

a much more truly valuable tool basket than these details of evanescent engineering which have covered so much of his recent pages."

I have, I think, read in some "Review" that Shakespeare was accustomed to handle with astounding felicity and correctness the technical phraseology of the law, of venery, and many other departments of human activity. It being of course impossible that a man whom we know to have been but imperfectly educated could have acquired so minute a knowledge of so many complicated and out of the way subjects, a sapient school of critics has not hesitated to assure us that the author of the Shakespearean plays was not one but many—was a lawyer, a Jehu, a Nimrod, a Papist, a Protestant, a Jesuit, a Puritan—was anything you please, except what he was—a man with an unequalled share of imagination, a great creator. Let us apply this singular criticism to Kipling and see to what conclusion it leads us.

It is plain to begin with that Mr Kipling must have studied long and ardently at all the best schools and universities in the world. How else could he have acquired his thorough acquaintance with zoology,—see the *Jungle Books*—with geography, including the use of the globes—see "*The Flag of England*"—and the "*The Children of the Zodiac*," with archæology—see "*The Story of Ung*," and with botany—see "*The Flowers*." It is equally beyond dispute that he served a long apprenticeship on the sea; and it seems likely that he first gratified his passion for that element by taking service in a Greek galley, and afterwards in that of a Viking. He must then have occupied a post on the following vessels in succession—a Chinese pig-boat, a Bilbao tramp, a New England fishing-smack, a British man-of-war, and an American liner. It was certainly in the engine-room of the last named vessel that he learned those details about machinery which he reproduces so faithfully in some of his stories. We infer that Mr. Kipling next withdrew for a few years complete rest to the solitude of the jungle. He there added materially to his knowledge of natural history, and familiarized himself thoroughly with the manners and customs of bird, beast and reptile. (If he did not, how on earth could he have written the "*Jungle Books*"?) It is also quite evident that he has held a large number of appointments in the Indian Civil Service; and that he served for a considerable period in the ranks of the army. No sane man can doubt that he took part in several hot engagements and fought in at least one Soudan campaign. A good many years must also have been passed by Mr. Kipling in disguise among the natives. By no other means could he have become conversant with their habits of thought and ways of life. It is further beyond dispute that he must have slummed in London; that at one time he must have had a studio of his own; and that the inside of a newspaper office must have been during a certain period of his life a place of almost daily resort.

And all this without doing violence to the facts. According to these critics, no man can acquire a knowledge of the terminology of soldiering, or sailing, or tinkering, or tailoring, unless he has been a soldier, a sailor, a tinker, or a tailor. But human life is too short for a man to have been all four, and for a man to follow fifty occupations. It follows, therefore, that Kipling is but the name for an amanuensis or hack, through whose pen certain eminent soldiers, sailors, tinkers, tailors, &c., have chosen for some undisclosed reason, to tell their story to the world, which is surely a "*reductio ad absurdum*."

Much has been written of Kipling's capacity of gleaning knowledge from technical experts; nothing at all of the lessons those