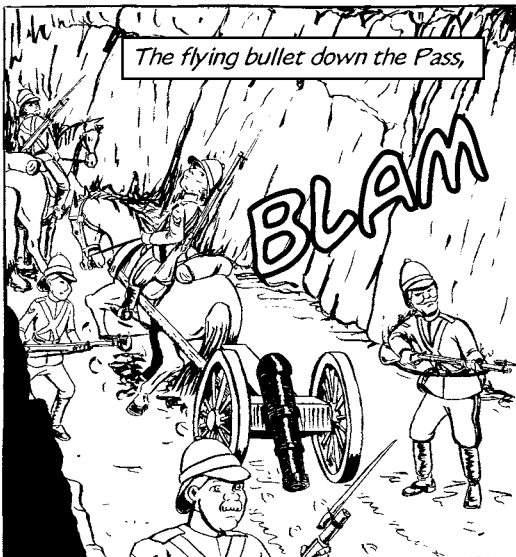
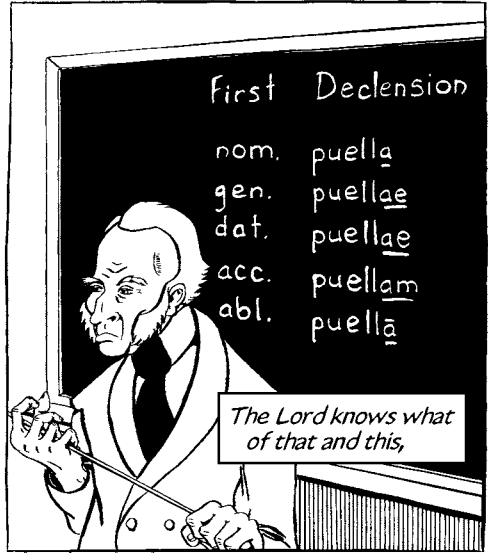


Arithmetic on the Frontier

by Rudyard Kipling

Illustrated by E. J. Barnes





Three hundred pounds per annum spent
On making brain and body meeter



For all the murderous intent
Comprised in "villainous saltpetre"!



And after? --

-- Ask the Yusufzaies
What comes of all our 'ologies.



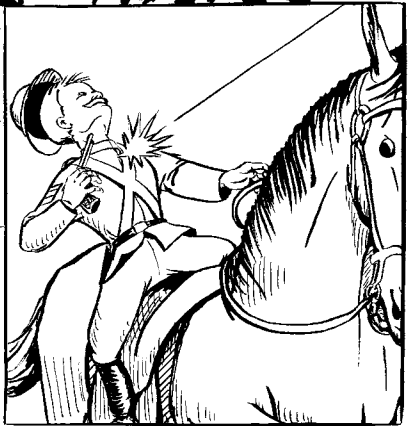
3

A scrimmage in a Border Station --



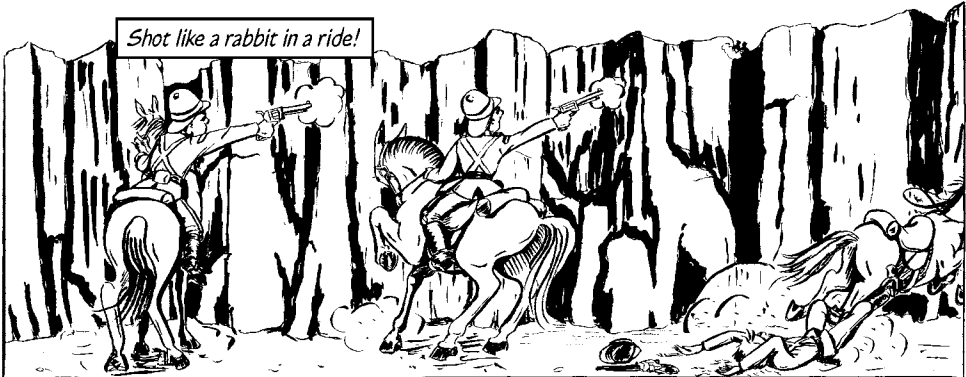
A canter down some dark defile --

*Two thousand pounds of education
Drops to a ten-rupee jezail --*

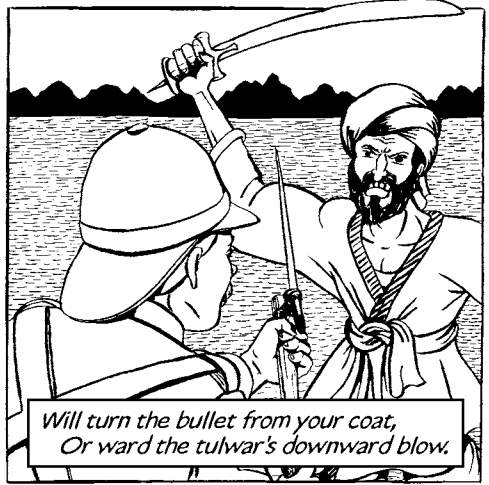
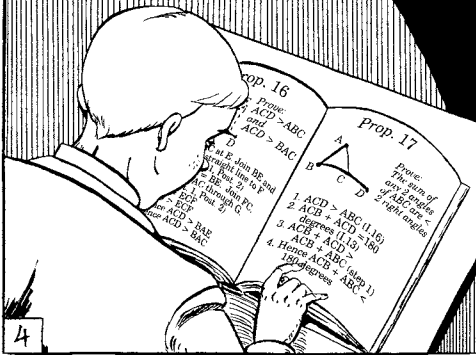


