

Worshipped by the native household and all their legion of adherents, he learned their babel of vernacular more rapidly than his mother-tongue. All natives he loved instinctively and from the first, and with the years his knowledge of them grew, as witness the picture of the little white-frosted child in the crowded city street, tugging by the hand, to overtake his mother, a new-made friend, a big bearded, evil-smelling Pathan:—"Wait, muvver, here is my brudder."

And this is the first impression.

When Ruddie was six there came separation from India, from his parents, and all his varicoloured friends, and for him and his little sister, the six motherless and cheerless years in the austere home at Southsea. Here the 'elderly relative,' whose name does not transpire, and very fortunately, took the two children, with the aid of her Calvinistic God, under her loveless care. These were the years depicted in "Baa-Baa, Black Sheep," and the opening chapter of "The Light that Failed"; the days of grief and of loneliness, of many whippings, of "Aunty Rosa" and "Mrs. Jennett." "Mrs. Jennett" of the black bombazine and silk mits, a widow with unblighted matrimonial aspirations, cold, angular and prayerful: the days of "Maisie's" goat "Am-moma" who, you remember, swallowed the two pin-fire revolver cartridges and was banished as too explosive company.

The day school at Southsea taught the boy something and for the rest, despite the prayerful relative, he grew, till at the age of twelve, his parents recovered the bare-kneed baby of Bombay as a shy awk-