

Rudyard Kipling's Verse Study Guide

Rudyard Kipling's Verse by Rudyard Kipling

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Rudyard Kipling's Verse Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Prelude through Certain Maxims of Hafiz.....	4
The Moon of Other Days through The Rhyme of the Three Sealers.....	6
McAndrew's Hymn through To the City of Bombay.....	8
The Gypsy Trail through The Last Suttee.....	10
General Joubert through The Lesson.....	11
Mesopotamia through Verses on Games.....	13
Tomlinson through The Young British Soldier.....	14
Mandalay through Lichtenberg.....	16
Stellenbosch through The Puzzler.....	18
The Press through An Astrologer's Song.....	20
The Power of the Dog through Tin Fish.....	22
The King's Task through The Marred Drives of Windsor.....	24
Songs Written for C.R.L.Fletcher's A History of England, Verses from Land and Sea Tales and verses from Debits and Credits.....	26
Verses from Limits and Renewals and Miscellaneous Verse.....	28
Characters.....	30
Objects/Places.....	32
Themes.....	34
Style.....	36
Quotes.....	38
Topics for Discussion.....	39



Plot Summary

The book, *The Complete Verse of Rudyard Kipling*, contains all of the poetry written by British author Rudyard Kipling. The poetry covers a variety of different topics and deals with various themes important to Kipling and the people of the time period in which he lived. Verses in the book are sometimes stand-alone poems but sometimes are part of a larger work.

It is interesting to note that in many of Kipling's poems, he deals with topics that are still relevant in today's society. These topics include ideas such as gun control, death and murder, religion and war. Other poems deal with the relationship between religion and government as well as the respect due to people who have fought in battles on behalf of their country.

Although many of the poems do deal with serious and heavy topics, there are also poems Kipling writes that deal with lighter topics. In his poem, "The Power of the Dog," for instance, Kipling writes about the way that an animal can earn the love of a human. Although this poem does deal with a heavy subject in that it talks about the sense of loss a man feels when his dog dies, it also has a lighthearted feeling. Verses that precede Kipling's *Just So Stories* are also included in this compilation of poems. These verses are from stories intended to be read by children.

Through his poems, Kipling also experiments with a variety of voices and forms of poetry. Kipling writes in his own voice, the voices of main characters in his poems, and even the voices of animals. While some of Kipling's poems have a clear rhyming scheme, some are written in free verse. In some instances, Kipling even writes verses that he incorporates into short plays.



Prelude through Certain Maxims of Hafiz

Prelude through Certain Maxims of Hafiz Summary

The book, *The Complete Verse of Rudyard Kipling*, contains all of the poetry written by British author Rudyard Kipling. The poetry covers a variety of different topics and deals with various themes important to Kipling and the people of the time period in which he lived. Verses in the book are sometimes stand-alone poems but sometimes are part of a larger work.

Kipling's "Prelude" introduces the circumstances of everyday life on which his poems are based. He writes that although these verses are written to amuse the reader, hidden beneath the joking form is a more serious lesson to be learned. The poem "A General Summary" details the ways in which things have not changed much concerning the way one man treats another. Modern men still hunt down and kill other men just as prehistoric men did. In the poem "Delilah," Kipling writes about a journalist who convinces a lady of honor to tell a secret dealing with a financial report. When the journalist writes about the secret, Delilah realizes she has been tricked by the man into telling a secret she shouldn't have told.

In "The Story of Uriah," Jack Barrett is sent to Quetta, it is assumed, because his commander wishes to have his way with Barrett's wife. Although Barrett didn't know at the time why he was being sent to Quetta, it is suggested that when he is able, Barrett may seek revenge on the man who sent him to Quetta. "The Man Who Could Write" details the life of the less than famous journalist Boanerges Blitzen. The poem "My Rival" details a teenaged girl's struggle with an older woman who all the men her age find more attractive than she. Kipling writes about a man who, through Kipling's help, learns that the heat in India is really bad.

The section entitled "The Masque of Plenty," is written about the real life of shepherds. It is written as if it were a musical play, complete with musical notations. The poem indicates that although shepherds seem to have a perfect life, they have problems with which they deal on a daily basis. This is parallel to the lives of countries and leaders. Even though these may seem to be perfect on the outside, they each have their own problems. People, however, have a tendency to believe when they are told their lives are perfect, even though there is solid proof that they do not have the things they need to be satisfied.

In the poem, "The Lovers' Litany," Kipling refers to a number of women to whom the same man has said that their love can never die. This poem indicates the fickle nature of love. The poem "The Betrothed" is written about a man given the opportunity to choose between his fiancée and his smoking habit. Unfortunately, the man chooses his smoking habit instead of his fiancée. A section of sayings entitled "Certain Maxims of Hafiz" includes a group of nineteen sayings. These sayings are reflections on everyday



life, including the way men and women relate to one another especially in terms of courtship or marriage.

Prelude through Certain Maxims of Hafiz Analysis

Although Kipling's writings were recorded more than one hundred years ago, it is significant to notice how many of the topics that he writes about are still issues with which the modern world is still dealing. For instance, in the poem "What Happened" Kipling writes about a man who sought permission to carry weapons. As a result, the government gave all men the right to carry weapons, allowing them to attack men like Mookerjee, who were upstanding citizens of their towns. In "The Man Who Could Write," Boanerges Blitzen learns that reporting the truth does not always get one the fame they desire.

Kipling deals with some very serious issues in his poetry including gun control, death and murder, but he always manages to keep the tone of poems light and entertaining. Even as he addresses these tough subjects, Kipling pokes fun at the people about whom he is writing. Kipling also uses unique wording to describe the subjects and items about which he writes. For instance, in the poem "The Last Department," Kipling refers to a casket as a "strait, wood-scantled office." Though the poem makes the point that there is no man who is not replaceable, Kipling's use of language helps him to make this point in such a way that the reader laughs at himself because he can see himself as a subject of the poem, as one of the many millions of people who believes that they have made some great mark on the world. Notice also the play on words in the poem "The Betrothed." Kipling uses the word nicotine, the name of the addictive ingredient in cigars, as the name of a god. Kipling plays with the spelling of this word making it appear to be a person's name, Nick o' Teen.

While most of his writings are in the forms of poems, Kipling sometimes explores other forms of writing. "The Masque of Plenty," for instance, is written in the form of a play complete with set descriptions and stage directions. In addition, the section, "Certain Maxims of Hafiz," is presented as a collection of brief sayings with an average of only three lines of text each.



The Moon of Other Days through The Rhyme of the Three Sealers

The Moon of Other Days through The Rhyme of the Three Sealers Summary

The poem "What the People Said," begins with Queen Victoria telling the people of her land to rejoice because she has been given both ruling power and years to rule. The plowman working his fields, however, realizes that God is the one who is in control of everything. In the poem, "The Undertaker's Horse," Kipling writes about the way that the undertaker's horse reminds him of those who have died. This horse also reminds the writer that one day death will come for him. It is indicated that the only way that the writer will be pleased will be to see the horse reduced to death.

In the poem, "One Viceroy Resigns," Lord Dufferin, an older, experienced viceroy shares his wisdom with a young up and coming viceroy. In this long poem Lord Dufferin calls upon God to help the young viceroy with the hard job that is before him. He warns the youth, however, that the mark that he might believe that he has made on the world by the work he will do will soon be washed away and forgotten. At the conclusion of the poem, Dufferin warns Lansdowne not to dream.

