Iron" also symbolises stern necessity, the impossibility of escaping fate. The boy, for all his fairy powers and his strong poetic imagination, comes across the slave-ring that Thor had made and puts it round his neck and fastens it permanently with its clips. He, being son of a slave-girl, can't escape his fate; he is destined to work like a slave only. He accepts the burden as his "unavoidable fate." "Cold Iron" can also stand for the inner compulsion which a person experiences because of his own sense of honesty and duty. What else could he have done? That is The Boy's question as he snaps home the catch. This is the question which most of the characters in Rewards and Fairies ask. What else could Gloriana do but send two gallant boys
to the Gascons' Graveyard to save Virginia from Philip of Spain? And what else could they do but go? St. Wilfrid, near death by cold and stravation on a ledge of rock, is compelled by his own honesty to say that even a pagan should not change his faith - even a faith he does not believe in - when he is in adversity. Simple Simon uses the same phrase when the Armada has come up the Channel to the narrow seas off Rye and he stands out in his own ship with all the naval stories he can scutchel up to bring comfort to Sir Francis Drake, who has been fighting the Spanish for days. Pharaoh Lee, who is a smuggler and a gipsy, refuses to tell Talleyrand what he had overheard Washington tell his cabinet, because the secret was not his; it belonged to the Seneca Chief under whose guidance and protection he heard it. "What else could I have done?" he too asks. Kipling himself had said that the phrase "What else could I have done?" was the theme of *Rewards and Fairies*. It is compulsion, but a compulsion which applies only to those with nobility of purpose, those capable of sacrifice for the honour of their craft and of honest craftsmanship, or for the people and the sheep, or for England, or for a village sick of the plague. One cannot lay down the burden and one has to pay the cost. All the characters in *Rewards and Fairies* are bound by the compulsion of their own integrity. Here is something very near the centre of what Kipling thought was the right behaviour for man and it is a good
deal more than a gospel of work and discipline for their own sake.

Besides "Cold Iron", there is another story "The Knife and the Naked Chalk" in which Kipling has dealt with the theme of suffering and self-sacrifice. "The Knife and the Naked Chalk" is a Promethean tale of a primitive Briton, who desires a new and potent weapon, the Magic Knife prefected by a neighbouring tribe. In exchange for the Knife, the priestess exacts from him a major sacrifice. With an iron knife heated in the flame she puts out his right eye. Thus maimed, but armed with the Magic Knife, he returns to his own tribe. Regarding him now as a God, men shrink from his shadow, and the maiden he loves takes advantage of his part-blindness to slip away and leave him to his fate. Maimed and deserted, he falls into the darkness of delirium. He is then tended by his mother:

When my spirit came back, I heard her whisper in my ear, "Whether you live or die, or are made different, I am your Mother." That was good — better even than the water she gave me and the going away of the sickness. Though I was ashamed to have fallen down, yet I was very glad. She was glad too. Neither of us wished to lose the other. There is only One Mother for the one son." [R&F., P.138].

The story is autobiographical, because Kipling also, like the hero of this story, suffered a serious breakdown in consequence to the strain and frustration of those early months in London. The above passage may profitably be
compared with the dedication that adorns the first Edition of *The Light that Failed*. There are three verses. The last of these runs like this:

"If I were damned of body and soul,  
I know whose prayers would make me,  
Mother O' mine, O mother O'mine!"

[Dedication, *The Light That Failed.*]

In fact Kipling's love, respect and sense of gratitude for his parents were immense. Equally the idea of parents in a man's life, in particular of mothers, as it emerges from his work, is absolutely central. It is difficult to know how to relate the elevated, almost religious concept of a mother's place in the life of her son that we find in his stories and his verse to his own relationship with his mother. In the story "The Knife and the Naked Chalk", we get a serious allegorical treatment of the basic importance of a man's mother that cannot be smiled away.

