

# FAMOUS PEOPLE

BY FANNIE M. LOTHROP



Photo by Elliott & Fry, London

## RUDYARD KIPLING The Greatest Living English Author

A small man, tanned and bronzed to a clear light mahogany, squarely built, with broad shoulders, keen blue eyes, heavy straight eyebrows, a thick dark mustache and square resolute jaw, dressed in clothes that shout defiance to fashion plates—this is Rudyard Kipling. Alive, alert, aggressive and intense, quick in movement, a bit cynical and quizzical, he at first suggests one thoroughly self-satisfied; one who is his own court of appeals.

At Bombay, the most cosmopolitan city of Asia, Kipling was born in Christmas week of 1865. His father was an Englishman, a professor of architectural sculpture in a Bombay college, and when Rudyard was six he was shipped back to England to be educated. At thirteen he entered the United Service College at Westward Ho, under the direction of old Indian officers. The atmosphere was military and Indian, and was doubtless a potent factor in coloring the mind of the boy, who acquired more by unconscious absorption than by direct study. It is true that he carried off the prizes in English literature in a matter-of-fact kind of a way, as if it were his assigned share of the plunder; but otherwise revealed no symptoms of genius.

At seventeen he went to India to work on the "Civil and Military Gazette" at Lahore, where his talent began to be recognized in a half patronizing way by the editor-in-chief. Strange, however, the "Plain Tales from the Hills," which gave him his first European success, and his "Departmental Ditties" were accepted under protest, to humor the boy, rather than for any merit the editors discovered.

A man of supreme individuality, he has the splendid courage of his convictions. He dared to lash England into a fight when the Boer war seemed to him imperative; he scourged the country he loved for her treatment of her soldiers; he inspired those soldiers by his stirring, tingling lines and martial stanzas, while Alfred Austin, the Laureate, was writing pink-lemonade verses guaranteed to offend no one. Then came his magnificent "Recessional"—a new classic added to our literature.

Kipling is the apostle of the strenuous; he loves color and paints it with love; he is thrilled by struggle, by power, by conquest. He shows man with the primal instincts and passions, nature unvarnished. He is often blunt to brutality, fearless to the point of frenzy, but always sincere, and always best when he lets the Oriental in his nature keep him close to the India he has revealed to the world as no other English writer has ever done.