



*The*  
**KIPLING JOURNAL**

Published quarterly by the

**KIPLING SOCIETY**



VOL XXXVIII

**MARCH 1971**

No. 177

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## THE KIPLING SOCIETY

THE Society was founded in 1927. Its first President was Major-General L. C. Dunsterville, C.B., C.S.I. ("Stalky") (1927-1946).

Members are invited to propose those of their friends who are interested in Rudyard Kipling's works for election to membership. The Hon. Secretary would be glad to hear from members overseas as to prospects of forming a Branch of the Society in their district

### THE KIPLING SOCIETY ADDRESS —

18, Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2. (Tel. 01-930 6733)  
Be sure to telephone before calling, as the office is not always open.

# THE KIPLING SOCIETY

## Forthcoming Meetings

### COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next Council Meetings will be held at 50 Eaton Place, S.W.I, on Wednesday, 17th March 1971, and Wednesday, 16th June 1971, both at 2.30 p.m.

### DISCUSSION MEETINGS

At St. George's Club, 4 Wilton Mews, S.W.1—at 5.30 for 6 p.m.

**Wednesday, 21 April 1971.** Mr. J. H. McGivering will introduce a Discussion on 'The Horrors of War'.

**Wednesday, 21 July 1971.** Mrs. R. Gains will talk on her 'Impressions of India'—where she lived until recently.

### VISIT TO BATEMAN'S

Mrs. Betty Sutherland is kindly allowing us to visit Bateman's this year on Friday, May 7th. We shall be lunching, as usual, at The Bear Inn, Burwash, at 1 p.m.

A coach will leave Charing Cross Underground Station at 10.15 a.m. on May 7th. **This coach will only take 15 passengers.**

The charge for members and guests, including lunch, will be £1.15s. (£1.75) for those going by coach, and £1.5s. (£1.25) for those going by private car.

Teas will be obtainable in the cafeteria at a small charge.

*Please note that these changes are the same as for the past two years.*

This is a lovely outing, **but lunch room (and coach room) are limited.** If you wish to come, be sure to notify the Hon. Secretary, Beckett Lodge, Beckett Avenue, Kenley, Surrey, CR2 5LT, enclosing the correct fee, not later than **first post Friday, 23rd April.** This will be the **ONLY** notice.

### ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The Annual Luncheon of the Kipling Society will be held at the Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London W.C.2, on Tuesday, 5th October 1971. The Guest of Honour will be Brigadier Sir Bernard Fergusson, GCMG, GCVO, DSO, OBE: a great Kipling lover, who served under F-M Lord Wavell (our second President) almost continuously for 15 years, and was on his staff five times.

Application forms will be sent out late in August.

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Vol. XXXVIII No. 177

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### KIPLING SCHOLARSHIP

Time was when the Editor of *The Kipling Journal* scanned the press of two continents anxiously to find references to Kipling and burrowed among journals—learned and otherwise—to find articles that might be reprinted.

But now the scene is changing. Splendid articles and notes come direct from their authors—academic and otherwise—for first publication in our pages. And so many articles and theses are published or submitted that volumes, and not *Journals* of the humble size of ours, would be needed to reprint them.

Among the more academic papers sent for a possible reprint in *The Kipling Journal* (and these notes do not mean that none of those mentioned will appear at some later date) is an interesting study of 'Brecht's Use of Kipling's Intellectual Property: A New Source of Borrowing', by James K. Lyon, Assistant Professor of German at Harvard, in *Monatshefte*, Vol. LXI, No. 4 (Winter, 1969), pages 376-86. Professor Lyon prefaces his study with a short synopsis as follows:

'Brecht's acquaintance with Kipling extended a good deal beyond the ballads. Around 1920 a popular German translation of Kipling's short stories, *Many Inventions*, by one Leopold Lindau, also furnished him with a rich source of material. His "Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten" came directly from an English soldiers' ballad at the end of a story in this collection. Brecht appropriated Lindau's rendering and used it virtually unchanged as the third stanza (and leit motif) for his poem. His alleged translation of Kipling's "Song of the Galley Slaves" which appeared in the 1967 *Kerkausgabe*, is not Brecht's at all but something he also borrowed nearly verbatim from Lindau with the apparent intent of using it in a projected Caesar drama. Proper and place names, bits of elephant lore that recur in Brecht's work, and even Kipling's famous "soldiers three" all turn up in these stories. 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot' in this translation introduced Brecht to a female character who adumbrates many traits of his feminine embodiments of goodness, especially Joan Dark, Shen Te, and Grusche. Finally, Lindau's rendering of Kipling's vernacular speech, which sounds much like the young Brecht, suggests why these stories appealed to him.'

