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The **Maulahka**: A STORY OF
WEST AND
EAST

By *RUDYARD KIPLING*
And *WOLCOTT BALESTIER*

LONDON
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WILLIAM HEINEMANN
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THE NAULAHKA:

A STORY OF WEST AND EAST.

I.

“There was a strife ’twixt man and maid—
Oh that was at the birth o’ time !
But what befell ’twixt man and maid,
Oh that’s beyond the grip o’ rhyme.
’Twas : ‘Sweet, I must not bide wi’ you,’
And : ‘Love, I canna bide alone ;’
For baith were young, and baith were true,
And baith were hard as the nether stone.”

—*Auchinleck’s Ride.*

NICHOLAS TARVIN sat in the moonlight on the unrailed bridge that crossed the irrigating ditch above Topaz, dangling his feet over the stream. A brown, sad-eyed little woman sat beside him, staring quietly at the moon. She was tanned with the tan of the girl who does not mind wind and rain and sun, and her eyes were sad with the settled melancholy of eyes that know big mountains, and seas of plain, and care, and life. The women of the West shade such eyes under their hands at sunset in their cabin-doors, scanning those hills or those grassless, treeless plains for the home-coming of their men. A hard life is always hardest for the woman.

Kate Sheriff had lived with her face to the West and with her smouldering eyes fixed upon the wilderness