

1892

MANDALAY (From Barrack-Room Ballads)

Rudyard Kipling

Kipling, Rudyard (1865-1936) - An English novelist, short-story writer, and poet who spent most of his youth in India, and is best known for his children's classics. In 1907, Kipling was the first English writer ever to be awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. Mandalay (1892) - From "Barrack-Room Ballads," a collection of poems celebrating British army life and the soldier. Opening line: By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea, ...

MANDALAY

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea, There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me; For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say: "Come you back, you British soldier: come you back to Mandalay!"

Come you back to Mandalay, Where the old Flotilla lay; Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay? O the road to Mandalay, Where the flyin'-fishes play, An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green, An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-lat- jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen, An' I seed her first a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot, An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot: Bloomin' idol made o' mud What they called the Great Gawd Budd Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!

On the road to Mandalay, etc.

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was droppin' slow, She'd git her little banjo an' she'd sing "Kulla-lo-lo!" With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek agin my cheek We uster watch the steamers an' the hathis pilin' teak.

Elephints a-pilin' teak In the sludgy, squidgy creek, Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf afraid to speak!

On the road to Mandalay, etc.

But that's all shove be'ind me- long ago an' fur away, An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from the Bank to Mandalay; An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year soldier tells: "If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed naught else."

No! you won't 'eed nothin' else But them spicy garlic smells, An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly temple-bells; On the road to Mandalay, etc.

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin' stones, An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my bones; Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand, An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?

Beefy face an' grubby 'and Law! wot do they understand? I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!

On the road to Mandalay, etc.

Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments, an' a man can raise a
thirst; For the temple-bells are callin', and it's there that I would
beBy the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea.

On the road to Mandalay, Where the old Flotilla lay, With our sick
beneath the awnings when we went to Mandalay!

Oh the road to Mandalay, Where the flyin'-fishes play, An' the
dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'cross the Bay!

THE END