LIFE'S HANDICAP: BEING STORIES OF MINE OWN PEOPLE. IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II

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Life's handicap: being stories of mine own people. In two volumes. Vol. II by Rudyard Kipling

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RUDYARD KIPLING

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LIFE'S HANDICAP

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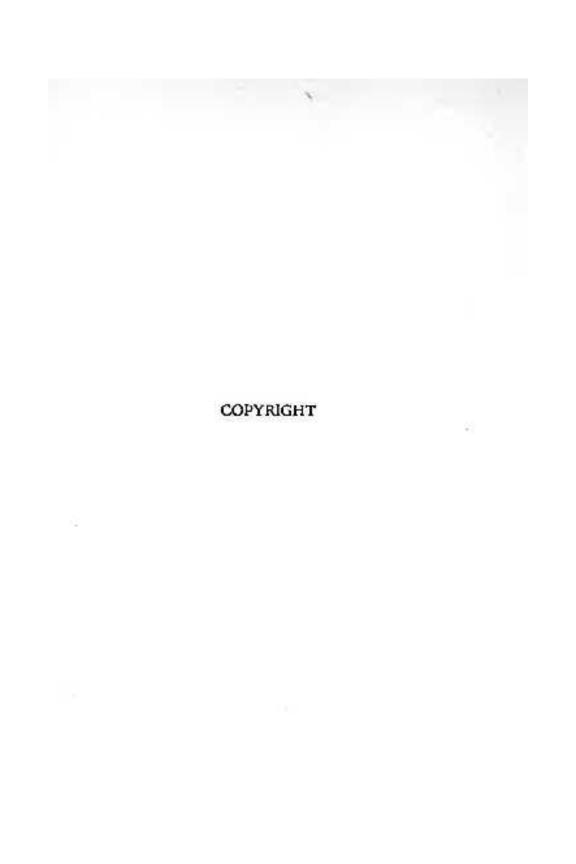
STORIES OF MINE OWN PEOPLE

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

IN TWO VOLUMES VOL. II

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THE MUTINY OF THE MAVERICKS

HEN three obscure gentlemen in San Francisco argued on insufficient premises they condemned a fellow-creature to a most unpleasant death in a far country, which had nothing whatever to do with the United States. They foregathered at the top of a tenement-house in Tehama Street, an unsavoury quarter of the city, and, there calling for certain drinks, they conspired because they were conspirators by trade, officially known as the Third Three of the I.A.A.—an institution for the propagation of pure light, not to be confounded with any others, though it is affiliated to many. The Second Three live in

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Montreal, and work among the poor there; the First Three have their home in New York, not far from Castle Garden, and write regularly once a week to a small house near one of the big hotels at Boulogne. What happens after that, a particular section of Scotland Yard knows too well, and laughs at. A conspirator detests ridicule. More men have been stabbed with Lucrezia Borgia daggers and dropped into the Thames for laughing at Head Centres and Triangles than for betraying secrets; for this is human nature.

The Third Three conspired over whisky cocktails and a clean sheet of notepaper against the British Empire and all that lay therein. This work is very like what men without discernment call politics before a general election. You pick out and discuss, in the company of congenial friends, all the weak points in your opponents' organisation, and unconsciously dwell upon and exaggerate all their mishaps, till it seems to you a miracle that the hated party holds together for an hour.

'Our principle is not so much active demonstration—that we leave to others—as passive embarrassment, to weaken and unnerve,' said the first man. 'Wherever an organisation is crippled, wherever a confusion is thrown into any branch of any department, we gain a step for those who take on