

Mr. Kipling and the Doctors is the title of an article in October 10th issue of *The Spectator*. It is a comment on an address delivered by the eminent *litterateur* to the students of Middlesex Hospital in praise of the doctors. Coming from such a source it is refreshing. It is said his words have been read by the public with delight and his auditors were thrilled with burning pride in their profession. The doctors and their patients divide the world into two classes; the non-combatants, the patients, eagerly watch the efforts, in their behalf, of those who were always in action, "always under fire against death." Mr. Kipling said that this fight for life was *one of the most important things in the world*. (The italics are ours.) Did but the public realize this, and governments in particular, with regard to tuberculosis and other diseases the doctors were fighting! They reported for duty at once in all times of flood, fire, famine, plague, pestilence, battle, murder and sudden death; they could pass through the most riotous crowds unmolested when they were known, or stop a ship in mid-ocean to perform an operation; houses were burnt up or pulled down on their order; they dared tell the world facts. Mr. Kipling says they are paid to tell the truth; Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes once told a graduating class they might sometimes venture on lies as justifiable in the interests of their patients. Truly we doctors have a wide latitude. The writer in *The Spectator* goes on and elaborates Mr. Kipling's address. We are told we belong to the "privileged" and the "ruling" classes as well; that judges' sentences upon criminals, the whole machinery of state, great projects of reform, cabinet council deliberations very often hinge upon the judgments of the doctors. Men and women, rich and poor alike, obey his mandates. But we are later told that with all our powers the prizes to us are few. One thing, however, long known to the medical profession, startles the public—the highest death-rate of any profession in the world! And, indeed, each and every one has time and again heard the salutation: "You shouldn't get sick!" "You shouldn't catch cold!" The doctors run more risks of untimely death, defend people's homes from invisible foes, bring hope and sleep in the worst hours of pain, see life exactly as it is, daily risk their lives for others, run great chances with their families, keep patients' secrets, and do it all unconsciously of their own individual selves; yes, and as a body, often have to carry the sins of the black sheep in the flock. The profession, as a whole, will not fail to return its appreciative thanks to Mr. Kipling as well as to *The Spectator*.