A worker in a ship's galley looks back with pride on the years he has worked on the ship in the poem entitled, "The Galley-Slave." The man first describes the physical appearance of this ship, then the hardness of life on the ship. He also describes his feelings of sadness as he leaves the ship that he loves so deeply. The marks on his body gained during his service have made him forever part of the ship. The man even takes a glimpse into the future where he sees the ship being destroyed by enemies. He indicates that he hopes that he can return to the ship to assist those working to defend the vessel of which he is so proud.

In the poem "Buddha at Kamakura," it is suggested that although Christians may believe that those who worship Buddha are non-Christians, Buddha may be as close to God in human image as man can come. In the long poem "Three Sealers," Kipling describes a gunfight on the open seas between the crews of three sealing vessels.

The Moon of Other Days through The Rhyme of the Three Sealers Analysis

In addition to writing his poems in accepted English, Kipling often mimics the speech patterns of the people about whom he writes in his poems. "The Fall of Jock Gillespie," for instance, is written in the language of the common country Irishman. "Sestina of the Tramp-Royal" is written in a way that mimics the speech patterns of the tramp. Kipling



also tends to write his poems in a very structured form. For example, consider the poem, "The Miracles." The poem includes a total of nine stanzas with four lines per stanza. Each stanza includes the commonly used abab rhyme form. This means that the last word of the first line (a) rhymes with the last word of the third line (a). Similarly, the last word of the second line (b) and the last word of the fourth line (b) also rhyme. Kipling takes this rhyme scheme a step further, however, in the second and fourth lines where he not only rhymes the last words of these lines, but often uses the same word as the last word in these lines. Often the next to last words in these lines is also either an identical word or a rhyming word.

In "The Undertaker's Horse" Kipling relates the horse to death itself. Note in the poem "Zion" that Zion is a term used in reference to heaven, the place where it is believed good people will go when they die, while Baal refers to hell, the place where bad people will go when they die. In the poem, "The Song of the Banjo," Kipling uses onomatopoeia, a poetical device in which the writer includes words in his poem that represent the sounds that he includes in the poem.

Notice the similarity between the poems "One Viceroy Resigns" and "The Galley-Slave." Both of these poems detail the ending of a career for the main speaker of each poem. Each of the main speakers is proud of the work that they have done and believes that they have done a good job. Unlike the main character of "One Viceroy Resigns," the main character of "The Galley-Slave" still has an optimistic view of his job despite the harshness of the conditions that he has endured. The main character in "One Viceroy Resigns," however, has allowed what he has seen on his job to jade him.

One of Kipling's many talents in his writing is the vividness of his imagery. Note, for instance, the deep doom one feels as they read the section entitled "June" in the poem "Two Months." The language used makes the reader feel the oppressive heat and dryness. The thunder and lightening that come bring no rain. Kipling gives the objects in this section the characteristics of humans. For example, the sun is "sullen," the night "falls heavy as remembered sin." Kipling's tone changes in the section of this poem entitled "September." Although his tone is still heavy, there is a hint of hope that the coming winter brings.



McAndrew's Hymn through To the City of Bombay

McAndrew's Hymn through To the City of Bombay Summary

In "McAndrew's Hymn," an old seaman speaks with God about his days on the ship. In these lines, the man both praises God for the hard times he has survived and also tries to make some excuses for his behavior to his God. The man appears to realize, however, that even his good behavior and the man he has kept safe while under his watch do not make up for the bad that he has also done with his life. The poem "Mulholland's Contract" is also a seafaring tale. In this poem Mulholland makes a pact with God that if God saves him from a bad storm and the terrified steers for which he is in charge of caring, Mulholland will preach God's word. To Mulholland's disappointment, however, he is sent by God back to the ship to perform his ministry.

The poem, "The 'Mary Gloster,'" records the words of a hardworking father to his good for nothing son. The father asks his son only that the son take the father's body back to the place where his wife was buried at sea and bury him there also. The speaker in the poem "Cruisers" asks his reader to consider the life of a sailor on a warship. Through the poem he describes the sort of troubles with which the men working on this type of ship must deal.

The poem "In the Matter of One Compass" describes the certainty the writer has that, although he is headed out to sea, he will return to his homeland again. In his poem "Ave Imperatrix," Kipling reflects on an attempt to kill Queen Victoria. At the conclusion of his poem, Kipling promises that although he and those of his country might be slow in coming, they would be willing to fight for the queen if need be.

Sons who have conquered the world is the topic of the poem "The Song of the Sons." The content of the poem indicates that this particular mother should be more proud of the sons who have gone out into the world than those who have stayed close by her side. "The Song of the Cities" includes a total of fifteen cities the inhabitants of which send their greetings to the lady to whom they refer as their mother. In the poem "The Houses," Kipling writes about two households that are separated by great physical distance. Despite this great distance, however, those who live in these houses are very dependent upon one another.



McAndrew's Hymn through To the City of Bombay Analysis

The majority of the poems in the first part of this section, with the exception of the "The Oldest Song," deal with the sea or seafarers. Note that although the poems entitled "The First Chantey" and "The Last Chantey" don't appear to have much to do with the sea, they are actually songs that the sea men would sing while they worked on the boats. Starting with the poem "Ave Imperatrix!" however, the focus of the poems seems to turn from the sea and those who make their livelihood upon the sea to England's conquest of areas of the world formerly not controlled by the English.

A brief line of introduction to the poem "Ave Imperatrix" indicates that Kipling wrote the poem as a result of an assassination attempt on Queen Victoria. Although it is not stated, perhaps the poem "The Song of the Sons" also deals with Queen Victoria as well as the expansion of English territory to places through out the world. The mother in the poem probably refers to Queen Victoria while her sons are those who are fighting to help her conquer the world. The poem "The Song of the Cities" appears to be a continuation of "The Song of the Sons." It appears that in this poem each of the capital cities of each of the countries under England's rule are sending their greetings and a line of introduction to Queen Victoria. The poem "England's Answer" appears to be Queen Victoria's greeting in response to those given her by the separate cities.

A few of these poems also deal with man and his relationship with God. The poem "McAndrew's Hymn" records a man's discussion with God. Although the man does praise God for taking him through hard times, he also tries to make excuses for some of the ways in which he has acted that have not been according to God's will. Similarly, in the poem "Mulholland's Contract," the man makes a pact with God to behave as God wishes if God will help him to survive a storm. Although Mulholland has promised to do whatever God wants him to do, he is disappointed when God sends him back to the sea to preach God's word.



The Gypsy Trail through The Last Suttee

The Gypsy Trail through The Last Suttee Summary

The poem "The Gypsy Trail" describes the way of the gypsies. In the poem, the habits of these roaming peoples are compared to the way that various types of animals are drawn to certain areas of the world. In "Our Lady of the Snows," Kipling writes about his reflections on the implementation of the Canadian Preferential Tariff. The poem indicates that the Queen has implemented the tariff as a way to show favor to those countries who have been faithful to her causes while punishing those that have acted as enemies to her. The poem "The Young Queen" addresses the topic of the inauguration of the new queen of Australia. In this poem, the older Queen gives the young queen her blessing and prays that she will have the love of the people who serve her.

In "Ode," Kipling writes a poem of remembrance for those Australians killed in war. The poem "The Native Poem" describes the Englishmen who call England home and respect it as their motherland because their parents and elders have instructed them to do so. In the poem "The Lost Legion," Kipling speaks of a group of 'soldiers' who have gone out to war but have never been given credit for their deeds. The poem "Pharaoh and the Sergeant" details the relationship between a Pharaoh and Sergeant Whatsisname, who is sent to make this Pharaoh behave the way the English want him to behave.