The 'soldier song' is that sung by Ortheris at the end of 'Love-o'-Women' (itself part of Kipling's earliest Barrack Room Ballad in 'My Great and Only'), and "The Song of the Galley Slaves" is Charlie Mears's "blank verse" in 'The Finest Story in the World' [pages 294 and 126-7].

**'WHAT IS KIM?'**

Two interesting articles on *Kim* have appeared recently. The earlier one, 'What is Kim?' by Professor Arnold Kettle, the eminent Marxist, is the more interesting and will, I hope, appear later in *The Kipling Journal*. (It was first published in *The Morality of Art*, edited by D. W. Jefferson for Routledge in 1969).

The second, 'The Quest for Identity in *Kim*' is by Dr. Jeffrey Meyers of Tufts University, Massachusetts, U.S.A. and was published in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Spring 1970, pages 101-110. It is an interesting, but rather superficial study and, strangely enough, exhibits a far narrower outlook on the India of Kipling's day than the Marxist article.

Dr. Meyers begins by marvelling at Kipling's 'unusual sympathy for Indian characters, customs and cultures' in *Kim*, and that, with the single exception of 'The Miracle of Purun Bhagat,' *Kim* is in tolerance and gentleness, quite unlike Kipling's previous works and 'reaches far beyond the arrogant and satirical tales of his youth to his profound childhood love of India and its people'. He makes a very interesting parallel between *Kim* and *Huckleberry Finn*—'both picturesque novels concern a journey along a major artery in a quest for freedom by an older dependent man of a different race who is under the care and protection of an orphan boy . . . Both novels are seriously flawed at the end when the boys are persuaded by another white to forget their love, betray their admirable principles, and assert their racial superiority, just as the men are about to achieve their long-sought freedom. Huck's emotions are manipulated by Tom in the same way as Kim's are by Creighton. Then, quite suddenly in the final pages, the older men attain freedom and part from the boys whose lives must inevitably follow a different path'.

This seems an odd interpretation of *Kim* (and odder still of the brilliantly imaginative Tom Sawyer section of *Huckleberry Finn*)—but it helps to explain Dr. Meyer's thesis that 'the reason that *Kim*, and ultimately the novel itself, are so disappointing is that *Kim* so naively agrees to be manipulated by Creighton and turned into a spy against, and betrayer of, the very people and country that nurtured him . . . The moral compromise involved in becoming a spy is never once raised in the novel, and what ought to be the central problem is carefully avoided . . . *Kim* sees himself only as a spy against the Russians and does not realise he will soon be forced to undermine the India he once loved by spying against his former friends . . . Thus *Kim* joins the ranks of Mahbub and Hurree, who have sold themselves to the English. Kipling creates a marvellous character in the first section of the novel, only to destroy and remake him as morally reprehensible in the following sections'.

Surely a curiously one-sided and out-moded interpretation of *Kim* !

**'THINGS AND THE MAN'**

Of more importance to Kipling scholars and collectors is the new edition, with some corrections and additions, of Charles Carrington's *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work* which now appears for the first time in paper-back, in the 'Pelican Biographies' at twelve shillings.

The volume on Kipling in the 'Critical Heritage Series' published by Routledge and Kegan Paul is due for publication early this year—and he will then take his place with such other writers already included in the series as Jane Austen, Dickens, Fielding, Thackeray and Tennyson. The Kipling volume contains some sixty articles, reviews or extracts from longer works published between 1886 and 1936.

