

**THE RIVER OF LIFE,  
AND  
OTHER STORIES**

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The river of life, and other stories by Alexander Kuprin

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AND OTHER STORIES

BY

ALEXANDER KUPRIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY

S. KOTELIANSKY AND J. M. MURRY

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ALEXANDER KUPRIN was born in 1870. He attended the Cadet School and the Military College at Moscow, and entered the Russian Army as a lieutenant in 1890. Seven years later he resigned his commission to devote himself to literature.

He achieved fame by a novel, *The Duel*, in which he described with a ruthless realism the army life in a garrison town upon the Western Frontier. The book, which in reality falls into line with the rest of his work as a severely objective presentation of a life which he has found vivid and rich, was, fortunately for his success, interpreted as an indictment of the Russian Army and the ill-starred Manchurian campaign. He was accepted by the propagandists as one of themselves, and though he protested vigorously against his unsought reputation, his position was thenceforward assured.

But the interest of Kuprin's talent is independent of the accidents of his material. He is an artist who has found life wide and rich and inexhaustible. He has been fascinated by the

reality itself rather than by the problems with which it confronts a differently sensitive mind. Therefore he has not held himself aloof, but plunged into the riotous waters of the River of Life. He has swum with the stream and battled against it as the mood turned in him ; and he has emerged with stories of the joy he has found in his own eager acceptance. Thus Kuprin is alive as none of his contemporaries is alive, and his stories are stories told for the delight of the telling and of the tale. They may not be profound with the secrets of the universe ; but they are, within their compass, shaped by the perfect art of one to whom the telling of a story of life is an exercise of his whole being in complete harmony with the act of life itself.

J. M. M.



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