*The Grammer's boast,
the Squadron's pride,*

Shot like a rabbit in a ride!



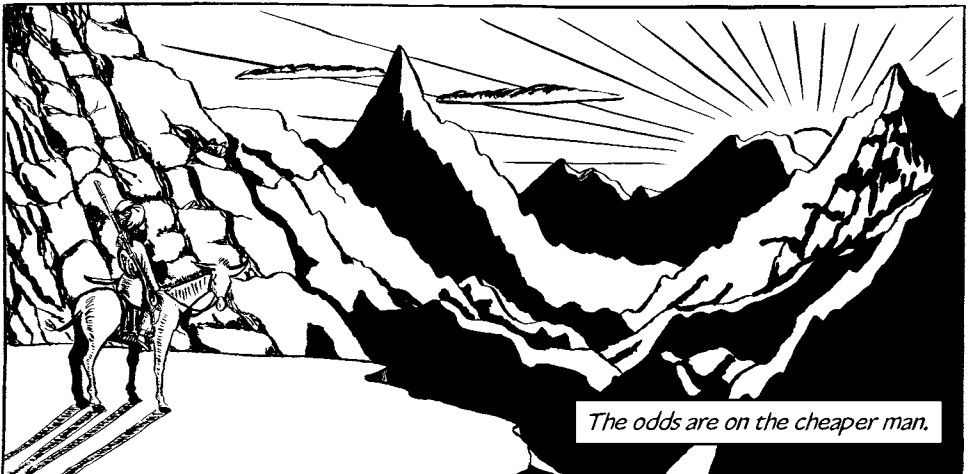
No proposition Euclid wrote
No formulae the text-books know,



Strike hard who cares --

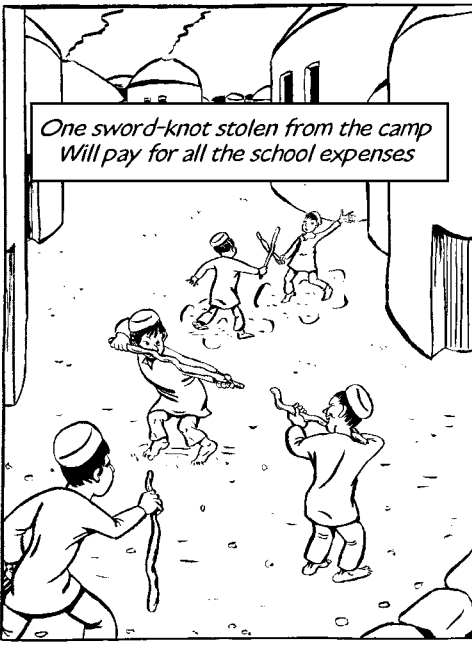


-- shoot straight
who can --

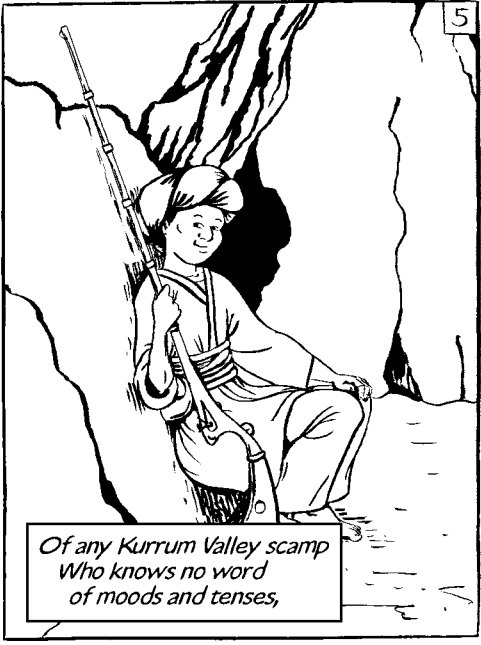


The odds are on the cheaper man.

One sword-knot stolen from the camp
Will pay for all the school expenses



Of any Kurrum Valley scamp
Who knows no word
of moods and tenses,



But, being blessed with perfect sight,



Picks off our messmates left and right.



