

Kipling as a poet is the same man that he is in prose, the man of action, and we naturally search in vain for the idyllic transcendental repose of Wordsworth or Tennyson; for the patient resignation of the virtuous, meditative "Williams," or the introspective, finely-wrought mosaic of "In Memoriam." No, here the picture is impressionist, the theme is practical, and the action is strong.

And these themes are as various as the moods, for the verses are simply prose in the hands of a great and versatile musician, who can play upon any instrument, from the Jew's-Harp and the banjo to the church organ. This theme-versatility is immense, and yet the metrical composition ever fits its lightning changes, and is cast to them in perfect mould. And so the metres, often manufactured to suit himself, are as various as his themes. In his verse-building also, he is a law unto himself. And his method is always the Kipling method. Plain, common, Saxon words he takes, from the street, the workshop and the barrack-room and yet invariably he builds them with strong, vigorous handling into a House Beautiful. A master-builder whether it be with the Cherubim in "The Last Chantey," or with the native water-carrier, "Gunga Din." To change the figure, his touch very truthfully is that of the alchemist, who turns everything to gold.

As an illustration of what Kipling can do as a mere mechanician, read his "Sestina of the Tramp Royal." This is the most intricate mould in which it is possible to cast verse. Nevertheless, there is in it all no constraint, but rather the freedom of the very wind "that tramps the world."