The Gypsy Trail through The Last Suttee Analysis

In this section of poems, one of the main themes that surfaces quickly is the idea of English expansion. In fact, this theme carries over from the poems in the end of the last section of poems. A majority of the poems deal with great days in the expansion of English rule such as the implementation of the Canadian Preferential Tariff and the Inauguration of the new queen of Australia. In the poem "Our Lady of the Snows," Kipling writes about the countries and the tariff in terms of a lady taking charge of her own house. The use of this common language makes the poem more easily understandable to the common person.

Also in this section, there are a variety of styles of poems. The poem "An American," for instance, is written in groups of four stanzas. All of these stanzas have a common abab rhyming scheme. Similarly, the poem "The Young Queen" is also written in groups of four stanzas. However, in this poem, Kipling uses an aabb rhyming scheme. In the poem "Pharaoh and the Sergeant," Kipling makes fun of the insignificant nature of a particular sergeant by giving him the surname of Whatsisname, a word that can be broken down into a phrase that people generally use for a person when they can't remember their name, old what's his name.



General Joubert through The Lesson

General Joubert through The Lesson Summary

The poem "General Joubert" speaks of a general who gave his life in a war in South Africa. In the poem "Gehazi," Kipling refers to a man, now a judge, who is of the same character as Gehazi of the the Christian Bible. This man's dishonesty is evidenced by the leprosy on his skin. "The Ballad of the King's Jest" tells the story of a man who loved to talk and for this reason told the king that his enemies were coming. Instead of honoring the man, however, the king had him killed. "The Dove of Dacca" tells the story of a dove or homing pigeon perhaps, who, by flying to its home, was a traitor to the people who lived there and caused the destruction of the town.

The poem "The Ballad of Boh Da Thone" tells the story of a warrior who shot his enemy Captain O'Neil with a bullet made out of telegraph wire. While the Captain still suffers with a fever as a result of the wound, Babu Harendra hears the Captain say how he'd like to see Boh dead. Though almost accidental, Babu kills Boh and then presents the Captain, who has now taken a wife who knows nothing of his time at war, with the dismembered head of Boh. The poem concludes that seeing her husband relive the war and seeing the head causes her unborn child to have a birth mark in the shape of the Boh's head.

In the poem "The Lament of the Border Cattle Thief," a man who has become a prisoner as a result of his habit of stealing cows shares his sorrow concerning his condition. "The Boy Scouts' Patrol Song" warns the patrols to keep a close watch on their surroundings. Information in the poem indicates that even friendly looking objects can actually be dangerous. Kipling describes the destruction that can occur when groups of people refuse to fight when enemies are attacking them in the poem "Russia to the Pacifists." The poem "The Lesson" discusses the way in which a people can learn from the mistakes of their past.

General Joubert through The Lesson Analysis

Many of the poems in this section deal with Kipling's reflections on the various wars and battles that had taken place during his lifetime. Without knowing the history of each individual conflict, it is difficult to know exactly how each poem relates to the current events of Kipling's time. However, it is easy to tell from Kipling's writing that he did have an opinion of each of the conflicts and was well versed on the world happenings of his time period.

Also note Kipling's various references to the Christian Bible or characters from the Bible in this section of poems. For example, the poem "Gehazi" deals with a character from the Bible placed in England's time. This judge of Israel appears in England to judge the people as he did those in Israel. However, at the conclusion of the poem, this Israeli



judge is found to be suffering from leprosy, a disease thought to come from unclean living. The intent of the poem seems to show that even the judges of past times or Biblical times were not without sin. The poem "The Ballad of the King's Mercy" also deals with the idea of justice; however, in this particular poem, the king gives out street justice which is fast and uncompromising.

Kipling continues his play with language in this section of poems. One example of this can be found in "The Ballad of the King's Jest." In this poem, Kipling refers to a man and his mother and father in terms that one would generally use to describe horses and not people. There are also some very lengthy poems included in this particular section. Some poems are three or more pages long. "The Sacrifice of Er-heb" is a particularly long poem of nearly six pages.



Mesopotamia through Verses on Games

Mesopotamia through Verses on Games Summary

In the poem "Mesopotamia," Rudyard writes of young men who died for a cause. He indicates that those very people who led these men to die for the cause now wish to belittle the cause for which these young men died. It is indicated that the behavior of these men brings shame to the entire human race. "The Islanders" speaks of a people who have become soft slaves of their own desires. They don't honor men who are worthy of honor but instead thrust these people away and out of sight. In the poem "The Veterans," those honoring these former warriors ask the veterans to pray for them that they will have the courage to fight as bravely as the ones who came before they did.

The poem "The Declaration of London" refers to the peoples' attitudes as they see the Parliament reassemble after they had a brief taste of voting freedom. The words of a woman, humming as she works a lathe machine in a bullet factory, are recorded in the poem "The Song of the Lathe." It appears from the poem that both the woman's husband and son have been killed in the war for which the bullets are being made.

In the poem "The Hyaenas," Kipling writes about the behavior of these creatures. He indicates they see the dead men they feed upon only as a safe form of nourishment. Kipling notes that he believes the hyaenas have no soul, therefore the animals cannot be found guilty of defiling the dead as humans would be if they did the same thing. "Hymn Before Action" also deals with war, but it is a plea from the soldiers to God before they go to battle. The soldiers pray even for mercy for those who do not serve the Christian God as their own.

Mesopotamia through Verses on Games Analysis

In this section of poetry, there are many examples of poetry where an explanatory line or paragraph is included before the poem. For instance, in the poem "The Declaration of London," it is explained before the poem that the following lines are written about the re-assembly of Parliament after a new king is coroneted. Another poem, "The Song of the Lathes," has an explanatory sentence that explains these lines are the words of a widow as she works at a lathe. This information allows the reader to better understand what is actually happening in the poem. The lady was once married to a man who has apparently been killed in warfare. For the past two years, she has been working in this factory that produces bullets as her contribution to the war efforts.

In the poem "Rimmon" a soldier writes about the way in which he bows to the god Rimmon even though he knows that this god has no power and has not aided himself and his comrades in winning the war. Kipling indicates in the poem "The City of Brass" that he takes the inspiration for this poem from the book "The Arabian Nights." The passage from which this poem is derived is presented along with the lines of the poem.



Tomlinson through The Young British Soldier

Tomlinson through The Young British Soldier Summary

In the poem "Tomlinson," the character Tomlinson dies and goes to heaven. When he is asked what he had done to earn eternity in heaven, Tomlinson is unable to come up with an answer that suits St. Peter's tastes. For this reason, Tomlinson is sent to hell. Once in hell, however, Tomlinson is not found to be bad enough a sinner to warrant his stay there. Therefore, the devil sends Tomlinson back to earth to become a better sinner. In the poem "The Female of the Species," Kipling discusses the way the female counterpart of several species of animals, including humans, are more quick to strike and kill when they sense danger than men. Kipling notes that men tend to discuss with one another how a problem should be handled while the female thinks only of keeping her young safe.

"The Gift of the Sea" tells the story of a mother and widow so caught up in the death of their own child that one of them ignores and the other does not recognize the cries of another child in need. By the time they investigate the strange noises they hear, the child needing help is already dead. The poem "The Sons of Martha" expands upon a Biblical story in which Mary sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him talk while Martha tends to household duties. The poem is written on the pretext that these ladies' sons are being made to live the consequences of their mothers' actions.

The section of poems entitled "Epitaphs of the War" includes a variety of short poems telling the story of various types of people. For instance, the story of a "have" and a "have not" is told, as well as the story of an only child. Also included is the epitaph of a Hindu Sepoy in France, a pelican, a native water-carrier, a sleepy sentinel, a statesman, a rebel, a convoy escort, and a bridegroom.