"Simple Simon" is another famous tale of *Rewards and Fairies*. It is a complex tale where part of the meaning remains submerged. Puck restrains Drake's friend, Simon, from saying what is on his mind about the hanging of Thomas Doughty by Drake's orders on the "Golden Hind." His name comes and is dismissed. Simon's aunt prophesies that Drake will bury his heart beside the road he will open from east to west and back again; and, before the tale begins, the children have seen Cattiwow, the Woodman, lash his team -

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leader to get last ounce of effort out of them that Cattiwow "cherished his horse, but he'd ha' laid him open in that pinch." [R&F., P.285]. But such knowledge is too hard for children, and the tale moves on another course, towards the Armada that Dan has been hoping for. Nonetheless they feel that some unknown and cruel obligation, such as confronts at times the leaders of men, had awaited Frankie by the side of the road he opened. The tale is a bit puzzling; the bits do not seem to come together and the pattern seems to be incomplete. What is full in the Child's vision, and very satisfactory, is the opportunity that comes at length to the modest home-keeping burgess of Rye to supply Drake's need for stores and ammunition in the middle of the fight with the Armada, and Drake courteously embracing his friend before all his great captains and causing his ship's music to play him away with honour. This is a situation full of the most reassuring moral and emotional lights. And, in case Simple Simon should be held too cheap, there are his little models of iron ships that floated, but were given up, since what England needed of Rye was wooden ships. They were "untimely" and hence were not needed.

In other words, we can say that Kipling believed firmly that everything must come in its own good time. It is no use hurrying the Divine Purpose, and efforts at premature progress will prove futile. That is why the Elizabethan
seaman in this story was unable to put into effect his idea of iron ships. The same theme was treated in "The Eye of Allah" where the microscope had to be destroyed since coming too soon: "It will be but the mother of more death, more torture, more division, and greater darkness in this dark age" [D&C., P.394]. In the poem "Untimely" also, Kipling writes: "Heaven delivers on earth the Hour that cannot be thwarted." [D&C., P.363].

"The Wrong Thing" is another popular story that occurs in Rewards and Fairies. The theme of the role and the ordeal of the artist, which has been treated in other stories also, is beautifully expounded in this story. Here Kipling embarks on a promising subject: the discrepancy between the aim of the artist who is trying his best to achieve perfection in his craft and the quite irrelevant kinds of interest that the powers which employ him take in him. This tale is told by Hal O' the Draft, in Dan's presence to Mr. Springett, the old builder, who dredges up out of his memory parallels to every point in it; and these homely anecdotes help to clarify what Hal has to tell and bring it closer to the boy's comprehension. Even so, Dan and the readers of Dan's age cannot wholly understand the emotions in which the tale deals - the anguish of the artist whose conceptions are beyond his achievement, the mortal envy of the better craftsman, the mingled flavour, bitter and comic, of the reward that is given, not for the
laborious triumph of disciplined art but for the casual by-product that falls in with the patron's interested requirements. Yet this is found to be a favourite tale, because there is a rich entertainment by the way in the picture of the craftsmen "toiling like cock-angels" [R&F., P.66] in Henry VII's chapel, of the fires on the cold pavements at nights, and Torringiano dealing with insults and priceless instructions to his youngmen; and a great deal of the humour is accessible to the young readers in that exquisite scene where the King bestows Knighthood on Hal for saving him thirty pounds. They may not be altogether clear as to what it is in this incident that disarms the murderous rival with laughter and breaks up the old crust of hatred about his heart, but it is felt to be a satisfactory conclusion when he and Hal reel back to the chapel with their arms about each other's necks. They perceive something of the artist's passion, and some oddity in the world's acceptance of its fruits.

There are two healing stories in *Rewards and Fairies*, "Marklake Witches" and "A Doctor of Medicine." "Marklake Witches" is told by a girl of the Napoleonic period, who is dying of consumption, something everyone in the story knows except herself. While she narrates this story of Laennec's invention of stethoscope, she is quite unaware of its purpose; she regards it with tolerant
amusement as one of the ridiculous hobbies of the young French prisoner. The medical part is about the discovery of stethoscope and the angry opposition of the orthodox and the superstitious. In some ways this story looks to "Simple Simon" and "The Eye of Allah" which deal far more effectively with the inventions produced before their time.

