

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

A NOTE ON 'THE JUNGLE BOOK'

FOR the benefit of all who enjoy Mr. Kipling's *Jungle Books*, I am reprinting an extraordinary tale which has recently appeared in the London *Morning Post*. Much attention has been paid to it all over Europe, and in both French and British newspapers.

A VERY interesting case of a leopard child is now reported from the North Cachar Hills, on India's northeastern frontier, by Mr. Stuart Baker, F.Z.S. At the village of Dhungi, Mr. Baker was confronted in the court house with protests from a certain native against the proposal that he should furnish his share of the forced labor for road mending, and so forth, which in many of the less developed tracts in India takes the place of direct taxation. The man's contention was that his wife had recently died, and that if he left his village to work on the roads, his little wild son would run back to the jungle. Mr. Baker, accordingly, went outside the court to see the 'wild child,' and there was a small boy about seven years old, or less, squatting on the ground like a small animal. Directly Mr. Baker came near him, he put his head in the air and snuffed about, finishing by bolting on all fours to his father, between whose legs he backed like a small wild beast retreating into a burrow. Looking closer at the child, Mr. Baker saw that he was nearly or entirely blind from some form of cataract, and his body was covered with the white scars of innumerable, healed, tiny cuts and scratches. The boy's father narrated the following story, which Mr. Baker fully believes to be true.

About five years before Mr. Baker saw father and son, the Cachari villagers had found two leopard cubs close to their villages, which they killed. The mother leopard had tracked the murderers of her children back to the village and had haunted the outskirts for two days. The third day, a woman cutting rice in some cultivation close to the village laid her baby boy down on a cloth while she went on with her work. Presently, hearing a cry, she turned round and saw a leopard bounding away and carrying the child with it. The whole village at once turned out and hunted for the leopard and baby, but without success, and, finally, they were forced by darkness to leave the boy, as they supposed, to be eaten by the leopard.

Some three years after this event, a leopardeess was killed close to the village by a sportsman, who brought in the news of his success, together with the information that the leopard had cubs which he had failed to secure. On hearing this, the whole village turned out and eventually captured two cubs and one child, the boy of Mr. Baker's story. He was at once identified by his parents, claimed by them, and their claim admitted by the whole village.

Subsequently, when visiting Dhungi Mr. Baker interviewed the head man, and also the man who actually caught the child, and they both corroborated the father's tale in every detail. It appeared that at the time he was caught, the child ran on all fours almost as fast as an adult man could run, while in

dodging in and out of bushes and other obstacles he was much cleverer and quicker. At that time, he was only suffering from cataract to a slight extent and could see fairly well, but after he was caught his eyes rapidly became worse. His knees, even when Mr. Baker saw him and when he had learned to move about upright, to a great extent, had hard callosities on them, and his toes were retained upright, almost at right angles to his in-step. The palms of his hands, and pads of toes and thumbs were also covered with very tough, horny skin. When first caught, he bit and fought with everyone who came within reach of him, and, although even then affected in his eyes, any village fowl which came within his reach was seized, torn to pieces, and eaten with extraordinary rapidity.

When brought before Mr. Baker, the boy had been more or less tamed. He walked upright, except when startled into extra rapid motion, and was friendly with his own villagers, whom he seemed to know by scent. He would eat rice, vegetables, and so forth, and consented to sleep in his father's hut at night. Clothes, being a Cachari child of tender years, he had not been introduced to. His blindness was not in any way due to his treatment by the leopard, as another child of the same woman, a couple of years older, and the mother also, had both had the same form of cataract. At the same time, the defective sense of sight may well have intensified his sense of smell, as the loss of the one must have caused him to rely more on the other. When caught, the child was in perfect condition, thin but well covered, and with a quite exceptional development of muscle. Mr. Baker contributes the detailed story of the child to the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*.

The Death of Mr. T. W. Rolleston

By the death of Mr. T. W. Rolleston at the age of sixty-three, we lose one of the moving spirits in the Irish literary renaissance. Perhaps the most widely known of his works was *The Treasury of Irish Poetry* (1900), which he edited in collaboration with Stopford Brooke, whose daughter he married some years previously. His book on *Imagination and Art in Gaelic Literature* (1900) was a timely revelation of aspects of the Irish genius to the world at large. Rolleston belonged to the splendid race of Irish practical idealists, at whose head stands George Russell (A. E.). His activities as Director of the Irish Industries Association, and organizer to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction were an integral part of his life's work, proceeding from the same centre as his criticism of literature and art. To Rolleston, Mr. George Moore dedicated *Esther Waters*.