The poem "To Thomas Atkins" is tagged as the prelude to the poems "Barrack-Room Ballads." The prelude indicates that the writer hopes that one day the subject of the poem will be treated as he should be treated. Until that point, the writer gives Thomas his best respects.

Tomlinson through The Young British Soldier Analysis

Note the irony in the conclusion of the poem "Tomlinson." The devil sends Tomlinson back to earth in order to spread the devil's word about sin. However, even the devil leaves Tomlinson with the hope that "God," who is the enemy of the devil and an entity not particularly well known to Tomlinson, be with Tomlinson during his return to earth.



The poem "En-dor" expands upon a verse from the book of Samuel in the Christian Bible. Kipling takes this verse to indicate that a person can meet spirits similar to people they knew in life while on the way to En-dor. They must, however, have a third party to interpret what this spirit has to say to them.

In the poem "A Pilgrim's Way," a man talks about how he looks to other people of God not only to help him know how he should live, but also how he should react to others. Although it is not stated, this poem is almost an expansion of the Golden Rule which instructs people to treat others as they would like to be treated. It is this idea of accepting others' faults and mistakes just as one would like others to accept his faults and mistakes that is the main theme of this poem.

The poem "The Last Rhyme of True Thomas," is an example of the way that Kipling uses language to portray the personality of his characters. In Kipling's writing, the ending "g's" are dropped off the words as well as the ending "ve's" are dropped off the word have. This gives the poem the feeling that it was written by an Irish or Scottish person based on Kipling's linguistic clues.



Mandalay through Lichtenberg

Mandalay through Lichtenberg Summary

In the poem "Mandalay," a British soldier writes about his desire to return to the Burmese girl whom he met by the old Moulmein Pagoda. The soldier describes what his lover looked like when he first met her and what she was doing. He also records how strongly he wants to be sent away from combat and back to happier times. The poem "Troopin'" records the excitement that soldiers feel when their time in the service has expired and they are at last allowed to return home.

The poem "Shillin' a Day" tells the story of a man formerly in the service who is now old and nervous and no longer able to fight. "Back to the Army Again" is a poem that details the thoughts of a man who has rejoined the Army, though he pretends that he had no military experience, in order to get in off the street. In the poem "That Day," a soldier writes about a day in which the fighting did not go as the soldiers or their commanders intended.

In the poem "Cholera Camp," a soldier tells of the conditions in a camp where the disease cholera is spreading among the men. "The Ladies" is a poem that tells about a man who believes he has learned all there is to know about women from four ladies with whom he has spent much time. Similarly, in the poem "The Sergeant's Weddin'," Kipling writes of a sergeant who is married to a woman both of whom are known to be good for nothing. The people celebrate their wedding, however, just as if both members of the wedding party were both pure. The poem "The 'Eathen" describes the way in which a man who wants to serve in the Army must act differently from the common heathen man. The poem "Mary, Pity Women" is told from the viewpoint of a woman who loves a man despite the cruel, mean things that he had done to her.

The poem "The Service Man" addresses the way in which a man loses his individual identity when he joins the military service. He is, from that point on, a military person before he is his own person. Similarly, in the poem "M.I." the writer speaks of the way in which he is now known only as "M.I." The poem "The Married Man" points out the differences between the bachelor and the married man. In the poem "Lichtenberg," the writer speaks of the way a certain smell, in this case "the smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg," can bring back clear memories.

Mandalay through Lichtenberg Analysis

An overwhelming majority of poems in this section deals with soldiers. These poems are generally written from a soldier's point of view. They also deal with a variety of issues affecting the soldier such as being away from family, experiences during war and their feelings towards the battles in which they are fighting. In order to make the poems appear to be realistic, Kipling writes the poems in the rough, ungrammatically correct



language that a soldier might use. Kipling also uses shortened forms of words and dropped consonants, mimicking the way that a soldier might actually have written the poems.

Several of the poems in this section, including "Mandalay" and "Toopin'," deal with the topic of soldiers either wanting to return home from war or finally being allowed to return home from war. One of the first thoughts on these soldiers' minds seems to be their desire to get back to the women whom they loved.

The poem "Mary, Pity Women" has Biblical overtones as the woman in the poem calls on Mary, the mother of Jesus, to have pity for women when men are cruel to them. There is also some indication that the woman speaking in the poem might even be Mary Magdalene whom Jesus saved from being stoned to death because she was caught in an adulterous relationship. Although she loves Jesus because he freed her, she is also grieved by him when he leaves her to die on the cross. Considering that this poem is included in a section of poems speaking about soldiers, the poem may even have been written from the point of view of a woman whose husband or boyfriend is leaving her for military duty.

The poem "Boots" is one of the most interesting poems in this section form-wise. The theme of the poem is the repetitive nature of the job of the soldier and the inability of the soldiers to break out of this repetition. To copy this repetition, Kipling repeats words and also forces his readers to slow down their reading by placing long dashes between these repetitive words. These writing techniques make the poem appear to be sluggish and repetitive, just like the job of the soldier.



Stellenbosch through The Puzzler

Stellenbosch through The Puzzler Summary

In the poem "Half-Ballade of Watervale," a man charged with loading prisoners onto a transport ship indicates that he understands how these men must feel because he too has been among soldiers captured during war. The man writes that he would, "give the gold o' twenty Rands" to set these men free. The poem "Wilful-missings" is written from the viewpoint of soldiers who have deserted from the war. Although others may believe they are dead and buried, these men have actually just started a different life and have no desire to return to their old life.

A soldier reminisces over the way that he has grown up and matured during his time in the armed services in the poem "The Return." The soldier writes specifically of experiences, such as seeing young people killed in the war, from which he has learned during his time in the services. In the poem "The Way Through the Woods," Kipling writes of a road that is no longer used and cannot even be recognized as a road any longer. However, Kipling indicates that on some nights the sounds of horses' hooves and swish of skirts can still be heard on this long gone road.

The poem "The Kingdom," addresses the way a person can put much effort into gaining a certain goal, even though the results of this effort may not be worth time and energy if they do not impress the one he intends to impress. The poem "The Cuckoo Song" describes the yearly ritual celebration of spring by an old woman feeding a cuckoo bird from a basket at Heffle Cuckoo Fair. In the poem "The Charm," it is described how just a few fistfuls of English dirt and the flowers of the land can make even a pauper feel like a king.

In the section entitled "Chapter Headings," these bits of poetry are introductions to chapters included in a book. Each poem addresses a different subject, presumably the subject that will be dealt with in the following chapter. Topics range from religion and love to murder and cheating. In the poem "Eddi's Service," the priest in the poem leads a special service even though the weather is stormy and a donkey and ox are the only ones who attend. The poem "Our Lady of the Sackcloth" tells of an old man who is requested not to lead services any longer because he is so old. The Virgin Mary comes to him as he tries to sew a sackcloth garment for himself and does the work herself. Later, Mary promises him that he will once again be allowed to lead services because the time for his death is near.

Stellenbosch through The Puzzler Analysis

Men's lives and the impact of their lives are compared to the length and impact of the lives of flowers in the poem "Cities and Thrones and Powers." The theme of the poem is that it doesn't matter how important a person believes he is, what he has done is



generally insignificant in the larger scheme of things and there will always be someone who will come along to replace them. The poem "The Way Through the Woods" has a similar theme. This poem speaks of a road that no longer exists. However, the poem indicates that on some nights, sounds once heard on the now quiet road can be heard again.

One poem in this section that has an interesting rhythm and rhyming scheme is the poem "The Floods." The words "the hills" are repeated multiple times during the poem. In fact, this phrase is used 20 times during the course of the 40-line poem. Each 8-line stanza has a rhyming scheme of ababccdb. Some lines in the poem have a sing-song rhythm formed by pairing stressed and unstressed syllables. In some stanzas, however, this rhythm is broken by a line of stressed syllables. These lines break up the continuity of the poem somewhat like the floods break up the landscape of the area.