The British in India Museum at Hendon Mill, Nelson, Lancashire, announces for early publication from its own Press *Mermanjan—Star of the Evening* by Gertrude Dimmock. This, we are told, 'is an exciting story of an Afghan lady of noble birth who fled from Afghanistan in 1849 to follow and eventually to marry an Englishman, a captain in the East India Company's Service. Gertrude Dimmock's mother, Beatrice Dunsterville, was sister to Kipling's "Stalky"—Major General L. C. Dunsterville'.

Mr. J. H. McGivering draws our attention to *Best Railway Stories* edited by the well-known Railway expert, L. T. C. Rolt, and published in 1969 by Faber and Faber. This book contains '007' and in his Introduction Mr. Rolt says:

'Among laymen writers the one who could, above all others, be relied upon to get his expertise right on whatever subject he wrote about was Rudyard Kipling. His '007' displays this uncanny gift for getting inside his subject. Were it not for its high artistry, this story might have been written by an American railroad man'.

Mr. D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke, a section of whose thesis, on 'Kipling's Indian Fiction', was mentioned in *Journal* 175 (page 3), asks me to correct the ambiguity of my statement: it was the section and not the thesis to which I referred. The section was, in fact, only part of a much longer work, including a consideration of Kipling's poetry—and we hope that we may look forward to the completed work appearing as a published volume.

### MORE KIPLING ILLUSTRATORS

Mr. P. W. Inwood takes me to task for omitting to mention the magnificent coloured illustrations to *The Jungle Book* by Maurice and Edward Detmold first published in 1908 and re-issued in 1921: the sixteen illustrations were first issued separately in a portfolio in 1903. The Detmolds also produced a series of twelve illustrations to *The Second Jungle Book* which appeared in *The Illustrated London News* between October 1910 and January 1911, but they do not seem to have appeared in book form.

Of course we all have our favourites among the numerous illustrations to Kipling's stories and poems—both in periodical and volume form—and we cannot be expected to agree over them. To me the Detmold illustrations seem no more than sumptuous additions to the text, while Tresilian's seem much nearer to becoming a part of it. If illustrations to periodicals may be included, I would also add those by L. Raven Hill to all the stories in *Stalky & Co.* (except 'Slaves of the Lamp') plus 'Stalky'—the versions in *McClure's Magazine* being better (and more numerous) than those in the *Windsor*. His illustrations to *The Complete Stalky & Co.* (1929) are much inferior to those accompanying the stories on their original appearance. There are also several excellent

ones by Fortunino Matania, notably those illustrating 'The Eye of Allah' in *The Strand Magazine* (Sept. 1926), and to other stories in other periodicals, besides a good series for *Egypt of the Magicians* in *Nash's Magazine*, June to December 1914.

### MERMANJAN: STAR OF THE EVENING

This book has just appeared (Hendon Publishing Co. Ltd. of Hendon Mill, 1970. Hard covers 25s. (£1.25p), Paper-boards 15s. (75p), and Mr. R. E. Harbord writes concerning it:

"The first six or seven chapters (there are 14 in all) set the scene—India under the British—until about 1847 that is until a few years after the First Afghan War, 1839-42.

'Then the intimate and exciting love story of this quite young girl and her English lover-husband. This may not have much direct connection with Kipling, yet it is worthwhile comparing the many descriptions given of life at that time with Kipling's own pictures of 1870 and 1882-90 of the India before 1947, i.e., the present India and Pakistan'. R.L.G.

## THE UNFADING GENIUS OF RUDYARD KIPLING

By the Rt. Hon. the Viscount Cobham

At the Annual Luncheon of the Kipling Society: October 15 1970.

