

Divided Destinies

Rudyard Kipling

It was an artless *Bandar*, and he danced upon a pine,
And much I wondered how he lived, and where the beast might dine,
And many, many other things, till, o'er my morning smoke,
I slept the sleep of idleness and dreamt that *Bandar* spoke.

He said: "O man of many clothes! Sad crawler on the Hills!
Observe, I know not Ranken's shop, nor Ranken's monthly bills;
I take no heed to trousers or the coats that you call dress;
Nor am I plagued with little cards for little drinks at Mess.

"I steal the bunnia's grain at morn, at noon and eventide,
(For he is fat and I am spare), I roam the mountain side,
I follow no man's carriage, and no, never in my life
Have I flirted at Peliti's with another *Bandar's* wife.

"O man of futile fopperies – unnecessary wraps;
I own no ponies in the hills, I drive no tall-wheeled traps;
I buy me not twelve-button gloves, 'short-sixes' eke, or rings,
Nor do I waste at Hamilton's my wealth on 'pretty things.'

"I quarrel with my wife at home, we never fight abroad;
But Mrs. B. has grasped the fact I am her only lord.
I never heard of fever – dumps nor debts depress my soul;
And I pity and despise you!" Here he pouched my breakfast-roll.

His hide was very mangy, and his face was very red,
And ever and anon he scratched with energy his head.
His manners were not always nice, but how my spirit cried
To be an artless *Bandar* loose upon the mountain side!

So I answered: "Gentle *Bandar*, an inscrutable Decree
Makes thee a gleesome fleasome Thou, and me a wretched Me.
Go! Depart in peace, my brother, to thy home amid the pine;
Yet forget not once a mortal wished to change his lot for thine."