The Press through An Astrologer's Song

The Press through An Astrologer's Song Summary

In the poem "The Press," Kipling notes the power of the press and news media over the opinions and viewpoints of common men. In the poem "Hadramauti," Christians are referred to as spiteful, hateful people. The writer of the poem admits that he killed a Christian because he felt that the man mocked him. The poem "Gallio's Song" is written based upon a Christian scripture about the trial of the apostle Paul. Because the two sides in the conflict do not squabble over Caesar's rules, Gallio is not interested in listening to the case of either party. "The Fabulists" refers to the way that a person must present their case in order to have people hear and appreciate what they are trying to say.

The poems "A British-Roman Song" and "A Pict Song" both deal with the importance of the city of Rome. In "A Pict Song," the speaker refers to the way the "little" people can become a disease that can overcome even a city as strong and powerful as Rome. The poem "The Stranger" deals with the way that an unfamiliar group or race of people can make another group feel uncomfortable just because they are different. In much the same way, the "Poor Honest Men" write about the way in which they are misunderstood just because they are different.

In the poem "Jubal and Tubal Cain," these two men are presented as opposites. Jubal believes in preaching about the evils of earth while Tubal takes action and does things that will help to right these wrongs. The poem "The Law of the Jungle" expounds upon certain truths of jungle life that can cause one to be killed if they are not followed. The poem "A Servant When He Reigneth" speaks of the four things that the earth cannot bear. A reigning servant is the one curse that is listed first among the things that the earth cannot bear.

In the poem "Our Fathers of Old," the writer speaks of the way in which many of the remedies of the ages gone by were not useful or advantageous. Although the speaker does not encourage using the cures, he wishes that the people of his time period had the same heart that the people of older days had. He wishes people still had the desire to try a cure or to experiment even though they weren't sure if the outcome would be positive or negative.

The poem "Parade-Song of the Camp-Animals" allows six different types of animals to tell the stories of the services they have provided for mankind. In the poem "The Prodigal Son," Kipling embellishes upon the story of the prodigal son by telling what might happen to him after he is welcomed back into the family. Kipling indicates that the boy has really not repented from his wild ways nor has he realized that he is responsible for his actions when he plundered the wealth his father had given him. In fact, at the conclusion of the poem, the boy leaves his father and returns to his ways believing this time will turn out differently.



In the poem "Cain and Abel," Kipling records an embellished story of the murder of Abel by Cain. In the conclusion of the poem, however, Kipling indicates that he believes the punishment that Cain was given by God was perhaps not fair.

The Press through An Astrologer's Song Analysis

Notice the Biblical references in the poem "Hadramauti." For instance, the seasons refer to a passage in Proverbs where the writer indicates there is a season for everything in life. In the poem, the Christian acts in such an opposite way from which his beliefs would indicate that the writer of the poem is moved to kill the man. The poem "Prophets at Home" also includes Biblical references including a reference to the town of Nineveh, which is the place that Jonah was ordered to go before he was swallowed by the whale, a creature also mentioned in the poem. "Macdonough's Song" is one of those poems that deal with issues eerily similar to those with which humans still deal today. These issues include governmental power versus religious power as well as the dangers of a "holy" government.

This section of poetry includes the poem "If." This poem is possibly one of Kipling's most well-known poems since as it is often quoted at graduation services and sometimes printed on birthday cards. The poem is perhaps so well-liked because it gives instructions on being a true "man" or adult. These instructions are as relevant today as they were when Kipling first wrote them.



The Power of the Dog through Tin Fish

The Power of the Dog through Tin Fish Summary

In the poem "The Power of the Dog," Kipling writes about the way people cause more grief for themselves when they get an animal, in this case a dog, to love. He indicates that even without the pain of losing this companion, there is already enough pain in the world. He wonders why people want to put themselves through this additional pain. "The Rabbi's Song" talks about the way that people, as God's creations, try to contact Him and hope that there is a way for their words to reach Him. The poem also indicates, however, that man believes that he is unworthy of having a close and loving relationship with his creator.

The poem "The Bee-Boy's Song" seems to be about the curiosity of the bees. These bees seem to want to know about all that goes on. If they aren't properly notified, the bees threaten to give no honey. In the poem "The Song of Seven Cities," a ruler speaks of the seven cities of which he was once lord. Although these cities were destroyed, the ruler plans to rebuild them. The poem "The Return of the Children" addresses Christ's willingness to let His children stay in His presence as well as leave it when they so desire.

In the poem "To James Whitcomb Riley," Kipling writes about the way that he believes that children of all places and races will all be able to enjoy and relate to the stories written by this particular author. The poem "Old Mother Laidinwool" is about a woman who at first desires to come back to life and walk among the living. As it becomes cold and dark, however, Mother Laidinwool decides she wants back in her grave.

The poem "The Widower" speaks of the feelings of one who has lost the love of his life. He looks forward to the time that he will be able to join his lover in heaven. In the poem "The Comforters," Kipling advises his readers not to try to give advice to others when they have not been in their position. He says that one should do this so that when they are in a position of bad luck, they can tell others not to give unwanted advice.

The Power of the Dog through Tin Fish Analysis

The poem "The Rabbi's Song" refers to a chapter in the second book of Samuel, chapter 14, verse 14. This is one of the few poems that seems to deal with Biblical matters related to God and religion. The poem "The Bee-Boy's Song" is interesting because it is written from the point of view of the bees. The premise of the poem is that if people don't tell the bees what they want to know, they will give the humans no honey.

In the poem "The Return of the Children," Kipling plays upon Christ's request in the Bible to allow the children to come to Him. In this poem Kipling appears to mean all of mankind when he speaks of the children. While Christ does not forbid any person from coming to Him, He also does not require that they stay with Him if they desire to leave.



The poem "To James Whitcomb Riley" is Kipling's response to a man who writes poems for children. In the poem, Kipling touches on the idea that although he and Riley live in different countries and will likely never meet, these rhymes have caused a connection between the two. He believes that all children who read these poems will be able to relate to the subject matter despite the country in which they live. In the poem "The Land," Kipling refers to a piece of land that has belonged to a variety of different people who have made a variety of improvements on the land. At the conclusion of the poem, however, it is indicated that it is the man who first decided the land should be drained who actually owns the land.

The section of poems "Chapter Headings" are the introductory portions of poems that describe the way in which several animals got their unique characteristics. The section preceding "How the Whale Got its Throat," for instance, references the arrival of a ship at sea to a particular latitude and longitude. Similarly, the section preceding "How the Camel Got its Hump," describes how even humans can get humps if they don't have enough to do.



The King's Task through The Marred Drives of Windsor

The King's Task through The Marred Drives of Windsor Summary

The poem "A Truthful Song," addresses the idea that things do not change much in the way that common jobs, such as laying bricks or building ships, are done. In "A Smuggler's Song," a smuggler tells his wife to look the other way and not ask questions when she sees things she does not understand. He warns her that if she asks questions, she will be told lies. The poem, "The Juggler's Song" is a poem written by a person who works as a crowd pleasing, awe-inspiring juggler.

The poem "The Runes of Weland's Sword," tells of the terrible things that a sword can help men do. The poem "The Four Angels" speaks of the fall of Adam and the stages of this fall as if these were the stages of a blooming, and then dying apple tree. In the poem "The Prayer," the speaker writes of his brother who worships a heathen god. Although they do not worship the same god, the writer hears, in the man's pleas to his god, the same longings that he has in his own heart.