I would like to begin by thanking you most warmly for having done me the honour of electing me your President. You will remember the story of A. E. Housman in the Senate House at Cambridge. 'In this historic building', he said, 'in which Wordsworth was once alleged to be drunk and Porson was once alleged to be sober, I stand before you a better scholar than Wordsworth, a greater poet than Porson and, as you might say, betwixt and between'. I myself am in a similar situation this afternoon; neither a close enough friend to be able to discourse upon "Kipling the Man", nor a good enough scholar to be able to speak with authority on his work in the presence of so many experts. One or two boyhood memories of course stand out with great vividness. First, the impression of a short man, with incredible eyebrows, very bright blue twinkling eyes, thick-lensed spectacles and a square jutting chin. The last time I saw him at Batemans, he was engaged in playing with a crossbow and had just caught his finger in that infernal contraption and using some strange oaths, which must surely have been culled from the pages of 'Stalky'. Then there was the limerick he composed to my mother, having been made to play a second set and declined the third on the tennis court. 'No', said Rudyard, 'I am too hot and so are you'. 'Nonsense, Uncle Ruddy,' replied my mother. 'I am not even warm yet'. As Kipling put on his coat, he turned to her and remarked:

'There was a young girl of Mwssleuch (pronounced M'sloo)  
Whose statements were often untrue,  
When they said, 'Are you hot?'.  
She replied, 'No, I'm not  
What you see on my face is the dew'.

And the charming little quatrain which he composed for my grandfather at his farm in South Africa:

'Ah the hope that lures us on, headlong to the game—  
 This shall last when we are gone—this shall bear our name.  
 When the headstone tilts awry, when the date is blurred,  
 This shall meet abundantly, mower, flock and herd'.

These snippets are not very strong fare but what one never forgets is his unflinching kindness and charm when dealing with the young with whom he was wholly at ease.

I remember once asking that famous old scholar and cricketer, the late Charles Fry, why Sir Stanley Jackson was so seldom mentioned in places where cricketers foregather and ancient reputations are discussed. (After all, "Jacker" was a real cricketing giant, a great all-rounder, and a shrewd and highly successful captain of England). Charles Fry ruminated for a moment, then said whimsically: "I suppose 'Jacker' was too beastly orthodox: his perfection of style seemed almost mechanical."

One has met this kind of criticism in fields other than cricket; not three months ago I heard a contemporary literary figure refer to Kipling's "fatal facility"—although, when pressed to explain why facility should ever be fatal, he soon found himself in a dialectical jam. What he meant, it appeared, was that writing came so easily to R.K. that it tended to deprive him of the capacity to evaluate his own work. I do not know if this latter criticism is true, but if it were, I regard the statement as a non-sequitur. I have somewhere seen it stated that R.K. regarded "The Phantom Rickshaw" as his finest short story; to lovers of his short stories this is surely somewhat startling when one remembers "The Gardener", "Wireless", and "The Brushwood Boy" to mention only three.

I find it hard to stand up and declaim about Kipling, not only in the presence of Mrs. Bambridge and your late President, Mr. Harbord, but also of Professor Charles Carrington who has recently published a massive and authoritative biography. Yet that somewhat colourless character "the ordinary reader" was the man for whom Kipling wrote, and perhaps that gives his voice the right to be heard.

I have often heard it stated by the literary "avant-garde" that when it comes to criticism a writer's merit should be completely divorced from his own character, beliefs and what can loosely be called his "ethos". In the more rarefied strata of criticism this may be true, but it is certainly not true of the present speaker. "Emotional" is now used by the intelligentsia as a pejorative term—and yet I would ask these clever persons. "When has mankind found itself satisfied for long with mere cleverness?" Surely genius lies in those works of art in which the heart, head and hand work together, beginning from the heart? I would go further: I would say that there is a duty laid upon the good man to reject the ugly and the obscene, however brilliantly disguised or portrayed: I don't believe that Kipling had it in him to write "Rain" or "The Turn of the Screw". Even his horrors, were, however creepy, concrete horrors. "The Mark of the Beast" and "The End of the Passage" leave one with one's hair standing on end, but hardly with a nasty taste in the mouth.

This is perhaps the main burden of the dislike shown towards Kipling's Works by so many of the modern literati; he was *too* good,

too orthodox. Too facile, too, of course: how dare a mere versifier write with such ease a Sestina, a charming little lyric like "The Road through the Woods", and a philippic such as "Cleared". How dare the man, moreover, presume to invade the sacred realms of Science and Engineering and Metaphysics? Away with him; all-rounders are suspect.

