

# The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes, Rudyard Kipling, 1899, F. M. Buckles, 1899

My own true ghost story. The strange ride of morrowbie jukes. The man who would be king. "The finest story in the world" Next morning I sent a penitent note to Kitty, imploring her to overlook my strange conduct of the previous afternoon. My Divinity was still very wroth, and a personal apology was necessary. I explained, with a fluency born of night-long pondering over a falsehood, that I had been attacked with sudden palpitation of the heart "the result of indigestion. This eminently practical solution had its effect; and Kitty and I rode out that afternoon with the shadow of my first lie dividing us. Nothing would please her save a canter round Jakko. Alive or dead "there is no other way. " Native Proverb. There is, as the conjurers say, no deception about this tale. Jukes by accident stumbled upon a village that is well known to exist, though he is the only Englishman who has been there. A somewhat similar institution used to flourish on the outskirts of Calcutta, and there is a story that if you go into the heart of Bikanir, which is in the heart of the Great Indian Desert, you shall come across not a village but a town where the Dead who did not Morrowbie Jukes, out on a moonlight ride, falls with his horse down an unexpectedly steep slope of sand, into a crater. He finds himself in a sort of village of the living dead, where people who appear to have died of - for instance cholera - but revived when their bodies were about to be burned, are imprisoned. Led by Gunga Dass, a murderous Brahmin, they sleep in burrows in the sand, and live on crows. And so one does hear of strange ordeals the Hindu has to undergo at the urge of his brahmin mentor-the sipping of cow's urine is one example. When he wrote the story Kipling was still very young, and one for whom those early scenes of Indian life which he saw as a child in Bombay, would have been singed in his memory.