The premise of the poem "The Looking-Glass" is that no matter who a person is, a mirror will show them as they are. Although Queen Mary was attractive, she was unlucky and lonely. The old queen in the first stanza of the poem will never appear in the mirror as pretty or as young as she once was. One of Kipling's shortest poems is named "Sepulchral." The poem indicates that a woman who loves a man is as determined and as unstoppable as death when it comes to a man.

"The Braggart" tells of a man who claims that his car can travel more than eighty miles per hour. The poem also indicates, however, that the man has never tried to make the car go that fast. In the poem "The Dying Chauffeur," the driver of the car asks that he be taken to see the car that he has driven for so long. As the chauffeur talks about his ailments, he refers to himself in car terminology. He refers to his heart as a left-handed cylinder and says that his gears are stripped.

The King's Task through The Marred Drives of Windsor Analysis

The poem "Tin Fish" talks about warships in the words of sea creatures. Although they are not really fish, these underwater vessels must have seemed like fish as they made their way through the water during wartime. Kipling flexes his poem writing dexterity in the poem "The Juggler's Song." He phrases his verses with repetition of key words that mimic the work of the juggler.

The poem "The Runes on Weland's Sword" is written in the voice of a sword, an example of Kipling's use of personification. In the poem "The Advertisement," Kipling uses the poetical device of alliteration, a technique where the writer repeats a sound or letter several times in the course of a line or stanza of a poem. The line, "Fairing with friends far among fields," is an example of alliteration.



Songs Written for C.R.L.Fletcher's A History of England, Verses from Land and Sea Tales and verses from Debits and Credits

Songs Written for C.R.L.Fletcher's A History of England, Verses from Land and Sea Tales and verses from Debits and Credits Summary

This section of poems is taken from three different books of Kipling's poetry. The poems in the section entitled "Songs Written for C.R.L. Fletcher's A History of England" deal mainly with major historical landmarks in English history such as the signing of the Magna Carta and the Saxon invasion of England. "Verses from Land and Sea Tales" deal mainly with the fighting of wars. These wars include wars against the sea, wars against the self and wars against other nations.

The first poem included in the section entitled, "Songs Written for C.R.L. Fletcher's A History of England" is "The River's Tale." In this poem, the Thames River tells the story of its history to the bridges built across it. In the poem "Pirates in England," Kipling writes of the Saxon invasion of England. He indicates these men were able to take away from the English their material possessions, but were not able to gain control of the English winds that eventually wrecked the pirates' ships. In the poem "The Reeds at Runnymede," the reeds speak of their recollection of the events that transpired with the signing of the Magna Carta.

The king in the poem "The King's Job" realizes from a group of small children that the best job in the world is the job that has been given to him. The importance of a united ruler and people is addressed in the poem "Together." Kipling argues that if a ruler and people are united as Queen Elizabeth and her people are, then they will not be able to be overcome by any outside force. A musket rifle is described in terms of a lady in the poem "Brown Bess." In the poem "The Secret of the Machines," Kipling writes that although machines can be made that will do all things, these machines are just machines, created by people.

In the section of poems entitled "Verses from Land and Sea Tales," Kipling fittingly begins with a set of lyrics entitled "A Preface." In this preface, Kipling urges his readers to make becoming fit, both in body and mind, their goal. He argues that many nations have been destroyed simply because their people were not fit. In the poem "The Junk and the Dhow," Kipling refers to sailors and ships that traversed the ocean even before there were modern day boats. The poem "The Hour of the Angel" refers to the point of death and the moment of judgment that all men must face.



The endless hope that humans have even in their times of trouble is the theme of the poem "The Last Lap." "The Nurses" speaks of how easy it often is for a well-trained man to deal with the troubles that his job throws his way. Kipling indicates that these people save the majority of their brainpower, using their full ability only when they are facing a crisis. A child's song is the topic of the poem "A Counting-Out Song." Kipling first refers to the way that school children play the game of "It" in the schoolyard. He then widens his view of human nature and indicates that the world was tamed by a great game of "It" that men have played with the universe since the beginning of time.

"The Changelings" is the name of the first poem included in the section of Kipling's book entitled, "Verses from Debits and Credits." In this first poem, Kipling presents a tale about a grocer and bank president who spend some time at sea, but later have nothing to show for their hard times. The poem "The Survival" speaks of the passing nature of all things on earth. Even as he writes about this passing nature, Kipling poses the question that there must be some supreme being who has created and can outlast all of the earth. The poem "The Burden" speaks of the pain the Mary Magdalene felt as she watched Jesus killed, and then raised from the dead.

Songs Written for C.R.L.Fletcher's A History of England, Verses from Land and Sea Tales and verses from Debits and Credits Analysis

Many of the poems in this section deal with the themes of history and current events. The poem "Jane's Marriage" appears to be a salute to Jane Austen. As the angels from heaven search for one who loved Jane, they happen upon Captain Wentworth, one of the characters Jane created, reading Jane's novel Persuasion.



Verses from Limits and Renewals and Miscellaneous Verse

Verses from Limits and Renewals and Miscellaneous Verse Summary

In the poem "Gertrude's Prayer," the speaker indicates that there are some things, such as the morning time, that can be lost and never gotten back. In the poem "Dinah in Heaven," the character Dinah dies but is not allowed into heaven. She is determined to wait until her man arrives. When Dinah's man does arrive in heaven, and St. Peter sees Dinah's reaction to the man, he allows them both into heaven. "Four-feet" is another poem about a dog. In this poem, however, it is indicated that the writer of the poem dies and the dog who has followed him throughout life cannot go with him in death.

In the poem "The Disciple," Kipling indicates that it is the followers of any particular religion who do the most damage and cause the most injury to any religious beliefs. The poem "The Mother's Son" is written about a man put into a mental institution. The man refers to himself as his mother's son. In the poem "Akbar's Bridge," the great Akbar learns a valuable lesson when he takes it upon himself to row an elderly woman from one shore of a river to the other. At the conclusion of the poem, as the woman suggests as they cross the river together, Akbar decides to have a bridge built across the river instead of building a new mosque. In the poem "At His Execution," St. Peter indicates that at his execution he will finally be able to be himself, a self that he sacrificed in order to win people to belief in Christ. In the poem "The Cure," Kipling asks respect for a poor preacher. Kipling requests only that the reader love the preacher for his life of poverty and service to people and the Lord.

Kipling writes about the decision to send young men whose studies had been interrupted by war back to college. He plays with the idea that these men will be transported back to the boyhood of learning. Kipling wonders if this transition will be possible for men who have seen and experienced so much through war and hard times. In "A Song of French Roads," Kipling writes a poem that both praises and pokes fun at the French system of numbering their roads. "London Stone" is a poem that describes the process of grieving. In the poem "The King's Pilgrimage," Kipling writes of the men who were killed protecting a cause in which they believed even though it took them away from their own families and countries. Kipling indicates these men would be grieved to learn that the people for whom they died now ridicule their sacrifice.

"Poison of Asps" indicates that man's inquisitiveness about snakes stems from the supposed incident with the devil, who was disguised as a snake, in the Garden of Eden. Kipling writes asking forgiveness for his dog's bad behaviors in the poem "His Apologies." The poem "Fox-Hunting" is a history of this sport written from the viewpoint of the fox. Although the poem deals with the topic of hunting, it is also intended to bring attention to the laws and modernization that have brought an end to what the fox refers



to as "decent sport." Kipling writes about the calm between storms often experienced in hurricanes in the poem "The Storm Cone." This poem relates to life in that just as a calm period does not mean that a weather storm is over, a calm period in life also does not indicate that the storms or troubles of life are over.

