

Kipling was born in Bombay on December 30, 1865. At the age of six he was placed in the care of some relatives in England, but he returned to India on reaching the age of seventeen. He obtained a position on the staff of The Civil and Military Gazette, published at Lahore, and in his early twenties edited The Pioneer at Allahabad. In his capacity as a journalist, and for his own purposes, he travelled extensively throughout India. On those journeys he acquired a thorough insight into Hindu conceptions and sentiments and became intimately acquainted with the different Hindu groups, with their varying customs and institutions, and with the special features of English military life in India.

He decided to use this money to make his way to London, the literary centre of the British Empire. On 9 March 1889, Kipling left India, travelling first to San Francisco via Rangoon, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan.

In 1892 Kipling married Caroline Balestier. They settled on the Balestier estate near Brattleboro, Vermont, in the United States

In 1897 the Kiplings settled in Rottingdean, a village on the British coast near Brighton. The outbreak of the Spanish-American War (1898; a short war between Spain and the United States over lands including Cuba and the Philippines) and the Boer War (1899–1902; a war between Great Britain and South Africa) turned Kipling's attention to colonial affairs. During the Boer War, Kipling spent several months in South Africa, where he raised funds for soldiers' relief and worked on an army newspaper, the Friend.

In 1907 Kipling became the first English writer to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. He died on January 18, 1936, and is buried in Westminster Abbey in London, England.

Of his early works the satirical Departmental Ditties (1886) attracted notice by the audacity of the allusions it contained, and by the originality of its tone. Also among the early productions are Plain Tales from the Hills (1888) and Soldiers Three (1888), collections of stories famous among other things for the three lovingly drawn soldier types: Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd. Other works in the same category are, for instance, The Story of the Gadsbys (1888), In Black and White (1888), and Under the Deodars (1889), all of which are concerned with society life in Simla. The series entitled Life's Handicap, embracing some stories of serious import, appeared in 1891. The same year saw the publication of The Light that Failed, a novel somewhat harsh in style but containing some strongly coloured descriptive passages of excellent effect.

In Kipling the British Army has found a minstrel to interpret in a new, original, and tragicomical manner the toils and deprivations through which it has to pass, and to depict its life and work with abundant acknowledgment of the great qualities it displays, but without the least trace of meretricious embellishment.

In the cycle entitled The Seven Seas (1896) Kipling reveals himself as an imperialist, a citizen of a world-wide empire.

In 1894 was published «the jungle books».

His marvellous power of imagination enables him to give us not only copies from nature but also visions out of his own inner consciousness.

This writer's philosophy of life is diffused with a piety characteristic of the Old Testament, or rather perhaps of Puritan times, wholly devoid of pretentiousness or wordiness, based upon a conviction that «the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom»

If Kipling is an idealist from an aesthetic point of view by reason of poetical intuition, he is so, too, from an ethical-religious standpoint by virtue of his sense of duty, which has its inspiration in a faith firmly rooted in conviction.

Kipling has become the nation's poet, owing not only to his numerous highly prized soldier-songs, but perhaps quite as much to the brief lines of the hymn («Recessional») which he composed on the occasion of Queen Victoria's

there are three «notes» to be traced in his authorship. The satirical note is found in Departmental Ditties, Plain Tales from the Hills, The Story of the Gadsbys, with its amusing commendation of single blessedness, and in the much-debated novel, The Light that Failed.

The second, the note of sympathy and human kindness, is most clearly marked in «The Story of Muhammad Din» and in «Without Benefit of Clergy» (in Life's Handicap), a gem of heartfelt emotion. The third, the ethical note, is clearly traceable in Life's Handicap.

Kipling has written and sung of faithful labour, fulfilment of duty, and love of one's country. Love of one's country with Kipling does not mean solely devotion to the island kingdom of England, but rather an enthusiastic affection for the British Empire.

Kipling has given us descriptions in vivid colours of many different countries. But the picturesque surface of things has not been the principal matter with him; he has always, in all places, had a manly ideal before him: ever to be «ready, ay ready at the call of duty» and then, when the appointed time comes, to «go to God like a soldier».