A Film from Sweden

A DISTINGUISHED Swedish film, *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness*, has been attracting much attention in London. The following resumé will probably cause Americans to regard it as uncomfortably didactic. But, didactic or not, we shall, most likely, see it over here within the twelve-month, the name changed of course to something like *The Pain of Passion* or *Should Wives Take Poison?* According to the *London Times*:

... It is, in fact, a sermon in pictures, beautifully told and beautifully expressed. Incidentally, it is a great tribute to the world-wide work of the Salvation Army. The story is concerned with an outcast who is waiting in a graveyard for the New Year to ring in, in order that he and his comrades may drink a curse to the months that are to come. A young social worker, on her death bed, is call-

ing for him, but he refuses to go to her. Even his friends are disgusted with his callous behavior, as he tells them of the legend of the cart of death which drives everywhere and collects the souls of the dead, the driver being the man, whoever he be, who has died on the stroke of the New Year. There is a quarrel, during which the outcast is stabbed in the back, and then the theme develops. The death cart appears, driven by the man who had died a year before, and who had really started the outcast on his downward path. He conjures up a vision of the past life of the man who has just been stabbed, and one sees the gradual decline and fall of the healthy young man, with his wife and two children. He returns from a spell of imprisonment to find that his wife has left him and taken the children with her.

Determined to find her and to show her how it feels to be scorned by everyone, he tramps from town to town, and, eventually, falls under the spell of an ardent young social worker. She battles to save his soul, and at last succeeds in bringing husband and wife together. The scene of the meeting is a fine piece of acting. The wife, having screwed herself up to the point of forgetting the past, greets her husband with a smile; the man, with hatred in his heart, stares beyond her into space. The idea of saving the man from eternal ruin becomes an obsession with the girl, and when she is stricken with illness, she calls for him in her delirium. The driver of the death cart takes him to her, but his heart is still hardened, and it looks as if nothing will alter him. Suddenly, however, his cold nature breaks down. He is taken to the hovel where his wife and children are living, and where the wife is making preparations for murder and suicide as an end to suffering. The frantic man begs the driver of the death cart to stop her, but

he replies that he has no power with the living. In his agony, his lips move in prayer, and he falls on his knees with a request to God to be merciful. The proud spirit of the outcast is broken at last, and as the driver disappears, he recovers consciousness and finds that he is still lying where he fell, in the graveyard. He dashes off to the hovel, finds that his wife is indeed about to take poison, and with a promise to reform and to love those near and dear to him, the play ends.

The cleverness in construction of the Swedish producers is shown by the fact that there are really only four characters who count in the story — the outcast, the driver of the death cart, the wife, and the Salvation Army worker.

A New Symphony by Sibelius

(From the *Times*)

QUEEN'S HALL was crowded on Saturday afternoon for the first performance of Sibelius's new symphony (No. 5 in E flat), and the composer was greeted with the most cordial applause, when he came forward to conduct it. A comparison of the reception given to the man beforehand, and to the work afterwards, suggested that the latter left the audience a little puzzled.

It is true that this symphony is designed on broader lines than its predecessor,—it contains more positive statement of its ideas, many of which are of the simplest melodic kind,—that the coloring is richer and fuller, with more use of the effects of orchestral masses. Yet, the fact that its manner places it more in line with accepted standards of symphonic development is apt to raise expectations which are not fulfilled. There is a severity about the ideas which is chilling on their first presentation, and each movement closes abruptly, just when the mind has become persuaded of its earnestness.

The first two movements are closely linked together by a four-note motto theme which pervades the greater part of the subject matter of both; they are distinguished by a contrast of mood. The first,—*tempo molto moderato*,—is a dreaming fantasy in which many motives and forces contend; the second unifies them in a more closely knit *scherzo* rhythm. Through both of them, the strings supply an uneasy background of shimmering sound, while the voices of the wind instruments are more clearly articulated. The third movement is *andante quasi allegretto*. The rather dry rhythmic pattern of the chief theme is discussed among the instruments in a way which is strangely Mozart-like and marks most definitely Sibelius's abstracted devotion to pure beauty of design.

