



THE KIPLING SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1927

Registered Charity No.278885

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*He binds His frost upon the land
To ripen it for Spring*

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2025

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 5 February 2025. Andy Williamson "Kipling and Brown's Hotel". Andy Williamson is an historian and expert of the golden age of travel. He is the author of *Brown's Hotel: A Family Affair*, the definitive history of London's oldest luxury hotel – and Rudyard Kipling's home away from home. He shares his knowledge of historic hotels on TV and radio. *Army & Navy Club, 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom (6.00pm)*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81317225873?pwd=Ra0qOyWBSNIR53QPp9PBfEb2bi9IGU.1>

Meeting ID: 813 1722 5873 Passcode: 912192

Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served from 5.30pm for those attending in person.

For security purposes at the venue, please can any members intending to attend in person let me know no later than Monday 3 February (contact details at the top of this page). Please also note the Club's dress code <https://therag.co.uk/club-dress-code/>. Members are welcome after the meeting to dine in the Coffee Room at the Army & Navy Club with the speaker and members of Council. If you would like to do so, please let me (Mike Kipling) know, using any of the contact details at the head of this newsletter.

OTHER FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Saturday 1 March** John McGivering Writing Competition 2025 opens. Poetry on 'the sea' with links to Kipling. Further information in due course on the website and in the March newsletter.
- **Wednesday 23 April.** Speaker TBA. *Zoom-only*
- **Friday 16 - Sunday 18 May.** Alliance of Literary Societies AGM and Conference. Hosted by the Kipling Society in Brighton. *All members of the Kipling Society are welcome to attend for all or part of the weekend.* Application forms will be circulated to members next month. If you are considering attending, accommodation, which may be in short supply by May, can be booked at <https://book.passkey.com/go/ALSG0525>
- **Wednesday 2 July** AGM. Speaker TBA. *Army & Navy Club, 4.30pm for 5.00pm, and by Zoom.*
- **Wednesday 24 September** Speaker TBA. *Zoom-only*

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL EXAMINER NEEDED

The current Independent Examiner of the Society's accounts took on the role for a temporary period and has now stepped down. We are therefore seeking a member, or non-member, to take over the role. The only requirement is that they may not be a current member of Council. Due to the small size of our annual income, this role is not mandated by the Charity Commission but just by the Society's own rules. It is not necessary to have an accounting qualification, as

the main purpose is just to ensure that the Society's income and expenditure has been accurately recorded and that its expenditure has been appropriate. The time commitment is small - and is needed only in February or March each year (including 2025). The Examiner does not have to be UK-based; a recent incumbent carried out the role without any problem from the USA. Some experience with spreadsheets such as MS Excel would be helpful but is not essential. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in finding more about the role, please contact me (Mike Kipling) by email or telephone using the contact details at the top of this newsletter.

REPORT OF NOVEMBER MEETING – Alex Bubb

In November we heard a lecture from our own Jan Montefiore, editor of the *Kipling Journal*. Jan's topic was Kipling's strange and somewhat ill-regarded story of metempsychosis, "The Finest Story in the World". Jan focussed in particular on the first-person narrator with his somewhat contemptuous attitude to his young friend with a remarkable series of past lives, and identified the story as representative of a trend for fiction on this theme in the early 1890s. Our wide-ranging discussion after the talk took in, among other things, John Davidson's poem 'Thirty Bob a Week' and just how much was a sensible salary upon which a clerk might marry in the late 19th Century, and the mercurial figure of Grish Chunder who appears towards the end of the story and anticipates Hurree Babu in *Kim*. Both characters demonstrate Kipling's ability to complicate and undermine the stock figure of the Bengali 'babu' that was routinely deployed in Anglo-Indian literature (including by Kipling himself, for example in 'What Happened'). A recording of the lecture can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iMC6S2eIZ8>

In addition to her prolific and dedicated scholarship on Kipling, I may note here also that Jan is an established poet. Her latest volume of poetry, *In The Here And Now*, was launched a few days after November's meeting at an event in Bloomsbury.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR WEBSITE EDITOR – Ian Bell

The society has recently opened a new YouTube Channel in order to gather all past society videos under one "roof" and to allow for access by more than one editor. Unfortunately, this means that the subscribers' and viewers' lists return to zero. The previous channel registered 50+ subscribers which for a society of 350+ is disappointing, the new channel already has 60+ subscribers. Please, please subscribe if you have not done so already, I would like to think that a target of 200+ is within reach. This is the simplest possible thing to do if you are already subscribed to Google. If not, a Google subscription is required, which of course is free, but may not appeal to some. However, the YouTube Channel is one way that we can attract new members, and a healthy number of subscribers must encourage this.