Verses from Limits and Renewals and Miscellaneous Verse Analysis

Dinah in heaven is a type of riddle in which the woman, Dinah, turns out to be a man's pet dog. It might be originally assumed that Dinah is a woman but Kipling gives hints throughout the poem that Dinah is not human. First, Kipling indicates that Dinah waits with her ears fully-cocked, a symbol of a waiting, anxious dog. Kipling also writes that Dinah's kind are not allowed into heaven. While it might be believed that this indicates that Dinah was a sinner, it probably indicates only that she was an animal. It is in the next to last line of the poem, when Dinah licks her master's face, that the reader realizes for sure that this character is indeed a dog.

Note that the poem "The Coiner" is intended to be sung. In the brief introduction to the poem, Kipling even suggests tunes to which the poem should be sung. In the poem "Akbar's Bridge," take into consideration the description of the temple that Akbar hopes to build. Each aspect of the temple is described using a term that relates to an element of faith. In the poem "London Stone," Kipling answers the question that appears in the book of First Corinthians in the Christian Bible. This question asks death where its sting and victory is. Kipling reasons that both the sting and victory of death can be found in the action of grieving.

In the poem "His Apologies," Kipling presents a poem where his acts of seeking forgiveness for his dog are made to appear to be as a human seeking forgiveness from God. Kipling uses the language of religion to show how like animals man is in his disobedience and sinfulness. We must sometimes have a third party to intercede on our behalf to help smooth out the things that we have done wrong.



Characters

Ahasuerus Jenkins

Ahasuerus Jenkins is an Army leader written about in the poem "Army Headquarters." Although he is not a good horseman and people laugh at the way in which he salutes, he has a beautiful tenor singing voice. Jenkins uses his voice as well as his false praise to win the affection of Cornelia Agrippa. Cornelia's husband is in control of a department in the Army. Cornelia, in turn, uses her influence and control over her husband to keep Jenkins from being sent back to active duty. Instead Jenkins is given a desk job and a double salary.

Matun

Matun is a blind beggar attacked by the bear Adam-zad, who supposedly can stand on his hind legs like a man. This beggar tells his story to the men who go presently to fight the bear with their modern rifles. The beggar asks for money to show people the wounds from his bear attack. He then also requires payment to recover his scars with the bandages. During the attack, the bear supposedly ripped off the beggar's entire face.

Lord Dufferin

Lord Dufferin is an old viceroy who tries to give advice to a young viceroy who will be taking his place. He has worked in his position for twenty years and has seen things that still give him nightmares. He is glad to be going back to Rome and to the comfort of his books. Dufferin's work has made him very wise to the ways of people, but also very jaded. He questions the existence of God.

Rahere

Rahere is a jester in King Henry's court. He is feared by the Normal Lords, but flattered by churchmen. Gilbert the physician suspects Rahere is suffering from distress caused by an excess of wealth, wit, power and fame. In his sickness, Rahere wanders to the gallows where he meets a leper and a woman who are baking bread and enjoying each other's company. The physician watches Rahere's reaction to this couple and realizes that through this picture of a couple who are happy with one another even though neither is perfect, Rahere is seeing the spirit of God.



Tomlinson

Tomlinson is a man who, on his death, was found worthy of entrance neither into heaven nor hell. Instead, he is sent back to earth to either sin badly enough that he can enter hell, or garner a reason to allow him into heaven.

Dinah

In the poem "Dinah in Heaven," Dinah at first appears to be a woman who is waiting for God, or Jesus, to meet her in heaven. In the second stanza, it becomes apparent that Dinah is a dog. However, she is not allowed into heaven because she is a dog. When Dinah's master does arrive in heaven, he asks if the one is there who had saved him from drunkenness. St. Peter allows the man to look, believing it is a person for whom Dinah's master is looking. When the dog runs out from under a chair into her master's arms, however, St. Peter lets both of them into heaven.

Mother Laidinwool

Description



Objects/Places

Little House in Simla

It is in this little house in Simla that Delilah lived during the prehistoric days.

Quetta

Quetta is the location where Jack Barrett is sent.

Bow Bazar

Bow Bazar is the Indian town in which Hurree Chunder Mookerjee ran a newspaper.

Domino

The domino is a similar coat worn by two different ladies in the poem "Pink Dominoes."

Nick o' Teen

Nick o' Teen is the name of the "god" whom the writer of the poem "The Betrothed" has served for more than seven years. Note the play on words as Kipling turns the word nicotine into a proper name.

Old Moulmein Pagoda

The Old Moulmein Pagoda is the place where the British soldier meets his Chinese lady, Supiyawlat.

Merrow Down

Merrow Down is a place where ancient Britons previously met, talked and bartered items.

Walworth Bank

One of the men who goes to sea in this poem was formerly the head of Walworth Bank.

Akbar's Bridge

Akbar's Bridge is the bridge that Akbar decides to build instead of the fine mosque that he had originally planned to build.

Themes

Religious Topics

Many of Kipling's poems deal with topics not only about God or religion but also about ideas that deal with Kipling's own peculiar take on religious stories or topics. For instance, in two of his poems Kipling retells, or embellishes upon, familiar Bible stories. In the first of these poems, "Cain and Abel," Kipling writes about what he refers to as the western version of the Biblical account of these two brothers. In this account, Cain takes the law in his own hands when Abel steals water from him to water his livestock. The outcome is the same. Abel is murdered by Cain and Cain is punished by God, but in the Biblical version, Abel is murdered by Cain because God accepts Abel's sacrifice and does not accept Cain's.

In the second poem of this same nature, Kipling completes the story of the prodigal son. Instead of living in peace and harmony with his family as one might expect from a son who has returned home after wasting his fortune, the son actually leaves home again. Although some people may consider this a foolish act on the part of the son, it is actually very representative of the way that most people live their lives. Often, even when people are offered a second chance, or are treated kindly by people they have wronged, these people will revolt and return to the old ways because these ways are more comfortable to them. They figure, as the prodigal son does, that the second time around, things will come out differently.

Other Biblical references in Kipling's poems include the advice of one resigning viceroy to the man who will replace him in the poem "One Viceroy Resigns." The poem indicates that though the man has lived a life of piety, he has become jaded and now questions the existence of God. Another poem that gets its central theme from a Biblical source is the poem "The Rabbi's Song." This poem speaks of the way that God's children try to reach him with their thoughts and prayers even though they know that they are not worthy of his presence.

Topics Still Dealt with Today

One of the characteristics of Kipling's poems that make them timeless is that some of the topics that he addresses are topics that are applicable even to today's man. For instance, in the poem "A General Summary," Kipling writes about the way that even since prehistoric times, man has changed very little. He notes that man still chases down and kills other men, these killings are just done in different ways. Kipling notes that the things that he writes about are not new, but have been tormenting men since the beginning of time. He also indicates these same sins will continue to torment people until the end of time.



Another poem that deals with a topic that is still an issue in the modern world is the poem, "What Happened." In this poem, the main character seeks permission to keep a weapon. When he is allowed to do so, however, people who will use weapons to hurt innocent people are also allowed to keep weapons. In the conclusion of the poem, the main character is killed by a man with a weapon, which the action on the part of Mookerjee allowed them to have. This desire and fight to have the freedom to carry a weapon is one that still continues today.

Other poems that deal with issues that are still alive today are the poems that deal with the press and newspapers. The poem "The Press," for instance, speaks of the power that the media holds over the lives of the people. The media has the ability to shape the way that people think about events that happen all around them. The way they choose to present these ideas can shape the way an entire population views what is happening around them.

