A PASS, A KING AND A MOUNTAIN

**Title**

The title refers to the topic of the chapter, indeed in the chapter Kipling communicates the qualities a great general (the king) must have. He also describes the soldiers of the Alpine Regiment and their location in the Alps.

**Topic:** The regiment located on the mountains and the means of transport.

At the beginning of chapter III, Mr. Rudyard Kypling describes the soldiers of the Alpine Regiment and their location in the Alps. The reporter is able, through the description of the landscape with a dialogue with a commandant who is expressing his thoughts and opinions about soldier’s conditions and progresses of the battles, to let the intelligent reader imagine the ways in which war affected soldiers’ and people’s lives. The description of the hard work made by Italian soldiers in building streets and keeping their unity and dedication despite the terrible conditions that afflicted them makes the reader understand Mr. Rudyard Kypling’s positive point of view about the soldiers.

**Soldiers’ characterization**

Features: psycological

Strong points:

* Kindness (page 30)
* Territorial knowledge (page 31)
* Endurance (page 34)
* Tenacity (page 34)
* Loyalty (page 33)
* Wilfulness (page 34)
* Temperance (page 33)

To communicate how soldiers appear to him, the writer underlines the kindness with which they turn to him. Indeed they patiently explain him the position of the mountains (Montenero) and the line of the Italian trenches. They also “kindly offer” him a coffee.

The soldiers are characterize by their extraordinary knowledge of the territory and ability of keeping it under control, indeed “their eyes were set to views of very distant horizons” and “we looked down as the falcons do”. So he characterizes them with the metaphor of “falcon”: great volatile that are able to reconnoiter and hunt, to bring out their preparation and their endurance. Their endurance is underlined also by the writer comment: “It is the infinite labour imposed on you by your mere surroundings that impresses me most of all. Everything you handle seems to end in a two-hundred-pound package taken up the side of a house, and yet you have heavy artillery on the edge of glaciers. It's a new convention.”.

The informant uses “we” both in the English and in the Italian version, but it is a typical Italian way to talk. It has the function to make the reader participate and makes more emotional the scene.

Kipling construct an idea of the soldiers that reveal their positive willfulness and motivation and this emerges from the sentence “But if you make a road, you must make a road”.

The writer makes the reader understand the soldiers’ conditions with metaphors, indeed he says that the enemy “hunted” them, as if they would be animals searched and hunted. In the Italian translation, the word “hunted” is translated with “snidarli”, that refers to them as birds and their land as their home.

He also underlines how war changed them, indeed he affirms “The officer spoke without emotion. He and a few million others had been goaded out of their known life to achieve the incredible. They had left the faculty of wonder”, so war take them away emotions, they are used to seeing so many tragedies that they are not surprised anymore. Indeed the writer tells the official words “But these are our surroundings, and our people are used to them”. As if now they are insensible, indeed in the Italian version soldiers are compared to a machine.

Lots of times Kipling refers to the changes war take with it. In particular with the sentence “Love has gone out of this huge basin of the Dolomites now, and the mountaineering is done by platoons in order to kill men, not by individuals who read papers before Alpine Clubs.” He wants make the reader understand the break of the quotidian life and the traditions.

After that he praises the popular general, that is “very much of a man as well as a statesman”, and “moves temperate, loyal, keen, in stark simplicity among his men and full hazards of war”. So he outlines the qualities that a great general must have.

**Idea of soldiers**

* Soldiers show: tenacity, physical strength, courage, obedience, loyalty and temperance.
* They sound and look perfect war machines
* The Italian version exalts their qualities more linguistic differences (

**Lexical and narrative choices**

* short, simple sentences, with the use of coordination
* lexical choices 🡪Semantic areas of war, nature and references to Puritanism
* rhetorical figures 🡪 alliterations of sounds “s” and “t”; similes (*Sometimes the discharge sounded like a triumphant whoop across the snows*)

**Narrative technique**

* 1st person narrator with an inner perspective → adding truth to narration
* showing and telling are combined to provide a lively, concrete effect
* Telling is more frequent
* The reader can figure out “reality” according to a narrator-mediated perspective