Here's the link <https://www.youtube.com/@TheKiplingSociety>

A DIVERSITY OF KIPLING - REVISITED

"A Diversity of Kipling" was staged by the Society in 2017 under the chairmanship of John Walker. It was a 24-hour reading of Kipling's works and hosted at Bateman's by the National



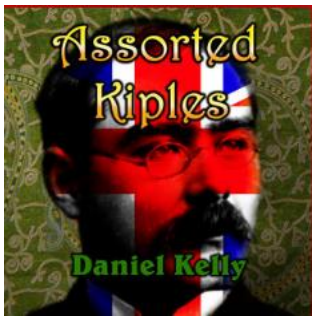
Trust. A one-hour video created of the event has been available on the website and YouTube channel ever since, but now, thanks to Ian Bell our website editor, the full 24-hour audio record is also available and, for the first time, the readers who contributed to this event can be listened to individually without having to search through the three 8-hour recordings. There is a direct link to the new pages from the Homepage or just click on the

following <https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/news/a-diversity-of-kipling.htm>

BATEMAN'S EXHIBITION ROOM REOPENING DATE ANNOUNCED

The exhibition room at Bateman's will reopen to the public on 15 February following a much-needed modernisation of the presentation of Kipling's story to visitors. A sequence of large, illustrated panels will explain his life and work, accompanied by a revised selection of material from the house collection. At the same time, the room beyond which is currently themed on Kipling's son John, will be returned to its more authentic pre-2014 arrangement as the Kiplings' bedroom. One of the exhibition room panels and displays will instead relate both Rudyard's and John's war experiences. For those who can get there, a visit is thoroughly recommended. For others, some photographs of the rearranged rooms will be included in the next edition of this newsletter.

ASSORTED KIPLES



Daniel Kelly has set delightfully to music a selection of some of Kipling's poems, including one or two less well-known ones. They are: The Four Angels, Tommy, A St Helena Lullaby, Brooklands Road, Buddha at Kamakura, The Glories, Sons of Martha, When Earth's Last Picture is Painted, The Thousandth One. The Prayer of Miriam Cohen, the Threshold, The Disciple, and The Sack of the Gods. These can be listened to on Spotify at

<https://open.spotify.com/track/0yUxR5MUeHe7CAIKTGkF6Q?si=3b525f385fb64867>

Including several tracks from Daniel's new album, there are now over 120 Kipling settings or Kipling-inspired tracks on our own Spotify playlist.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/25SzgST4RnE93z2Qxh7FZt?si=06edbc32dc8d4011>

MEMBERS' READING EVENING

On Thursday 12 December 2024, Jan Montefiore curated another of our popular members' reading evening. The material selected by each reader is shown below

- **War:** **Martin Powell** Hymn before Action, **Andrew Scragg** The Holy War, **Harry Potter** Minesweepers
- **After a war:** **Bill James** The Lesson, **Alda Milner-Barry** The English Way
- **Empire:** **Janice Lingley** The Tomb of his Ancestors (extract, at the tomb), **Mike Kipling** The Story of Tommy (part) and Descent of the Punkah, **John Seriot** A Sahibs' War (opening paragraphs)
- **Songs of Adventure:** **John Walker** The Bell Buoy, **Andrew Lycett** Some Aspects of Travel (extract discussing smells)
- **From the 'Puck' Books:** **John Radcliffe** A Truthful Song, **Jan Montefiore** A Pict Song
- **Last Things:** **Maggie Washington** Peter Bellamy singing 'Follow me 'Ome', **Valmai Holt:** Jane in Paradise, **Mike Kipling** The Lesson (schoolboy lyrics)