Yet we know that his work will outlast time. I myself was weaned from Beatrix Potter straight on to the Just So Stories and the Jungle-Books, and I have been a devoted slave ever since. We who love his writing argue fiercely among ourselves; I will start one now by saying that I believe *Kim* to be, of his longer works, in a class by itself, and "*Captains Courageous*" a better book than *The Light that Failed*.

This afternoon, however, all that we need remember is a great Englishman, Patriot and Man of Letters, summarised for me by merry twinkling blue eyes, a pair of unforgettable eyebrows and a square jutting chin. He knew great happiness and great sorrow—and yet one feels that his ranging, time-effacing mind saw time itself as a mere human and terrestrial convenience against the vast revolving backcloth of Eternity. Yes, he was too orthodox; he believed in order and discipline and the good clean things of life. He saw all Mankind as the Children of God and all Gods synonymous with good. Already we are told he is "beginning to come back into fashion". Great art is always contemporary, and for those of us who love great writing and great story-telling he never went out. He never will—so let us rise and drink to his memory.

## HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES

**Charge for Meetings.** We are sorry to have had to raise this from 3s. 6d. to 5s. (17.5 to 25). It's entirely due to our having to pay more for the room than formerly; we cannot afford a loss on our functions.

**Kipling Society Rules.** The Rules of the Society have been amended and approved by the Council. A certified copy is available in the Office for inspection. Copies are also available for purchase. Price 4s. (20 np) each, post free.

**Congratulations** to our Victoria Branch, which has now held 300 meetings since its birth in mid-1933.

**Congratulations, too,** to our new Meetings Secretary, Trevor Daintith, for his ingenious "Kipling Quiz" on November 18 last. The sight of such experts as I. S. G. and C. E. C. squirming in their chairs with frustration when the right words *would not* come out, was some consolation for one's own (charity) two out of fifty.

**A Royal Artist.** Capt. Hansen, a Danish member of many years' standing, most kindly sent us a sheet of 50 beautiful Christmas Gift Stamps, all different, and all designed and coloured by Princess Margarethe of Denmark. The sheet bore her initial in one corner (M, '70), and Capt. Hansen says that the English translation of her title for the series is "Christmas in the Heavencastle."

**New members in 1970.** Seventy joined, seven up on '69. A good number of these were 'recruited'; many thanks to those who brought this about.

A.E.B.P.

## "SOMETHING SPOOKY"

Thoughts on *In the Same Boat*, *The Wish House* and *Fairy Kist*

By A. E. Bagwell Purefoy

Read at Discussion Meeting of The Kipling Society: 16 Sept: 1970

When we choose stories for these meetings, we always try and find a group that has something in common, and if you ask what have these in common?, the answer undoubtedly is: "SOMETHING SPOOKY". Taking *In the Same Boat* first, any sort of Horrors are Spooky, but when you get exact pre-warning of them as well, you're in the position of the man on the lonesome road, who dares not turn his head because he *knows* the Frightful Fiend is just behind him. As regards *cmfwymfwy House*, the idea of an empty house is always creepy, even without something platting across the hall and sighing through the letter-box. And *Fairy Kist* is, for me at least, fully qualified by those two practical men, the doctor and gardener, poking about the sitting room, all unaware that beneath them, in dirt and terror, is lurking a half-mad, terrified creature. Besides all this, if you read the three stories at one go. you notice other little points of contact, e.g. little medical points, which show that Kipling's mind was running on much the same lines when he wrote each one.

And there's another thine that's common to them all; they're all set in England, and the England of our own time, though none of them really has the 'smell' of the countryside, like 'Friendly Brook'. I think that's because their purpose is different. In those great stories like 'My Son's Wife' I think the purpose was to reveal the charm of the countryside, but I believe the Author wrote today's three stories largely to amuse and interest himself—to indulge his undoubted fancy for medical matters of a rather macabre sort.

