RUDYARD KIPLING ON INDEPENDENCE.

"TO OWN YOURSELF."

A striking Rectorial Address.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling was on October 10 capped LL.D., and installed as Rector of St. Andrew's University.

Professor Blyth Webster, in presenting Mr. Kipling, said he had given this year fresh cause for admiration, and increased the debt they sought to pay. Two battalions of the Irish Guards fought in the Great War, and had the fortune to find a writer of his genius for their historian. The oath was administered by the Vice-Chancellor.

Mr. Kipling's Address.

Mr. Kipling said: The sole revenge that maturity can take upon youth for the sin of being young is to preach at it. When I was young I sat and suffered under that dispensation. Now that I am older I purpose, if you, my constituents, will permit me to hand on the sacred torch of boredom. In the first volume, then of the Pickering edition of the works of the late Robert Burns, on the 171st page, you will find this stanza:

To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her,
And gather gold by every wile
That's justified by honour—
Not for to hide it in a hedge
Nor for the train attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

At first sight it may seem superfluous to speak of thrift and independence to men of our race, and in a university that produced Duncan of Ruthwell and Chalmers. I admit it. No man carries coals to Newcastle—to sell, but if he wishes to discuss coal in the abstract, as the Deacon of Dumfries discussed love, he will find Newcastle knows something about it. And so, too, with you here. May I take it that you, for the most part, come, as I did, from households conversant with a certain strictness—let us call it a decent and wary economy—in domestic matters which has taught us to look at both sides of the family shilling, that we belong to stock where present sacrifice for future ends our own education may have been among them) was accepted, in principle and practice as part of life. I asked this, because talking to people who for any cause have been denied these experiences is like trying to tell a neutral of our life between 1914 and 1918.

Independence means, "Let every herring hang by its own head." It signifies the blesesd state of hanging on to as few persons and things as possible, and it leads up to the singular privilege of a man owning himself. The desire for independence has been up to the present an inirradicable human instinct antedating even the social instinct. Let us trace it back to its beginnings, so that we may not be surprised at our own virtue to-day. Science tells us that man did not begin life on the ground, but lived first among the tree tops—a platform which does not offer much room for large or democratic assemblies. Here he had to keep his individual balance on the branches, under penalty of death or disablement if he lost it, and here, when his few wants were satisfied, he had time to realise slowly that he was not altogether like the beasts, but a person apart, and therefore lonely. Not till he abandoned his family tree, and associated himself with his fellows on the flat, for predatory or homicidal purposes, did he sacrifice his personal independence of action or cut into his large share of brooding abstraction necessary to the discovery of his relations to his god. This is the pe[illegible] ...stor's progress [illegible] ...es me as immens[illegible] and five according to his varying needs or moods. Why does he want this? Because, subconsciously, he still scales himself against his age-old companions, the beasts, who can only act lies. Man knows that, at any moment, he can tell a lie that, for a while, will delay or divert the workings of cause and effect. Being an animal who is still learning to reason, he does not yet understand why with a little more, or a little louder, lying he should not be able permanently to break the chain of that law of cause and effect—the justice without the mercy—which he hates, and to have everything both ways in every relation of his life. In other words we want to be independent of facts for the younger we are the more intolerant we are of those who tell us that this is impossible. When I wished to claim my independence and to express myself according to the latest lights of my age (for there were lights even then), it was disheartening to be told that I could not expect to be clothed, fed, taught, amused, and comforted—not to say preached at—by others, and at the same time to practise towards them a savage and thorny independence. I imagine that you, perhaps, may have assisted at domestic conferences on these lines; but I maintain that we are not the unthinking asses that our elders called us. Our self-expression may have been a trifle crude, but the instinct that prompted it was that primal instinct of independence which antedates the social one, and makes the young at times a little difficult. It comes down from the dumb and dreadful epoch when all that man knew was that he was himself, and not another, and therefore the loneliest of created beings; and you know that there is no loneliness to equal the loneliness of youth at war with its surrounding in a world that does not care.

Preparing for Independence.

I can give you no great comfort in your war, but if you will allow me, I will give you a scientific parallel that may bear on the situation. Not once upon a time, but at many different times, in different places and ages, it came over some one primitive man that he desired above everything to escape, for a while, from the sight and the smell of his tribe. It may have been an excellent tribe or it may have been an abominable one, but whichever it was he had had enough of it for a time. Knowing no more than the psychology of his age (whereas we of course, know the psychology of all the ages) he referred his impulse to the direct orders, guidance or leading of his totem, his guardian [illegible], his disembodied ancestor, or other [illegible] god who had appeared to him [illegible] dream and inspired his action. H[illegible] ancestor was as logical as a [illegible]ng his degree on the eve[illegible] ...ssional career—not to say as [illegible] Scot. He accepted spirits [illegible] manifestations of all kinds as p[illegible] of his highly organised life which had its roots in the immemorial past; but outside that, the amount of truth open to him was limited. He only knew that if he did not provide himself with rations in advance for his proposed excursion away from the tribe, he would surely starve. Consequently, he took some pains, and practised a certain amount of self-denial, to get and prepare these rations. He may have wished to go forth on some utterly useless diversion, such as hacking down a tree or piling up stones: but whatever his object was, he intended to undertake it without the advice, interference, or even the privity of his tribe. He might appreciate the dear creatures much better on his return; he might hatch out wonderful schemes for their advantage during his absence. But that would be the side issue. The power that possessed him was a desire to own himself [illegible]