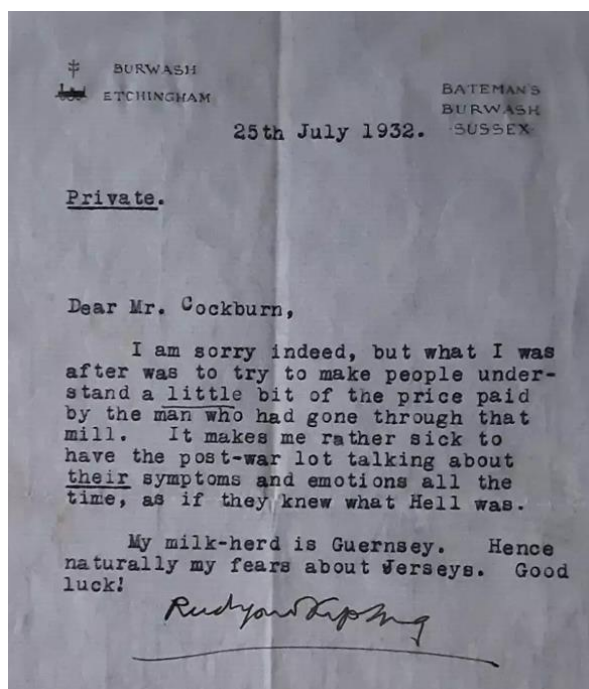
ZOMBIE BOOTS

A powerful 1915 recording of 'Boots' by Taylor Holmes has been used in a trailer for a forthcoming zombie movie directed by Danny Boyle. Watch and listen if you dare at [28 Years Later](#)



NEW KIPLING LETTERS

Several previously unknown letters by Kipling have surfaced recently. Two are described in articles in the January 2025 edition of the Kipling Journal. Another, defending one of his stories about the effects of war on individuals – and also mentioning his cattle herd – was sold on e-



bay recently for £180. A photograph is reproduced with the permission of the seller. Our Librarian, John Walker, commented on the letter as follows:

“I would agree that this is typed by Kipling himself, on his current Remington (ref. *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*; Vol 6; p 130; ed Thomas Pinney; University of Iowa Press 2004). Rudyard wrote to Colonel C.E. Hughes, on 18th July 1932, that he had '103 herd of beasts' in a good year for calving, but that he intended to change present bulls for a 'larger type'. These would have perhaps have been his Sussex herd, though we know that during the First World War Kipling had bought some Guernsey cattle, and that he was proud of their success in winning prizes. Mr Cockburn had probably written to Kipling regarding a story, perhaps in a recent publication such as *Limits and Renewals* (published 7th April

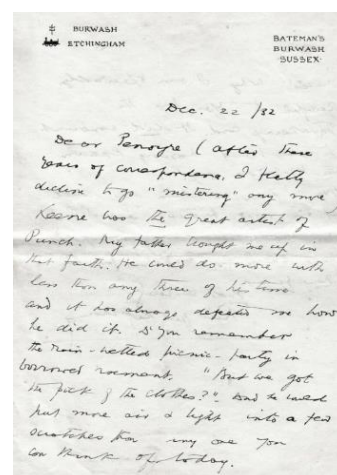
1932). We are unlikely to place Mr Cockburn (there are no links in farming stock close to Burwash, to my knowledge). It is perfectly possible that this correspondent was one of the Cockburn family who, Googlefish reports, championed Jersey cattle in New Zealand ...”

Two others are from Kipling to, we strongly suspect, John Baker Penoyre (1870-1954) who was an archaeologist and Secretary to the British School at Athens and other learned societies. Penoyre may also have been an acquaintance of Kipling's nephew Ambrose Poynter. We are not aware of any other correspondence between Kipling and Penoyre. One is dated 22 December 1932 from Bateman's and the other 3 January 1934 from the Grand Pump Room Hotel, Bath.¹ John Walker offers the transcriptions below.

