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C O N T E N T S

Enlightenment Confined or Dissipating through the Audience: A Critique of Kipling's "The Enlightenments of Pagett, M. P."

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Abstract:

Unlike the Liberal politicians at Home, the British administrators were lukewarm in acknowledging the impact Congress was slowly creating among the masses. Pagett, a newly arrived M. P. from Britain, came to learn the diversity of race, class and creed in India with the realization that political right or freedom was still a distant dream.

Widely regarded as the mouthpiece of the Empire Joseph Rudyard Kipling also earned a bad name for his apparently negative attitude towards the spread of western education in India. In stories like "The Head of the District" (1890), poems like "What Happened" (1888) and in the novel *Kim* (1901) Kipling good-humouredly criticized the westernized Indians who are found either wanting in executing their duties entrusted to them or simply failed. As the ruler the British thought it appropriate to implement western education in India which in due time would usher western industrial civilization and democratic values. But all these desired outcomes require reasonable time and certainly can not be expected within a few decades. Given the essentially heterogeneous racial, political and social fabric of India the British could only wait and help the slow initiation of modern age in India. Any over-enthusiasm to propagate the values of modern civilization on the part of either the ruler or the ruled is bound to face with bitter reality. Only a more tolerant and balanced approach by both parties can yield satisfactory result in the end. The modest object of the present article is to examine this hypothesis with respect to Kipling's narrative "The Enlightenments of Pagett, M. P." (1890)[1].