"A Doctor of Medicine" deals with Nicholas Culpeper, the seventeenth century astrologer - physician. A village in Sussex is hit by the plague during the civil war and Nicholas Culpeper, herbalist and astrologer, joins the villagers in their isolation; he fights the plague by reasoning based on the observation of stars, reasoning that most modern readers would regard as absurd, but which leads him to declare war on the rats, organize all the able-bodied for rat-hunts, persuade them to clear up the village, stop up the rat holes and take the sick into the open. The plague is checked, and it is partly because the able-bodied are too busy to think about getting ill themselves. Thus the story links the health of the body with the health of the spirit, and is so far in the line of Kipling's development. But the attitude to astrology is superficial and conventional; it was a theme to which he returned with a more enquiring mind in "Unprofessional", where the medical men study what seem to be tides in malignant tissues. They discuss radium as astrologers might discuss planetary influences, the analogy
Kipling had made use of in his speech to the Royal Society of Medicine where he had said:

"Nicholas Culpeper, were he with us now, would find that the essential unity of creation is admitted in so far forth as we have plumbed infinity; and that man, Culpeper's epitome of all, is in himself a universe of universes, each universe ordered - negatively and positively - by sympathy and antipathy - on the same lines as hold the stars in their courses."\(^{15}\)

Thus Kipling firmly believed that doctors should return to the astrological idea of "influences." He put these ideas first into "A Doctor of Medicine" and later into "Unprofessional."

"The Tree of Justice", the last tale of Rewards and Fairies, is the hardest tale for children. According to Carrington, this tale "may even be classed as one of Rudyard's obscure psychological pieces."\(^{16}\) It is, however, commended by the high heroic note of Hugh's service and Harold's death, by the reappearance of young Fulke and by the fascinating figure of Rahere. It tells of the unification of England, where Saxons and Normans were welded into Englishmen - partly by the great De Aquila, prototype of Kipling's wise administrators. The following conversation takes place, which is worth quoting in full. Henry I is speaking:

"I'll never quarrel with Anselm, or his Pope till they quarrel with my England. If we can keep the King's peace till my son comes to rule, no man will
lightly quarrel with our England. "Amen", said De Aquila, "But the King’s peace ends when the King dies." "That is true." [Another is speaking]. "The King’s peace dies with the King. The custom then is that all laws are outlaw, and men do what they will till the new king is chosen." "I will amend that", said the King hotly, "I will have it so that though king, son, and grandson were all slain in one day, still the King’s peace should hold over all England! What is man that his mere death must upheave a people? We must have the Law." [R&F.,PP.325-326].

Thus the last story expresses Kipling’s love for "Law", which he expresses more strongly in the Two Jungle Books.

IV

We can conclude our discussion of Puck of Pook’s Hill and Rewards and Fairies with these words: "Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies have in them the very marrow of England. For them, at least, we may prophesy with assurance that death will not come quickly." These tales give us a vivid picture of England of different times. There is no book in the guise of fiction that gives glimpses of English history with such breadth of vision and nobility of feeling, and so sure and easy a touch. When we go through these tales, we feel not that the writer has read about the remote days of the Roman occupation, nor of the days of Elizabeth, but that he has been there and comes back to tell us of them. In these entrancing stories, there is far more than merely the exquisite art of telling a story; there is the recreation of history, the essence of a nation's
beginning and early development. The figures of De Aquila and Sir Richard Dalyngridge are not only great characters of fiction but pendants to the works of great historians. "And so was England born," declares Kipling proudly.

Though Kipling picks up the real characters from British history yet he weaves fantastic tales around those real characters to bring out the important character-traits of the men and the outstanding characteristics of the age in which they appeared. For example, the tales "Gloriana" and "Simple Simon" deal with the famous Elizabethan times. In "Gloriana" Kipling brings out queen Elizabeth's love for Philip of Spain through an imaginary tale of two youngmen who sacrificed their lives for the young queen. Similarly in "Simple Simon", Kipling talks about the great achievement of the Elizabethan hero Sir Francis Drake by inventing the story of Drake's friendship with Simon. Though the story of this friendship is purely imaginary, yet the fact mentioned in the story that Drake opened a road from the East into the West, and back again is based in reality. The tales "Brother Square Toes" and "A Priest in spite of Himself" concern the time of French Revolution and make one reference to the cutting of King Louis's head. Kipling has brought out the role played by Talleyrand, the famous statesman of France, by inventing the story of his friendship with an imaginary Character Pharaoh Lee. In other tales also, Kipling has adopted this technique. He has taken out from the history
books some important historical personages and woven interesting stories about them. Thus we can say that *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies* are two incomparable pair of volumes in which Kipling makes the past of English history live with such implicit learning as is the wonder of historians and such imaginative truth as is paralleled in literature only by the splendidly vagrant chronicle - histories of Shakespeare.
REFERENCES


8. Ibid., P.42.

9. Ibid., PP.43-44.

10. Ibid., P.111.
11. Ibid., P.111.


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