Dear Penoyre (After these years of correspondence, I really decline to go “mistering” any more)

Keene was the greatest artist of Punch. My father brought me up in that faith. He could do more with less than any three of his time and it has always defeated me how he did it. D'you remember the rain-wetted picnic-party in borrowed raiment. “But we got the pick of the clothes?” And he would put more air and light into a few scratches than anyone you can think of today.

That's why I am specially grateful to you for the Thackeray card. It did amount to something, having known the Victorian age! No, I have not been very well but am now better and I hope you will follow my example.



¹ Kipling was in Bath from 22 December 1933 to 5 January 1934 spending the holiday with his wife, daughter and son-in-law.

With every good wish for the new year
 Most sincerely,
 Rudyard Kipling

Dear M Penoyre,

And that's all right at last.

By all manner of means come down when the Lord stands us a Summer. Like you, I've much I'd like to discuss. I've sat with Kenyon for years on the War Graves Commission and like him personally very much. Likewise he is full of knowledge and we can go round him like a cooper round a cask and always be sure of drawing something good and "factual". (That, I think, is one of the silent words in the light lexicon of the B.B.C., but he is accurate)

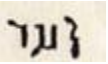

What is your precise work with his successor? Archaeology? But what special branch other than classic. I want to know for reasons which concern Crete and Cypress [sic]. I'm not one as dives after "Raddis" so I missed the cultivated Voice

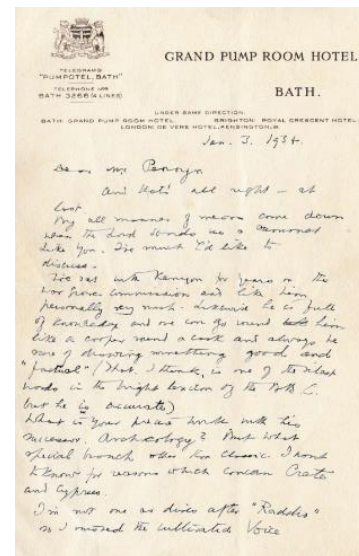
The "social contract" nowadays is perfectly plain and rather brutally put. If you don't joyously and at will, expose your innards in order to help sell newspapers and advance mews agencies you are "retiring". If Lot's Experiences with the first Fathers of Journalism in Sodom when they broke down his doors. The translators, not knowing Hebrew as well as I do, rendered [Hebrew form A] as "know" in the corrupter [?] sense, instead of "know-all-about". They were excusable for the misreading [Hebrew form B]. Hence in the Devil's own time [?], the modern press and the B.B.C.

But these are among the things we'll talk over anon. I'm off almost at once to see if there is Sun in the South of France.

Ever sincerely,
 Rudyard Kipling

P.S. Give a warning before you come so that I may have the house empty. RK

A  B 



TISBURY WINDOW DEDICATION

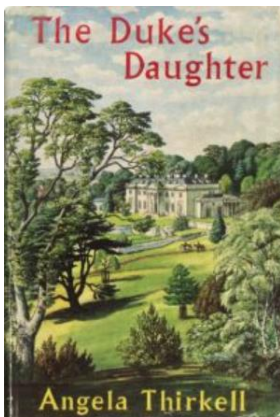
The new stained-glass window in Tisbury church will be formally dedicated on Sunday 9 February. The Society made a donation towards the window, and the message "Donated by the Kipling Society in remembrance of Lockwood and Alice Kipling, parents of Rudyard Kipling, who retired to this parish and were often visited by their son, and are buried in the churchyard" will appear next to the record of our donation in the memorial book.



RUDYARD KIPLING AND ANGELA THIRKELL; OR "I THINK KIPLING'S MARVELLOUS, ROBIN, DON'T YOU?" Part 2 – Hilary Temple

Here are one or two contextual borrowings before we get to specific Relusions². The Red Cross and St John Hospital Libraries are significant in Thirkell. The origin of this was May Gaskell's War Library, which she conceived on the night of 4 August 1914. She had collected books for wounded soldiers in the Boer War and feared a repeat. May's son-in-law had written from South Africa: 'We have cut up the Rudyard Kipling volumes into numbered parts and we pass them down the beds, for a volume each is too precious.' The War Library was taken over by the Red Cross, and May and her friends spent much time repairing books, perhaps slicing up the more substantial works to make them go further. Thirkell would have known this and puts 'bookbinding' into several of the novels, as by World War Two there would have been a hefty stock of titles published in paperback as well as used books needing reinforcement. But there is an even stronger link here: despite (or perhaps because of) the 20-year difference in their ages, Burne-Jones and May Gaskell had an intense relationship in which he idealised her and she confided in him the 'profound secret' that Josceline Dimpleby uses as the title for her biography. And it was through Burne-Jones that May had met Kipling.