Verse Structure

One of the things that makes Kipling's verses stand out is the variety of different ways that he finds to structure and style his poems. While most of his verse is written in traditional poem form, some of Kipling's verses are written in the form of songs and plays. Some of his verses are even written as introductions to longer works.

Many of Kipling's poems are long poems, some stretching one page or more. These long poems are often broken down into stanzas. Some have strong rhyme schemes and rhythms while others are written in free verse. One of the more common rhyming schemes that Kipling uses is the abab cdcd etc. scheme. Kipling does, however, sometimes use the common rhyming scheme of aabb ccdd etc.

In other poems, such as the poem "Boots," Kipling uses the literary device of onomatopoeia, in which he includes words that mimic a sound. In his poem "Route Marchin'" Kipling uses the words, "rowdy-dowdy-dow!" to mimic the sound that the drums make. Kipling also uses words in a way that portrays the idea that he is trying to convey to his reader. For instance, in the poem "Boots," Kipling uses his words in a way that mimics the monotonous marching of the men in the army as they slog through mud and muck, and the monotony of their lives in their heavy boots.



Style

Point of View

The majority of Kipling's poems are written from the first person point of view. Although this first person point of view is generally narrated in Kipling's voice, he sometimes writes his poems from the point of view of a different person. The poem "La Nuit Blanche" is written in the first person point of view. This poem appears to be written in Kipling's own voice. Other poems, such as "The Song of Diego Valdez," are written from the first person point of view, but not written from Kipling's point of view. It is deduced that the poem is written from the point of view of Diego Valdez. The poem "France" is interesting because it is written from a first person point of view, but this point of view is not the point of view of a person. This poem is told from the point of view of the country of France.

The third person point of view is another point of view that is often used in Kipling's poems. The poem "A Code of Morals," for instance, is written in the third person point of view about a man named James. The poem "The Voortrekker" is also written in the third person point of view.

Setting

It is often difficult to assign a setting to Kipling's poems since they often deal with ideas or politics instead of places and things. There are, however, several poems in which specific settings are mentioned. The poem "Pagett, M.P." appears to be set in the country of India since the heat of this country is mentioned several times in the course of the poem.

While it is difficult to tell which country some of Kipling's poems might be set in, there is at least a setting mentioned in the text of the poem. In the poem "The Ballad of Fisher's Boarding House," the action of the poem takes place in a boarding house. Since the people who inhabit the house are from various parts of the world, it is uncertain where this poem might actually have taken place.

It is known, however, that Kipling was well traveled during his life. He spent time in America, England and India. It is assumed that even though many of the poems do not mention a specific location, these poems are written about things that Kipling has experienced during his travels.

Language and Meaning

In Kipling's prelude, he describes his verse as being written in "jesting guise." This indicates that he intends to make fun of things that generally aren't seen as amusing. Although there are some people who will read his poems simply as amusing reports of



things that are happening in current culture, Kipling seems to indicate that he hopes that some will read beyond the humor and see the true meaning of his writing.

Through his poems, Kipling hopes to bring to life the personas of a variety of different people and even animals. For this reason, Kipling sometimes mimics the speech patterns of different people, such as commoners, sailors and soldiers. He writes his poems with incorrect spellings and grammar in order for his reader to understand the linguistics of the people about whom he is writing. In the same way, Kipling can also write poems with excellent grammar, spelling and rhythm. For instance, many of Kipling's poems are written in honor of important government occurrences or significant dates. Perhaps one of Kipling's most widely known poems is the poem "If." This poem is an excellent example of Kipling's ability to write meaningful, beautiful and well-written poems.

Structure

This collection of more than 500 poems opens with a poem entitled "Prelude" with a subtitle of "To 'Departmental Ditties.'" This poem, like many of the others included in the book also bears a date that indicates the year in which the poem was written. This particular poem was written in 1885. It is perhaps one of the first poems that was written by Kipling. In this poem, Kipling summarizes his poems by indicating that he has written the stories of life for the entertainment of a people to whom he refers as "sheltered." About 80 percent of the book is comprised of various poems written by Kipling.

Also included in this anthology of Kipling's verse is a short play entitled "The Marred Drives of Windsor." Following this play, the remaining approximate 15 percent of the book is devoted to verses that have come from particular sources. These sources include songs written for C.R.L. Fletcher's A History of England, verses from Land and Sea Tales, verses from Debits and Credits, and verses from Limits and Renewals. Another brief section of miscellaneous poems follows these sections.

A postlude poem titled "The Appeal" completes the book. In this poem Kipling closes by requesting that his reader question only the material in the books that he has written, not his own character as a person and writer.



Quotes

"I have written the tale of our life / For a sheltered people's mirth, / In jesting guise - but ye are wise, / And ye know what the jest if worth." "Prelude" pg. 3

"Transferred to the Eternal Settlement, / Each in his strait, wood-scantled office pent, / No longer Brown reverses Smith's appeals, / Or Jones records his Minute of Dissent." "The Last Department" pg. 21

"I had been singin' to them to keep 'em quiet there, / For the lower deck is the dangerousest, requirin' constant care, / An' give to me as the strongest man, though used to drink and swear." "Mulholland's Contract" pg. 126

"Four things greater than all things are, - / Women and Horses and Power and War." "The Ballad of the King's Jest," pg. 246

"We were together since the War began. / He was my servant - and the better man." "Epitaphs of the War," pg. 384

"I do not love my Empire's foes, / Nor call 'em angels; still, / What is the sense of 'atin' those / 'Oom you are paid to kill?" "Piet" pg. 477

"Look, you have cast out Love! What Gods are these / You bid me please?" "Chapter Headings" pg. 502

"The cure for this ill is not to sit still, / Or frowst with a book by the fire; / But to take a large hoe and a shovel also, / And dig till you gently perspire..." "Chapter Headings" pg. 606

"It was not part of their blood, / It came to them very late / With long arrears to make good, / When the English begin to hate." "The Beginnings" pg. 677

"To all whom this little book may come - / Health for yourselves and those you hold most dear! / Content abroad, and happiness at home, / And - one grand Secret in your private ear: - / Nations have passed away and left no traces, / And History gives the naked cause of it - / One single, simple reason in all cases; They fell because their peoples were not fit." "A Preface," pg. 739

"He that hath a Gospel / To loose upon Mankind, / Though he serve it utterly - / Body, soul and mind - / Though he go to Calvary / Daily for its gain - / It is His Disciple / Shall make his labour vain." "The Disciple" pg. 781

"If I have given you delight / By aught that I have done. / Let me lie quiet in that night / which shall be yours anon..." "The Appeal" pg. 836



Topics for Discussion

Consider any of Kipling's poems that deal with issues of law or government. Research the political atmosphere of the world at that time. Discuss what political factors contributed to Kipling's poem.

Locate a few of Kipling's poems that deal with religious related topics. Discuss the way these poems present the idea of religion and religious ideas. Use specific examples from the poems.

Choose a few of Kipling's poems that deal with soldiers and war. Discuss his opinion of soldiers and the way these men are treated by the countries for which they fight.

Choose two of Kipling's poems that are written in different voices. For instance, one of his political poems and one of his poems in which he writes from the view of a common person. Compare and contrast the language and style of these two poems.

Research Kipling's life. Take a specific portion of his life and examine some of the poems that were written during this time period. Discuss the way Kipling's travels and experience affected his poetry.

Discuss a few of the various points of view from which Kipling writes his poems. Discuss the ways in which Kipling successfully uses these points of view. Are there any ways that you believe his use of points of view could be improved? How could these improvements be made?

Choose a few of Kipling's poems that are written in different forms. Compare and contrast the forms and voices used in each poem.