our bed through every hour of our days and nights. Even a normal world might become confusing on these terms, and ours is far from being normal. One-sixth of its area has passed bodily out of civilisation, and much of the remainder appears to be divided, with no consciousness of sin between an earnest intention to make earth hell as soon as possible, and an equally earnest intention, with no consciousness of presumption, to make it heaven on or before the same date. But you have ample opportunities of observing for yourself. The broad and immediate result is, partly through a recent necessity for thinking and acting in large masses, partly through the instinct of mankind to draw together and cry out when camality bits them, and very largely through the quickening of communications, the power of the tribe over the individual has become more extended, particular, pontifical, and using the word in both senses, impertinent, than it has been for many generations. Some men accept this omnipresence of crowds; some may resent it. It is to the latter that I am speaking The independence that was a "glorious privilege" in Robert Burn's day is now more difficult to achieve than when one had merely to overcome a few material obstacles and the rest followed almost automatically. Nowadays, to own oneself in any decent measure, one has to run counter to a gospel, and to fight against its atmosphere; and an atmosphere, so long as it can be kept up, is rather cloying.

A Heritage of Freedom.

Even so, there is no need for the individual who intends to own himself to be too pessimistic. Let us, as our forefathers used, count our blessings. You, my constituents, enjoy three special ones.

First thanks to the continuity of self-denial on the part of your own forbears, the bulk of you will enter professions and callings in which you will be free men-free to be paid what your work is worth in the open market irrespective of your alleged merits of your needs Free, moreover, to work without physical molestation of yourself or your family as long and as closely as you please—free to exploit your own powers and your own health to the uttermost for your own ends

Your second blessings is that you carry, in your land's history and in your hearts, the strongest instinct of inherited continuity, which expresses itself in your passionate interest in your own folk, your own race, and all its values

History shows that from remote ages, the Scots would descend from their heather and associated together on the flat for predatory purposes, which now take the form of raiding the world in all departments of life—and Governments, But at intervals your race, more than others, feels the necessity for owning itself. Therefore it returns in groups to its heather, where, under the camouflage of "games" and "gatherings," it fortifies itself with the rites, incantations, passwords, raiment, dances, food and drink of its ancestors, and re-initiates itself into its primal individualism. These ceremonies as the Southern races know to their cost give the members fresh strength for renewed forays.

And that same strength is your third and chief blessing. I have already touched on the privilege of being broken by birth, custom, precept, and example to do without things. There is where the sons of the small houses, who have borne the yoke in their youth, hold a cumulative advantage over those who have been accustomed to life with broad margins. Such men can and do accommodate themselves to straitened circumstances at a pinch, and for an object; but they are as aware of their efforts afterwards as an untroined man is aware of his muscles on the second morning of a [illegible]

one's independence, then must be financed, by no means for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith towards oneself primarily out of the drinks that one does not too continuously take; the maidens in whom one does not too extravagantly rejoice; the entertainments that one does not too systematically attend or conduct; the transportation one does not too magnificently employ; the bets one does not too generally place, and the objects of beauty and desire that one does not too generously buy. Secondarily, those revenues can be added to by extra work, undertaken at hours before or after one's regular work, when one would infinitely rather rest or play. That involves the question of how far you can drive yourself without breaking down, and if you do break down how soon you can recover and carry on again. This is for you to judge, and to act accordingly.

No one regrets—no one has regretted—more than I that these should be the terms of the policy. It would better suit the spirit of the age if personal independence could be guaranteed for all by some form of co-ordinated action, combined with public assistance, and so forth. Unfortunately, there are still a few things in this world that a man must manage for himself; his own independence is one of them; and the obscure, repeated shifts and contrivances and abstention necessary to the manufacture of it are too personal and intimate to expose to the inspection of any department, however sympathetic.

If you have a temperament that can accommodate itself to cramping your [illegible] while you are thus saving you are l[illegible] But, any way, you will be more or [illegible] uncomfortable until it presently d[illegible] you that you have put enough [illegible] food and housing for, say, one week ah[illegible] is both sedative and antispasmodic—it n[illegible] for calm in the individual and forbear[illegible] towards the tribe—to know that you h[illegible] even seven days' potential independence [illegible] reserve—and owed to no man. One is led on to stretch that painfully-extorted time to one month if possible; and, as one sees that this is possible, the possibilities grow. Bit by bit one builds up and digs oneself into a base whence one can move in any direction, and fall back upon in any need. The need may be merely to sit still and consider, as did our first ancestors, what manner of animal we are, or it may be to cut loose at a moment's notice from a situation which has become intolerable or unworthy; but whatever it may be, it is one's own need, and the opportunity of meeting it has been made by one's own self.

The Price Worth Paying.

After all, yourself is the only person you can by no possibility get away from in this life, and, maybe, in another. It is w[illegible] a little pains and money to do go[illegible] For it is he, and not our derivative educated minds or our induced emotions, who preserves in us the undefeated senior instinct of independence. You can test this by promising yourself not to do a thing, and noticing the scandalous amount of special pleading that you have to go through with yourself if you break your promise. A man does not always remember or follow up the great things that he has promised himself or his friends to do; but he rarely forgets or forgives when he has promised himself not to do even a little thing. This is because man has lived with himself as an individual vastly longer than he has lived with himself under tribal conditions. Consequently facts about his noble solitary self and his earliest achievements had time to get well fixed in his memory. He knew he was not altogether one with the beasts. H[illegible] amazing experiences with his first lie [illegible] shown him that he was something [illegible] magician, if not a miracle-worker; a[illegible] first impulse towards self-[illegible] [illegible] immediately in sight [illegible]