Difficult though Kipling was reputed to be - for instance, he refused to write any kind of tribute for Burne-Jones's centenary exhibition of 1933 and Thirkell was unsurprised by this - the psychological welfare of wounded soldiers obviously struck a chord with him, perhaps because of the loss of his son John. He donated copies of his own works but also suggested that small-scale magazines should be made for the less literate or more damaged men; he even specified that they should contain four sheets and include pictures, jokes and colour. It would have been easy for the educated middle classes to overestimate their target audience in this respect. Just as Dickens pops up all over the place, so does Kipling appear in sundry Relusions throughout all but the earliest Barsetshire novels. And they are not always just quotations from his works. I imagine, for instance, that Pook's Piece [*Marling Hall*], also Pooker's Piece [*Before Lunch*] is a reference to Pook's Hill. Mr Middleton begins a lecture on the pre-Norman variants Pooker,



Pook or Puck, even though it turns out that Pooker was a nineteenth-century clergyman, a typical piece of wit that underlines Mr Middleton's pretentiousness. (Pucken the cowman escapes comment.) A reference to leaf-dipping [*The Duke's Daughter*] is also reminiscent of Puck of Pack's Hill. As we have seen, further afield the Pathans [*Northbridge Rectory*] were regarded as heroic by Kipling - Stalky is their advocate and has an almost magical relationship with them - but they merely present Thirkell's characters with a pronunciation problem: are they Paythans or Ptarns or what? Was this also a family joke? And as the herd at Kipling's house Batemans had its Blizzard and Buttercup, so Rushwater has its Romany Rubicon and other alliterations.

I had a note on a bit of paper for some time bearing the question 'Why Turk?' for the name of the Marlings' dog. It turns out that the Kiplings had a bloodhound of that name, though there is no trace of his being a burden as was poor Turk [*The Old Bank House*]. Anyway, I was able to throw away the piece of paper. Now to some proper Relusions. One of the most famous lines from Kipling's poetry, already mentioned, is: 'Oh East is East and West is West, and never the

² The Angela Thirkell Society refers to allusions, particularly those of a literary nature, as 'relusions', because of a malapropism by a character in *The Old Bank House*. 'I admit I don't quite take the relusion,' said Mr. Adams ...'but my little Heth would, ...she's a great reader and anything literary she's down on like a pack of wolves.'

twain shall meet'. Sister Chiffinch [*Miss Bunting*] refers to this as a 'saying' when someone has mentioned Tony Morland being in Burma: it has the kind of resonance that makes it seem an organic rather than a manufactured product. The following three lines, which are almost never quoted, give the twist to the poem:

'Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth.'

Others following hard upon this include: 'Sisters under the[ir] skin[s] - Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady from *Barrack Room Ballads*. Thirkell uses them variously in *Marling Hall* when Lettice is thinking about common office workers fancying David; *Private Enterprise* about Mrs Colonel Matcham being virtually a prostitute; and *Happy Returns* in relation to Mrs Crawley's and Mrs Simnet's views about the Palace. The poem is one we might find slightly unpleasant nowadays, being Cockney memories of women the speaker has been with. Kipling often writes in this voice, as in 'On the Road to Mandalay:

'An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the 10-year soldier tells:
If you've 'eard the East a'callin', you won't never 'eed aught else.'

The abundance of apostrophes makes deciphering difficult on occasion, but it reads aloud well.