With home-bred hordes the hillsides teem,

The troopships bring us one by one,

At vast expense of time and steam,

To slay Afridis where they run.

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The "captives of our bow and spear"

*Are cheap, alas!
as we are dear.*

END

A Note on the Author

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in Bombay (Mumbai), India, and schooled in England. He worked as a journalist in Lahore, India (now in Pakistan), from 1882 to 1889. He married an American in 1892 and lived in Brattleboro, Vermont, after which he returned to England with his wife, settling in Sussex. He died in London.

Much of his best-known work is based on his experience and observations as an Englishman in British India. His volumes of verse included *Departmental Ditties* (1886) and *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). He is well-known in the United States for the children's books *The Jungle Book* (1895) and *Just So Stories* (1902). He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907, the first English-language writer to receive it. His writings have provided the source for numerous motion pictures, including *Captains Courageous* (1937), *Gunga Din* (1939), *Kim* (1950), *The Jungle Book* (1942, 1967, 1994, et al.), and *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975).

In the later 20th century, his reputation as the 'poet of British Imperialism' caused him to be widely reviled as an apologist. However, his work as a whole shows that he understood the price of Empire, to conqueror and conquered alike, with a subtlety often missed by both its boosters and detractors. His poems about the Great War (World War I) are particularly ambivalent, as his only son died in a war that seemed to drag on forever to no discernable point. It is Louis Killen's recording of Peter Bellamy's arrangement of "We Have Fed Our Sea" (from the poem *The Song of the Dead*) that caused me to seek out those of Kipling's poems that might shed light on our own, more recent entanglements in Central Asia.

A Note on the Artist/Adaptor

E.J. Barnes is an illustrator, cartoonist, and animator. Her cartoons have appeared in the *Fortean Times* and *Journal of Irreproducible Results*. Her animated film, *Leatherwing Bat*, has shown at numerous film festivals, including the Comic-Con International Film Festival. The comic she is currently drawing is *Blaster Al Ackerman's Tales of the Ling Master*, a humor series.

Notes on "Arithmetic on the Frontier"

Page 1 -- "The Pass" -- capitalized -- from the geographical context implied by the rest of the poem, is almost certainly the Khyber Pass, the narrow defile through the Khyber Hills at the border between what is now Pakistan (then North-West Frontier Province of British India) and Afghanistan. It is 5 yards across at its narrowest point. It is one of the very few passes from Pakistan into Afghanistan along that mountainous and largely barren border, being part of the road from Peshawar (Pakistan) to Jalalabad (Afghanistan) on its way to Kabul. During the First Afghan War, in 1842, a British military party of 16,000 was slaughtered here during its retreat from Kabul, repeatedly assailed by ambushes and snipers along the 33 mile trail.

Page 2 -- The buildings in Panel 1 are those of Rugby School, in England, made famous by *Tom Brown's School Days* and the place where Rugby football was purportedly invented.

Every all-male boarding school in the English-speaking world has had rumors circulate that the cooks put something in the food to suppress the libido of the students. In the 19th century and well into the 20th, the prime suspect was saltpeter (potassium nitrate), a mineral traditionally used to manufacture gunpowder.

The Yusufzai tribe belongs to the Pathan group -- the Pathans (or Pashtuns as they are more commonly called today) being the dominant ethnicity in southern Afghanistan, and the main ethnic group from which the Taliban have drawn membership. Yusufzai tribal territory includes parts of the North-West Frontier Province.

Page 3 -- A jezail (despite Kipling, actually rhymes with “mail”) is a long, slender Afghan musket, often used with a rest. This is the gun I’ve put in the hands of the native fighters in my drawings. Ten rupees was pretty cheap for a gun even then.

Page 4 -- The *Elements* of Euclid (c. 300 B.C.), Greek father of plane geometry, was used as a basic geometry text until the 20th century.

The *tulwar* (*talwar*) is a sabre of an Indian (and presumably Pakistani) style.

Page 5 -- The Kurram (Kipling’s “Kurrum”) River runs from Afghanistan into Pakistan, southwest of the Khyber Pass, draining into the Indus. Paktia Province in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have been regrouping, is one of the areas drained by the Kurram.

Page 6 -- The Afridis are another Pathan (Pashtun) tribe of the North-West Frontier Province – the tribe which controlled passage through the Khyber Pass for centuries before the British arrived in the area. For narrative purposes, I’ve portrayed the boy being shot as the “Kurrum [sic] Valley scamp” from page 5, but I don’t actually know whether Afridi territory extends to any part of the Kurram valley.

“...Are cheap, alas! as we are dear.” The art in the last panel, however, tells a more complicated story: The tribesmen may be “cheap” as far as educating and equipping them, but poor folk have nothing *but* family, so every death is a cost to them that they cannot bear without it being avenged. The pose of the *paterfamilias* is based on that of John Brown in the mural of *Bleeding Kansas*.

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