

THROUGH COLORED GLASSES

Let any of those many all knowing critics who affirmed so vehemently that Rudyard Kipling had forever blighted his own prospects as an author by removing from India to the United States read "The Brushwood Boy" in the December Century, before definitely deciding that their dictum has held, or holds good. This little story, the latest that Kipling has published, is also one of his best. While it is true that a part of the scene is laid in India, no one will question that the idea,—the "theme" of the story is entirely independent of Indian life. "Georgie," the hero, is the "Brushwood Boy." He is not, as the title would indicate, a low caste native of India, but is a typical beef-eating, athletic, hearty, honest English boy with an inordinate capacity for dreaming, and his dreams always start out from a brushwood pile on the sea coast—hence the title. He dreams as a boy of "Annie Louise," and with her explores the dark continents of dreamland. As a "grown-up," on service in India, he still dreams of "Annie Louise," also a "grown-up," and together they continue their mystical journeys and travels in the land beyond the river of Nod. One day Georgie returns to England and meets "Annie Louise," the veritable companion of his dreams. He hears her sing, and she sings a song of their dreamland wanderings. The upshot of the matter is that explanations follow, and Georgie finds to his joy and amazement that "Annie Louise" has dreamed the same dreams he has dreamed,—dreamed them all the years that he has dreamed them. Of course they are married, engaged on an acquaintanceship of some eight hours;—but they have they not known each other for years and years in their dreams?

The story is a very strong and fascinating one, and is brilliantly executed. It shows, as I said, that Kipling's sojourn in civilization has not deprived him of his powers as a story teller.

There seems to be some diversity in testimony as to times in the east. Some returned pilgrims tell us that times are as bad in the east as they are in Nebraska. But Prof. W. G. L. Taylor, of the state university, who was east during the holiday vacation, bears testimony to the contrary.

"East of the Mississippi I found everything all right," said Prof. Taylor, "times are good, business prospering, and everything going at full blast.

"The trouble here in Nebraska," continued the professor, "is due to the hand of God. We have had no rain and so have raised no crops. We have consumed, but we have not produced. As a consequence, business and prices have had to adjust themselves to the new relations between production and consumption. This adjustment must always come,—and it comes at the expense of the individual. The individual suffers poverty and bankruptcy, until a sufficient number of them have been 'cleaned out,'—then the equilibrium is reached again. We are just now in the 'cleaning out' stage—and that is what's the matter."

Prof. Taylor, it will be seen, is inclined to lay the full blame for the present financial stringency in Nebraska to purely local causes, notably, two successive failures of crops. And as Nebraska is yet a new state, with but little productive wealth save her agricultural industries, two such calamities, the one following right on the heels of the other, could hardly produce any other effect than what we are suffering at the present time.

In Prof. Taylor's explanation there is hope rather than despair for Nebraska and Nebraskans. Nothing is more constant than climate. Nebraska is a great agricultural country—the greatest in world. The rains, so long withheld, must come, will come. It is folly to doubt it. It is the silliest kind of pessimism to predict everything bad when all the laws of nature point to a return of prosperity with the coming of spring.

There never was a better time than now, when it can be had almost for a song, to invest in Nebraska property. There can be no speculation as to Nebraska's future. "One swallow does not make a summer,"—neither does two years of dry weather make a desert.

A few years ago, when Dr. Sherman, of the university, issued his "Analytics of Literature," the ideas therein enunciated were pooh hoed and laughed at in almost every college and educational centre of the country. Dr. Sherman taught in the "Analytics" that literature must be studied as botany is studied, by an analysis into its elementary parts. The "effects" and methods, the truth and beauty of literature could be learned and known by common people,—by people who are not themselves distinctly "literary," Dr. Sherman believed, if they only undertook the study of literature and its elements in a scientific and logical manner. The "Analytics" were published as furnishing that manner. And the critics and literary lights of the cultured east could not find terms in which to express their contempt for Dr. Sherman and his "crazy ideas." They declared that an "analytics of literature" was sacrilege,—that it was an act of vandalism. They affirmed that the picking of a great poem or tragedy to pieces and studying it piecemeal,—making a microscopic examination of its internal anatomy, so to speak, would forever destroy one's appreciation of literature. "If my students can not understand and fully appreciate 'Hamlet,'" said a Yale professor, "there is no way in which they can be taught to do so."

But Dr. Sherman thought differently. He held quietly on in the method outlined in his "Analytics," and conducted classes in Shakespeare, Browning and Tennyson, studying the greatest works of these greatest writers in a strictly laboratory method. And behold! his method succeeded, despite the croaks of the critics. The hayseed youths from the prairies of Nebraska were obtaining, under Dr. Sherman's guidance, a knowledge and appreciation of the true power and beauty of literature that was a closed door to the much cultured college men of the effete east.

And as a result Dr. Sherman is the prophet and seer of the new movement toward literature for the masses. His method and his "Analytics" are being adopted slowly but steadily and surely by the leading universities of the country. There can hardly be any question: that in a few years more the "Analytics" will stand entirely vindicated, and Dr. Sherman will have achieved a triumph reflecting glory and renown not only on himself and on the university, but on western scholarship and culture as well.

In the meantime, there is very grave danger unless all signs fail, that before next fall Dr. Sherman will be himself "adopted," together with his book and his ideas, by a plutocratic university not a thousand miles from here.

The poor old Journal made an unusually long-eared jackass of itself, even for itself, in discussing the law of libel recently. The Journal has more than

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once distinguished itself by the production of pseudo scientific editorials of fearful and wonderful construction and amazing philosophy, as those who remember its "Atavism" and "Swing of The Pendulum," editorials of last year can testify, but in this last editorial on libel, it outjournalled itself. In a learned, be-whiskered and be-spectacled essay on the law of libel, the ponderous genius of that sheet soberly and solemnly proposed that newspaper libel should be punished with the same punishment that would have been ladled out to the person libelled, had he committed the crime alleged. For instance, if the Journal should accuse "Prof." Austin of rising up in the dark and stilly night

and splattering Prof. Fossler's unpatriotic brains about the room with a hatchet, and if "Prof." Austin had not yet committed that act of poetic justice and vindication of "Old Glory,"—then Col. Will Owen Jones should be hanged by the neck until dead. Similarly, if the Omaha Bee should mildly suggest that the Hon. Tom Majors was a venal vampire and the Hon. Tom should succeed in proving an alibi, the owner of the "pride of two continents" would be summarily dealt with as a blood sucker, and disposed of according to law.

This novel and truly original emanation from the legal slot of the Journal's think tank has aroused the staid and re-

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