Thirkell uses 'Take up the white man's burden' [*The Duke's Daughter*] from Kipling's poem of the same name, combined with 'He knew what the 10-year soldier tells' in relation to the Americans in Korea, the sense of this being that the conqueror serves the conquered. 'Lesser breeds without the Law' [*Recessional*] comes up often in Barsestshire thinking. 'Law' in Kipling, incidentally, is not just legal structure but a whole system of knowledge and values and the necessity of accepting things as they are. Thirkell transmutes this into 'alien race without the law' [*Growing Up*] and 'One of the lesser sheets [ie newspapers] without the law' in *Miss Bunting*; Mrs Belton reflects on the 'deep hidden shame of feeling that England's name had been lowered in the eyes of all lesser breeds' [*Love Among the Ruins*]; and 'men who now allow any lesser breed without the law to spit upon the Flag of England [*Happy Returns*]. The poem continues:

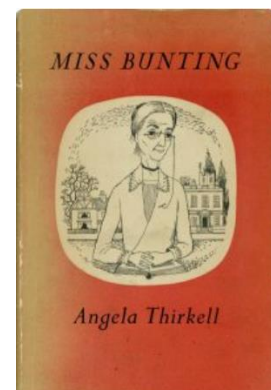
'The tumult and the shouting dies -
The captains and the kings depart -
Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice, An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget!

'High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone' [*The Winners*] again sounds proverbial and means in short 'women hold you back'! In *Miss Bunting*, Anne quotes it to Robin Dale about his prospective career in teaching and in *Happy Returns*, Swan uses it of Tony Morland - someone has got the better of Tony! Rather more subtly and reflectively [*Jutland Cottage*], John Leslie remarks, "I am sure that high hopes can faint on a cold hearthstone just as easily as on a warm one, or even more so." '

To be continued

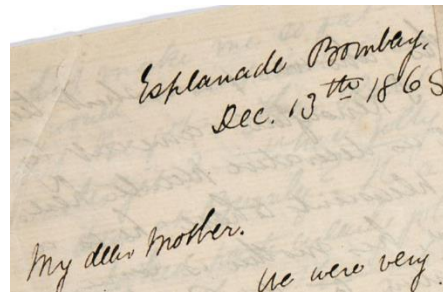
LOCKWOOD KIPLING LETTERS AT BONHAMS

A group of c.80 autograph letters, the majority from Kipling's father John Lockwood Kipling and some from his mother Alice and others came up for auction at Bonham's recently. They



were to family members, ranging in time from Lockwood's early student days, via his work in London, career in India, to his retirement in Tisbury. The group consisted of:

i) Twenty-two autograph letters, written from Bombay (13), Lahore (7), Simla (2), from Lockwood and Alice, on life in India, the climate ("...We call this the cold weather by courtesy really..."), much on Rudyard ("...Ruddy improves in talking every day, and speaks with wonderful distinctness... The little rogue talks in four languages – English – Hindustani, Marathi, and Goanese! I hope he will have a taste for languages... suffering terribly from the heat now like



all of us... as cross as a woman on a washing day..."), his work ("...almost frightened sometimes to think how much I have to do... If I had six good English carvers and masons, and a lot of plasterers I could do something... busy designing a big new museum and additions to the School of Art..."), servants ("...Our ayah is a clever imitator of animals and little Alice has quite picked up her menagerie of sounds..."), animals ("...musk rats horrid things like sleek moles... that taint all they touch... gigantic cockroaches... a porcupine in a cage... to furnish me with penholders and brush handles..."), news of the assassination of the Viceroy, Lord Mayo ("...It has thrown a heavy gloom over all society all over the Empire..."), the death of Sir Henry Durand, Lt Governor of Punjab ("...the most conscientious statesman India has possessed..."), the benefits of India to the young ("...offers opportunities that few other countries can... I should like above all things... to let Ruddy have a chance in the Indian civil service... one of the best



careers open to brains..."), preparing for a ball ("...three tailors are sitting on the Verandah stitching away at black velvet, gold braid etc... Bombay is very gay just now..."), description of their journey to Lahore ("...hotel here is very poor... no food fit to eat..."), the heat ("...like the breath of an oven after the pies have been taken out..."), meeting with Sir John Strachey, Governor of the N.W. Provinces ("...prospects of a new School of Art in the north..."), the power of the political agent ("...virtually rules a country bigger than Holland..."), growing children ("...Trix has thoroughly enjoyed her first season..."), increasing success of Rudyard ("...six small books now selling well in this country... no doubt of his success as a writer..."), visit of Lord Northbrook ("...dinner... 170 guests costing four thousand pounds..."); with a further 12 from London, Surrey and Yorkshire from them and other correspondents, with family news, and much else. *Sent from Bombay, Nassick, Lahore, Simla, Bewdley and London, 1865 to 1875*

