

Mr. Kipling's New Book Is In His Best Vein

WHEN Mr. Kipling writes a real book in his best vein it deserves to stand in a place by itself; when he is true to his genius the author of the "Jungle Books" is one of the most original writers of his time. The same hand, however, which wrote "Plain Tales from the Hills" and the "Jungle Books" wrote also "Stalky & Co." as well as a great many tales notable rather for smartness and a touch of brutality than for insight, beauty or power. In "Puck of Pook's Hill" Mr. Kipling is again very near his best. There are ten stories in a style which is distinctly his own: a happy combination of the historical romance and the fairy tale. A boy and girl on Midsummer Eve, as night draws on, visit a fairy ring on Pook's Hill and amuse themselves by playing at "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Suddenly Puck appears to them and tells them a story, and continues to tell them stories, calling to his aid various other persons who came to Great Britain at early periods in her history; among them one of the companions of William the Conqueror, a Roman centurion, and a Jew who had money-transactions with King John. Each story is a vivid picture of some incident or person in the history of England, touched with the reality which makes them live and which is the sign and seal of the genius of the author. There are wonderful bits of description of Romans, Picts, Normans and Saxons which recall the best work of a writer who happily combines realistic description with poetic feeling and the touch of the imagination.

Two Valuable Books About Lincoln

THE country cannot know too well the story of Abraham Lincoln; and books which bring out the different sides of his inspiring career cannot be too numerous. Mr. Frederick Trevor Hill's "Lincoln the Lawyer" is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the life of the frontiersman who became one of the greatest figures in modern history, because it makes clear the special education which Lincoln's training and knowledge of the law gave him by way of preparation for the difficult and perplexing duties which devolved upon him during the Civil War. This is the core of the book. It also has biographic value, for it tells in detail the story of Lincoln's professional career.

A very good companion volume for young readers is Miss Helen Nicolay's "The Boys' Life of Abraham Lincoln," based on the elaborate Nicolay and Hay biography. The story is told with simplicity and directness; and this book, or some book dealing with the same subject, ought to be in the hands of every boy in America, for from such books boys learn to be men. The salient facts in Lincoln's life have been intelligently selected for such a purpose; the influences and conditions which had most to do with directing his career and shaping his character are well brought out. The style is simple and the narrative interesting.