

written and didn't should read something like this:

It was our fault, and our very great fault,  
that angered the Lord to smite;  
And black are the weeds the widows wear  
for the bones on the veldt bleached  
white.

The bones bleach white on the rain-washed  
veldt where the red stain lingers long  
To bid us curb our stiff-necked pride and  
purge our souls of wrong.

—Public Opinion of Aug. 8.

#### THE DECLINE AND DECAY OF KIP- LING.

Doubtless there is something sufficiently pathetic in the passing of any once popular favorite. The inevitable contrast of old days and new, of vanished honor and present neglect, the potent reminder of the instability and vanity of all human affairs—even the overturning of a heathen idol—must suggest some melancholy reflection.

But when we hear that in this country the works of Mr. Rudyard Kipling are no longer in demand, I submit that, aside from sentimental considerations, the occasion is for thanksgiving and a feeling of relief.

We may indulge this feeling without prejudice or malice, and without denying or trying to obscure the splendid ability of the man. Surely it is a wonderful gift that has gone so far astray.

What powers of expression, what strength and indomitable vigor of style, what command of words marshalled and aligned with what skill and variety of resource! A vision so clear in some ways if so clouded in others, and the apparent possibility of the gods' own grace of utterance—all gone awry for the lack of a soul and guiding spirit.

And for this lack no gifts, no powers, no graces atone. It is the inward spirit that determines the ultimate value of every artist's work, and with all his magnificent technical endowment the spirit animating Kipling's work was always bad, always reactionary, always indurating and blinding to him that read.

Of this American readers seem to have made clear discovery. No swifter fall from favor has been known in literature. Four years ago this was the most popular of living authors; to-day the sale of his books is merely nominal.

In his own lifetime he has become a name and a tradition. Of a collected edition issued by an American publisher two years ago, not enough sales have been made to pay for the binding, and for separate volumes the booksellers report a demand almost imperceptible.

At the libraries it is said that Kipling, once most in request, is now less read than any one of 20 American authors.

Exactly what Kipling stood for in the essence of his writing was not revealed to us until the beginning of the South African war, a struggle already of more and even stranger results than the ruin of Britain's military glory.

Then it came upon men in a flash that this was the thing he had always meant and always apotheosized—the strong arm, the dominance of brute instincts, the coarse, hard fiber of life, the love of cruelty and savagery, the negation of sympathy and brotherhood, the lust for power and land and wealth, the right of might, the cynical indifference to justice, the burden of strong races upon the weak, the thirst for preying and plundering.

With the "Absent-Minded Beggar" the illusion snapped like a thread. We had not seen that under the wonderful brilliancy and fascination of the man's style these were the springs of his faith; the war and his view of it and callous delight in it were all made clear. Men perceived that the "Recessional" was mere sound; that its author had no heart in it, and that while with front of brass he sang of Christian peace, he was casting about for further feats of national brigandage and shame that he might sing these with all his soul.

In the narrower view, we may be glad that the difference between English civilization and American civilization has been so sharply revealed.

We may be glad to see so clearly that we have not drifted so far from the lines of progress that the destruction of a brave people fighting for liberty seems admirable. We can see no glory in the triumph of 40,000,000 over 200,000. We are not stirred to joy by the fall of a little republic before a huge empire.

We may think with pride also that evidently we do not delight in cruelty. We do not greatly care for brave force, we are not charmed by the savage spirit of aggrandizement.

We have some belief that suffering calls more for tears than for laughter, and we have no joy in battle for the sake of battle, nor for the sake of gold.

We are not of this man's race.

Moreover, in a broader view, here is a sign of progress. The world has known a time when the singer of blood and battle and the glory of physical strength was the dearest of all lyrists. We have passed from that state as

from the state of skin clothing and the work of the stone hatchet.

The world at heart has grown sick of these things. It asks for literature now, not so much the entertainment of cleverness as some note of help or hope. In all Kipling has written is no such note.

From the reading of him no man has ever arisen with any renewed sense of the sorrowful state of man, with any new tenderness for his brother, with any kindlier or gentler purpose, with wider sympathy or with deeper feeling.

It is better that such a man should pass.

After all, one touch of the universal heart is above all possible achievements of style. After all, it is better to pity than to be clever. After all, sympathy is the soul of art. After all, it is only love that endures.—Charles E. Russell, in *New York Journal* of July 20.

#### SOME OF THE HORRORS OF WAR.

The following graphic description of the taking of Peking, and the terrible march thither, was written on the ground at the time by a member of the Fourteenth United States infantry to his brother in England, and has been furnished to *The Public* from the original manuscript by a member of his family.

Peking, China, Aug. 18, 1900.

Dearest Brother: I will ease your mind at once by stating that I am unscathed and unscratched, and safely encamped here in the suburbs of Peking. I have passed through two of the most fierce and inhuman battles here that I ever had read, heard or thought of.

The first big battle took place at a large, well fortified town, 18 miles from Tientsin. The name of this town, or in fact of any of those we passed through, is not known to me at this date. This town was garrisoned by about 50,000 Chinamen, soldiers; and all had the best, most approved, modern artillery, with which they sadly raked our ranks. The Fourteenth in fatalities and casualties lost in that battle 103; the date was the 5th of this month. The Japanese lost (killed and wounded) three hundred odd, and the English 36 men.

After routing the Chinese we rested half a day, and then moved forward toward Peking, which is 125 miles from Taku, where our first landing was made. The Japanese forces now took the lead; they having an army here of over 60,000 men, had no difficulty in routing the enemy from the small towns along the trail, which towns were very numerous; in fact we