So much for a general introduction; now let's have a quick look at each story. I'll start with some remarks on my favourite one of the three: *In the Same Boat*. As I've pointed out already, it's by far the 'easiest', if you know what I mean: you walk straight into it, and are hooked after two sentences, which is what Editors used to like, though heaven knows what they like now; I rarely read a modern short story. since I can usually find no point in them at all. This story's simple and straightforward: a terrible Problem, how it is tackled, a fearful Conflict, and the Happy Solution reached in the end. That is why. of course, it has received very little attention from Critics. Mr. Carrington doesn't mention it, Miss Tompkins calls it Straightforward, where *Love of some kind* (note that—*Love of some kind*—not the *obvious* Love) is the true healer. Bonamy Dobrée calls it not enormously interesting, though superbly told and full of side issues of the Kipling kind, such as the clashing of milk-cans in the small hours, or the inadequate water supply. Incidentally like 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot', it seems to have been published only in an American magazine (*Horners*) in 1911, and not to have been available in England till 1917 when *A Diversity of Creatures* was published. And that seems odd: just as the slummy scenes of "Badalia" were far removed from New York, so the American railway scene can't have had much in common with the Milk Train from

Waterloo. "Miss Henschil" is one of Kipling's few young and pretty heroines, and the author gives us a really good look at her but it's through the eyes of Conroy. You'll have noticed, of course, that she's never given a Christian name, and how, lovely though she is, you never feel physically attracted to her—as you do, for example, to the beautiful Sophie Chapin of 'An Habitation Enforced'. Or, certainly in my case, to the green-eyed Connie Sperrit from 'My Son's Wife'—not described as pretty at all, but undoubtedly endowed with quite a slice of IT!

The story is at least Kipling's second Railway Train story, again on the L.S.W.R., and you may bet your last tanner that this tram too, passed through Framlingham Admiral Station, but our young couple will have been too pre-occupied to ponder on the shocking events that took place on that platform one Sunday about sixteen years earlier. As you know, it runs out to a real happy ending—an ending where everyone's happy and nobody's hurt, but I've always been a bit puzzled by the final words of that hardworking willing horse, Nurse Blaber. Conroy, in his telegram to Miss Henschil, orders her to find out what gift "Nurse" would like best. "Oh, I oughtn't to have read that," exclaimed Miss Henschil. "It doesn't matter," said Nurse, "I don't want anything, *and if I did I shouldn't get it.*" Perhaps one of you will tell me the meaning of that cryptic remark, for Kipling never wrote anything that was meaningless. When we last discussed this story, some 12 years ago, the late Mr. Bazley interpreted it rather brutally as: "She knows she'll never have a love-affair of her own", and others thought that if she had longed for a romance between the two young ones, she realised by now that there was nothing doing.

Which brings me to the adored poem at the end: "Helen All Alone". Kipling's the only writer I know of who often added a poem at the beginning or end (or both) of a short story. Sometimes its connection with the story is mighty obscure, and I wish somebody would write an article on the subject for the *Journal*—an article on the different uses these poems are put to. But with "Helen All Alone", of course, there's no obscurity whatever. It simply tells the story over again, ramming home the fact that someone who has shared Hell with you is the very last person on Earth that you want to share your Life with. And I'll tell you another thing it does—for me, at least. Because a good poem has to be so diamond-hard, leaving out everything except the core of what it wants to say, these forty-one lines emphasize the Terror and the Horror that afflicted those two, far more sharply than the prose, with "side issues of the Kipling kind". You don't get any let-up while milk-cans clash, or too little water comes out of the taps. The poem shows you nothing but the shrieking fear that's driving a boy and girl out of their minds. It is beautifully done: the slow, sombre beginning, when "There was darkness under Heaven for an hour's space . . .", then the "stealing out of Limbo Gate", followed by the acceleration to faster and faster flight: "Hand in pulling hand", right to the climax "When the Horror passing speech hunted them along, each laid hold on each, and each found the other strong", and all through the racing Nightmare Helen came to me, Helen ran with me, Helen stood by me—Helen all alone. And when at last we hear the Fires dull and die away our clinging hands fall apart, and Helen passes on. And why does she pass on? Because "there is knowledge God forbid more than One should own" . . . "Oh

my soul, be glad she's gone!" Beautifully done though it is, we never hear of that poem; in a dozen years of cutting out quotations for our Scrap Book, I've never come across a line of it; it's tied to the story: it is the story.

