

sprang from differences on public matters. Such an enmity Mr. Carewe, magnate of Rouen and father of Miss Betty Carewe, cherishes for young Tom Van-revel, the lawyer, and out of his murderous hatred for Tom—and the complication of Tom's love for Miss Betty—the story grows. The theme is old, of course; all themes are; but in his special treatment of it Mr. Tarkington has managed to evolve something really new and ingenious. In a sense it is a comedy of errors, so dextrously and cleverly worked out that one is tempted to try to describe it, only one realises that to do so would be to spoil a good thing with clumsy handling. But it is a strange comedy, with a thread of sadness running through it; with a tragedy, though not a bitter one, at the end.

After all, though, the real charm of the story is in its characters. How well one gets to know them all! Mr. Carewe, with his high nose and his swollen pride and his evil temper; Miss Betty, just home from the convent, with her dark eyes, and her true heart, and her girlish wit and beauty; Mrs. Tanberry, her chaperon, that "extravagantly stout lady in green muslin illustrated with huge red flowers," with skirts so voluminous that "some cathedral dome seemed to have been misplaced and the lady dropped into it," but so buoyant with it all; old Nelson, the faithful negro servitor; you know them every one. As for Tom Van-revel, he is a gentleman. Now there are few authors who can paint a gentleman without painting a bore, but Mr. Tarkington is one of the few. Chivalry without foppery or weakness, and courage without bluster, and goodness without priggishness, they are all in Tom, and they make him a lover worthy of Miss Betty. Then there is Crailey Gray, the town's lovable ne'er-do-well, Tom's friend and nominal law partner, whom Tom has carried along for years; better men than Crailey would be less mourned than he is when, at the last, he is struck by the bullet from Carewe's gun that is meant for Tom.

Now and then in *The Two Vanrevells* you come upon parts that remind you that it was written by the author of *The Gentleman from Indiana*. There is a certain likeness between the heroines of the two books; and the humour of this latest

story, too, is of the same delightful quality as that which marked the earlier one just mentioned. Again, it has a certain flavour of *Monsieur Beaucaire*. But in the main it is unlike either; it is itself. Mr. Tarkington has that peculiar artistic sensitiveness which leads him, whether consciously or unconsciously, to meet each new subject with a new and subtle and fitting change of mood. Once Crailey Gray, thinking of Miss Betty Carewe, says to himself that she is "a woman like wine; there is a bouquet." And so it is with this book; it has its own distinctive "bouquet."

Eleanor Booth Simmons.

II.

MR. KIPLING'S "JUST-SO STORIES."*

Mr. Rudyard Kipling is a most extraordinary and bewildering genius. Some of us have recently had reason to protest against certain phases of his later development, and we protested because they were pert and cockney and cruel, and full of that precocious old age which is the worst thing in this difficult cosmos, a thing which combines the brutality of youth with the disillusionment of antiquity, which is old age without its charity and youth without its hope. This rapidly aging, rapidly cheapening force of modernity is everywhere and in all things, a veritable spiritual evil: it looks out of the starved faces of a million gutter-boys, and its name is Ortheris. And just as we are in the afterglow of a certain indignation against this stale, bitter modernity which had begun to appear in Mr. Kipling's work, we come upon this superb thing, the *Just-So Stories*; a great chronicle of primal fables, which might have been told by Adam to Cain before murder (that artistic and decadent pastime) was known in the world.

For the character of the *Just-So Stories* is really unique. They are not fairy tales; they are legends. A fairy tale is a tale told in a morbid age to the only remaining sane person, a child. A legend is a fairy tale told to men when men were sane. We grant a child a fairy tale just as some savage king might grant a missionary permission to wear clothes, not

*Just-So Stories. By Rudyard Kipling. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company.

understanding what we give, not knowing that it would be infinitely valuable if we kept it to ourselves, but simply because we are too kind to refuse. The true man will not buy fairy tales because he is kind; he will buy them because he is selfish. If Uncle John, who has just bought the *Just-So Stories* for his niece, were truly human (which, of course, Uncle John is not), it is doubtful whether the niece would ever see the book. One of the most lurid and awful marks of human degeneration that the mind can conceive is the fact that it is considered kind to play with children.

But the peculiar splendour, as I say, of these new Kipling stories is the fact that they do not read like fairy tales told to children by the modern fireside, so much as like fairy tales told to men in the morning of the world. They see animals, for instance, as primeval men saw them; not as types and numbers in an elaborate biological scheme of knowledge, but as walking portents, things marked by extravagant and peculiar features. An elephant is a monstrosity with his tail between his eyes; a rhinoceros is a monstrosity with his horn balanced on his nose; a camel, a zebra, a tortoise are fragments of a fantastic dream, to see which is not seeing a scientific species, but like seeing a man with three legs or a bird with three wings, or men as trees walking. The whole opens a very deep question, the question of the relations between the old wonder and the new wonder, between knowledge and science. The hump of a camel is very likely not so much his characteristic from a scientific point of view as the third bone in the joint of his hind leg, but to the eyes of the child and the poet it remains his feature. And it is more important in this sense that it is more direct and certain: there is a relation between the human soul and the hump of a camel, which there is not between the human soul and the bone in his hind leg. The hump still remains and the bone vanishes, if all these physical phenomena are nothing but a grotesque shadow-show, constructed by a paternal deity to amuse a universe of children.

This is the admirable achievement of Kipling, that he has written new legends. We hear in these days of continual worship of old legends, but not of the making

of new; which would be the real worship of legends. Just in the same way we hear of the worship of old ceremonies, but never of the making of new ones. If men decided that Mr. Gladstone's hat was to be carried three times around the House of Commons, they would have offered the best tribute to the Eleusinian mysteries. That is the tribute which "How the Whale Got His Throat" offers to the story of Sigurd and Hercules.

G. K. Chesterton.

III.

GEORGE HORTON'S "THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD."*

With his habitual deftness, Anatole France laid his finger upon the most vulnerable point in the creed of Realism—the Realism that paints the commonplace lives of average, middle-class people—when he said: "Yes, it is all very true and very sad, but what of it? It teaches us nothing which we did not know before." A writer must needs have an uncommon degree of courage to choose deliberately such a theme as that of Mr. Horton's *Long Straight Road*—the sober prose of humdrum married life—since only a touch of uncommon skill and flashes of rare intuition can keep it from becoming sordid and dull. The pleasure afforded by Mr. Horton's volume—a pleasure for which his earlier works afforded scanty preparation—proves that he possesses these qualities to an unforeseen degree. The explanation of his title is found in the quotation from Stevenson upon the title-page to the effect that to him who marries the pleasure of lingering by the wayside and wandering in green pastures is henceforth denied; "the road lies long and straight and dusty to the grave." Yet the book is not written in a pessimistic spirit; rather, it impresses one as a faithful transcript from life, as Mr. Horton sees it—as any one with his eyes open may see around him any day in the week.

The background of the story is the city of Chicago; the plot involves the destinies of three married couples, destinies

*The Long Straight Road. By George Horton. Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Company.