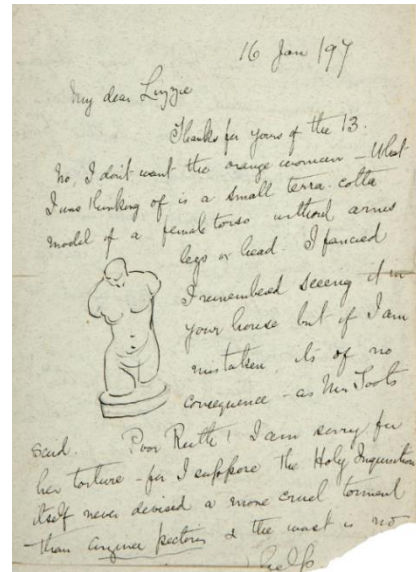
ii) Twelve autograph letters, from Lockwood to family members, written prior to leaving for India, the first mentioning urgent work for Mr Pinder ("...At present I dream of strawberry dishes and fluted butter tubs... Rejoice with me, we are going to have a modeller to finish my designs..."), excited that "...The great exhibition is to be – and your humble servant hopes to have a hand therein... Mr Sykes is discovered to be in a dangerous state of lung disease... I am appointed his deputy and viceroy in management...", on his work on the Foreign Office ("...have been employed in carving the greater part of the single figures for the model..."), on the prospect of working in India ("...They are sanguine at Bombay about the success of the natives as carvers..."), on the 1862 exhibition ("...lounging about the Museum... making savage designs for ornament..."), his colleagues, suitable shirts for India. *Pimlico, South Kensington,*

c.1857-1861

iii) Eighteen letters from Lockwood and other family members, including a love letter from his father to his mother, the rest dating from the early years of his career, with mention of his time at Pinder Bourne & Co. and night classes at The Potteries art school, with a small juvenile sketchbook bearing ownership inscription "John Kipling. 1849", c.56 pages, 4to and smaller, Burslem and elsewhere, 1829 and later;

iv) Twenty letters written after his retirement in 1893, the majority from Lockwood, some from Alice, to Frances and Lizzie, with family news ("...Rud has just flitted from Rottingdean to a property he has bought in East Sussex, an old house with about 50 acres round it..."), and work ("...I am doing some models for America of Indian subjects..."). *Tisbury, 1893 to 1910*

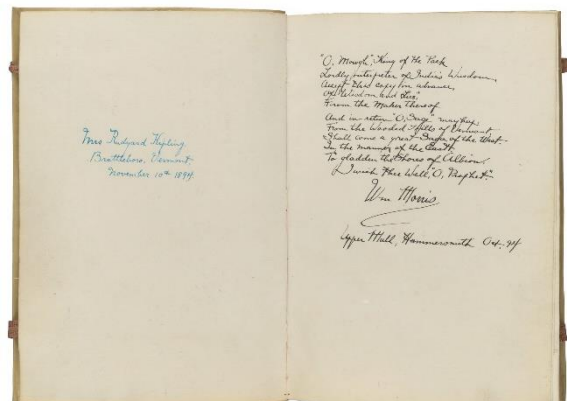
This correspondence, which has been held in the family until now, not only offers an evocative description of life in India, where Lockwood spent nearly thirty years, but also offers an insight into the childhood of Rudyard. Lockwood's experiences in India engendered a strong belief in the opportunities offered by the country for a clever young man, and he expresses the hope that his son will follow a career in the Indian civil service. These letters have been consulted, and quoted from, by Catherine Arbuthnott and others in *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and Crafts in the Punjab and London, 2017*, the catalogue accompanying the landmark exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum.