The finale launches out into a franker expression of feeling. Its second subject makes an almost passionate appeal on its first arrival, and this appeal is intensified in the long development of it which leads to the *coda*. Yet, somehow, this ending left the feeling that the composer had not allowed himself to say all that he meant, or the thing which he meant most of all. This may have been partly in the playing, for Sibelius is a difficult conductor to follow. If, only, he could have given his ideas to Sir Henry Wood and let the latter carry them out for him, the first impression of this symphony might have been far more satisfactory than it actually was. But that, probably, would have been impossible. Sibelius, both as composer and conductor, stands apart, a lonely figure seeking with difficulty to bring the ideals which are intensely real to him into touch with other minds. Possibly, it is his struggle for expression which sometimes recalls Beethoven as one listens to him. Certainly, the Beethoven violin concerto which Miss Jelly

D'Aranyi played finely, immediately after, seemed the right thing to follow this strenuous symphony. Novak's symphonic poem 'In the Tatra,' with its fluent and conventional scene painting, seemed misplaced — altogether a thing too effectively written and too easily comprehended.

Washington Statue for London

THE Sulgrave Institution, which recently offered to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, and also to the City of Liverpool, copies of the famous Houdon statue of George Washington, has received cordial replies to both offers. The estimate of the cost of making replicas of the statue, and of placing them in position, is now being prepared. As soon as this is known, the Institution will begin to raise the necessary funds.

The question of presenting to the British nation a replica of this statue was first put forward in 1912 by the British-American Peace Centenary Committee. In 1914, the State of Virginia made a formal offer of a copy of the statue to his Majesty's government, who gratefully accepted it.

Ambassador Claudel

M. PAUL CLAUDEL, the French Ambassador at Copenhagen, is now to go to Tokyo in the same capacity. Mr. Robert Nichols, from this side, is also about to depart for Tokyo, having accepted the post of Lecturer in English to the Imperial University.

Stonehenge Again

WHILE the work of replacing the large fallen stones, as far as possible, in their original positions was recently in progress at Stonehenge, an old lady passing by, made the following remark: 'I zee thee be a-puttin' of they ztoans back. Z'poze they wuz zent zumwheres for zafety doorin' the Air Raids?'

[The Sunday Times]

THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM JAMES

BY EDMUND GOSSE

THE house of James promises to be better known in literary history than any other American family of our day. It has produced three men of letters remarkable for their energy and originality, all dowered with that quality of personal force which will not permit itself to be passed by. The father, Henry I, was a philosopher little regarded in his own day, who developed what was rudely called 'a sort of Ishmaelitish Swedenborgianism,' by no means to be easily apprehended. He was the contemporary of Longfellow and Holmes and Motley, but by the side of their fame he walked in a cloud, almost unobserved. His views were expressed in admirable English, but they were difficult of interpretation and it used to be said that the only people who understood them were his two sons.

Being inquisitive in such matters, I once pressed Henry II, to explain them to me briefly, but he admitted that he could not. 'William, and only William, can be father's interpreter!' But when Henry I died, in 1882, his posthumous fame began, for William published his *Literary Remains*, and trumpeted, with no uncertain sound, the claim of Henry I to be considered one of the most acute metaphysicians that America had produced. He was also one of the most surprising, and a portent to the New England conventions. It is recorded that he once 'attacked morality' in the house of Emerson, whose sister, aged eighty-four, and wearing her shroud under

her dress, rose in rebuke and shook him by the shoulders.

This eccentric and valuable man had five children, two of whom were endowed with genius. It seems hardly fair on the millions of American citizens that, among the half dozen leading men of letters of a generation, two should be brothers, but so it was. Indeed, among the serious writers of their time, the only name which could be mentioned in competition with those of William and Henry II James was that of W. D. Howells.

Delightful, vivacious, sensitive to the last degree, this trio illuminated the America of their age, and, having passed away, still speak to us. Of Howells, no monument has yet been unveiled, but the brothers are more and more prominently celebrated, and now Henry III comes forward, bearing two massive volumes of letters written by his father, the psychologist, with a biographical setting of his own so tactfully written and so competently arranged, that we perceive in it fair evidence of a dynastic talent.

While we read these volumes, we ought to have open at our side that somewhat nebulous masterpiece, *A Small Boy and Others*, in which Henry II revived his memories of sixty years before, seen through a golden haze of retrospect. With all this literature in our hands, we may repeat of the brothers, if we please, the old amiable gibe that the one wrote fiction like metaphysics, and the other metaphysics like fiction. Whatever it was,