Editors' Remarks

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A Legend of Truth

by Rudyard Kipling

Once on a time, the ancient legends tell,
Truth, rising from the bottom of her well,
Looked on the world, but, hearing how it lied,
Returned to her seclusion horrified.
There she abode, so conscious of her worth,
Not even Pilate's Question called her forth,
Nor Galileo, kneeling to deny
The Laws that hold our Planet 'neath the sky.
Meantime, her kindlier sister, whom men call
Fiction, did all her work and more than all,
With so much zeal, devotion, tact, and care,
That no one noticed Truth was otherwhere.

Then came a War when, bombed and gassed and mined,
Truth rose once more, perforce, to meet mankind,
And through the dust and glare and wreck of things,
Beheld a phantom on unbalanced wings,
Reeling and groping, dazed, dishevelled, dumb,
But semaphoring direr deeds to come.

Truth hailed and bade her stand; the quavering shade
Clung to her knees and babbled, "Sister, aid!
I am - I was - thy Deputy, and men
Besought me for my useful tongue or pen
To gloss their gentle deeds, and I complied,

And they, and thy demands, were satisfied.
But this - "she pointed o'er the blistered plain,
Where men as Gods and devils wrought amain--
"This is beyond me! Take thy work again."

Tablets and pen transferred, she fled afar,
And Truth assumed the record of the War...
She saw, she heard, she read, she tried to tell
Facts beyond precedent and parallel--
Unfit to hint or breathe, much less to write,
But happening every minute, day and night.
She called for proof. It came. The dossiers grew.
She marked them, first, "Return. This can't be true."
Then, underneath the cold official word:
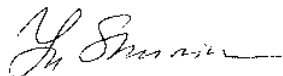"This is not really half of what occurred."

She faced herself at last, the story runs,
And telegraphed her sister: "Come at once.
Facts out of hand. Unable overtake
Without your aid. Come back for Truth's own sake!
Co-equal rank and powers if you agree.
They need us both, but you far more than me!"

Rudyard Kipling (1809-1849) ♣

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♣ **Joseph Rudyard Kipling** (30 December 1865 – 18 January 1936) was an English short-story writer, poet, and novelist. He is chiefly remembered for his tales and poems of British soldiers in India and his tales for children. He was born in Bombay, in the Bombay Presidency of British India, and was taken by his family to England when he was five years old. Kipling is best known for his works of fiction, including The Jungle Book (a collection of stories, which includes and his poems, including "Mandalay" (1890), "Gunga Din" (1890), "The Gods of the Copybook Headings" (1919), "The White Man's Burden" (1899), and "If—" (1910). He is regarded as a major "innovator in the art of the short story"; his children's books are enduring classics of children's literature; and his best works are said to exhibit "a versatile and luminous narrative gift".