Provenance: John Lockwood Kipling (1837-1911); his sister Ann Elizabeth Crump (née Kipling, 1841-1924); her daughter Alice Crump and son-in-law John Thomas Gaskill (d.1947); their son Philip Ainsworth Gaskill (1908-1998); thence by descent to the present owner

WISDOM AND LIES

Bonhams in New York also had a copy of William Morris's 'The Book of Wisdom and Lies' (Kelmescott Press, 1894) presented by the author to Kipling, and bearing Morris's manuscript inscription "O, Mowgli", King of the Pack / Lordly interpreter of India's Wisdom / Accept this copy in advance / of "Wisdom and Lies" / From the Maker thereof / And in return "O, Sage" mayhap / From the Wooded Hills of Vermont / Shall come a great Saga of the West / In the manner of the East / To gladden the shores of Albion. / I wish thee well "O, Prophet." / William Morris/ Upper Mall, Hammersmith Oct, 94



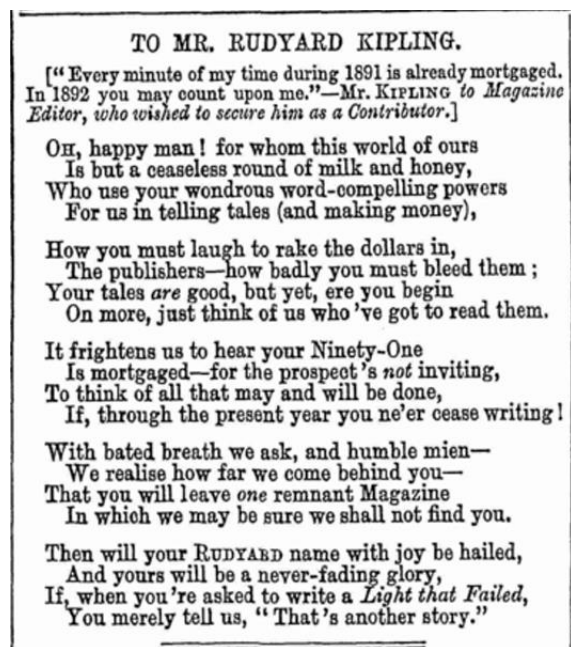
Also inscribed "Mrs. Rudyard Kipling, 'Brattleboro, Vermont, November 10th, 1894". The starting bid was \$10,000.

A PRESENT FOR RUDYARD – Mike Kipling

The Alliance of Literary Societies had an on-line meeting in December at which member societies were invited to speak for three minutes on what present they would give their author for Christmas. Having consulted with Council, I spoke along the following lines.

The Kipling Society would give Rudyard two presents. The first would be an electric car. Kipling was a pioneer motorist, purchasing his first car, a steam-powered Locomobile, in 1900. He wrote about a fictionalised trip in it in the short story 'Steam Tactics' (1902). A succession of internal combustion engine cars followed, usually from Rolls Royce, one of which can be seen on display today at Bateman's. He wrote other stories where a car was either central or served as a framing device, perhaps most famously the supernatural 'They'. He also wrote a series of poems on a motoring theme collectively known as 'The Muse among the Motors'. Each was a parody of a different style of poetry, from early Chinese, via Piers Plowman and Ben Jonson, to RL Stevenson. Kipling also generated his own electricity at Bateman's, using the power of the mill race to drive a turbine. The second present would be trip into space. Kipling is recognised as a pioneer Sci-fi writer, with ten or so of his short stories usually categorised as such. Perhaps the best known is 'With the Night Mail'. Set in 2000, it describes an overnight journey in a GPO dirigible – propelled by 'Fleury's Ray' - from England to Quebec, the journalist narrator looking down from 6,000ft at the cities passing beneath. Kipling would get an even better view from orbit and be able to use his own travel-writing expertise to describe it to us all back here on earth. The realism of this 1905 tale belies the fact that the Atlantic was not crossed by an airship until fourteen years later, the crew of the British R34 carrying with them a copy of Kipling's story, which they later autographed and sent to him. Now that would have been a present to savour.

KIPLING IN PUNCH - #2



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