Vastly different meat is our next story, "The Wish House". Nothing straightforward here, and definitely not the first story you'd put in front of a new reader, who would have to grope his way through nine pages before he reached the subject of the story's title. Needless to say, far more has been written about this story by critics and commentators than about 'The Same Boat'. Miss Tompkins, for instance, feels that the story as conceived by Kipling contained enormously more than appears in the published version. Then "the dead coal and ash were poked out of the bars of the grate, and the fire burnt brighter, but a great deal of fuel had first been consumed before it reached that pitch of heat." And the result, she judges, is that "he found a way to make the reader perceive the substance of a novel in the words of a short story." Well, some of you may have views on that. I, a non-expert, would like to mention some of the more simple questions that the story calls up. First of all, what can have given Kipling the idea of a 'Wish House'? We've all had fun when there's been an excuse for making a wish. The wish bone from a chicken. The first time you hear the cuckoo, turning your money and wishing. Wishing when you see a new moon—not through glass! All these are normally fun wishes—nice wishes: my goodness, not the sort that you let loose at a Wish House! And the rules about such a dreadful place are explained by a grubby little girl, Sophy Ellis: . . . "All you get at a Wish House is leave to take someone else's trouble."

We once had a knowledgeable member called Colonel Browne, who used to write censorious letters to the *Journal*, and indeed to individual members—I had several. When he saw, about a dozen years ago, that I was venturing to talk about the three stories on tonight's bill, he wrote to me asserting that 'The Wish House' should not have been included with the other two, because it was a story of *Witchcraft*. I think he must have made some study of that subject, because he made a statement singularly like that of Sophy Ellis: "Witches can help your friends, but only by transferring their troubles to you." Kipling in his autobiography, which has been cynically called "Not much about Myself", gives us precious little clue to what started him off on this story. All he says is that somebody on the *Manchester Guardian* accused him of cribbing from Chaucer's Canterbury Tale about The Wife of Bath, but though I'm sure she did some astonishing things, most of the critics I've read say there's practically no connection between the two stories, and the sore leg belonged to the Cook anyway. Perhaps we've a Chaucer student here who can elaborate on this.

Well, what is there to remember in those first nine pages? I think Liz Fettlely rather sets the tone when she describes her grandson's reception of her frequent tips. "No odds 'twixt boys now an' 40 year back. 'Take all and give naught—an' we to put up with it!" A sentiment echoed by Grace Ashcroft later, when Liz asks her what she got out of losing her heart to Harry Mockler. "The usuals. Everythin' at first—worse than naught after". Then Liz vividly recalls the dreadful incident of Polly Batten and the hay-fork; "We was all looking that she'd prod the fork spang through your breastes when you said it" . . . phew!

And there's an interesting little word here— "Shruck" for "shrieked". Grace says "She shruck too much for reel doins". We find it in another Sussex story, "They". "Arthur's unaccountable bad. Did ye hear him shruck just now?"

Evidently a Sussex dialect word; I wonder if it's still in use.

Then Mrs. Fettleley tells the story of one of her love affairs, and as the Author evidently felt it would unbalance his story if he gave it in detail, he covers it neatly enough in a few lines, Mrs. Ashcroft rounding it off a little brutally with "Then you've naught to cast up about," in other words, "You've eaten your cake." Then, just before we reach the story proper, there's a bit that reminds us rather nicely of a bit in another favourite story. We hear what must have been almost the last words of the late Mr. Ashcroft. Do you remember that in 'On the Gate' which deals mostly with war deaths, civilians were expected to "demise on approved Departmental lines", with appropriate sentimental last words. I doubt if Mr. Ashcroft's parting words would have passed the Chief of Normal Civil Death: "You pray that no man'll ever deal with you like you've dealt with some."

Then at last we reach the story proper, which I'm sure you all know well. The special bit of Horror for me is that Token. The Author defines this as "a wraith of the dead or, worse still, of the living", but I'd somehow expected that what came to the door here would be something frail and light—a Whisper borne by a sad-faced raggedly-dressed fairy or gnome. But no! It's described as something far more terrifying: "a heavy Woman in slippers", that shuffles to the door and stays silent, with only the cheap planks in between, till it hears the Wish, and then breathes out in a sort of A-ah! before it drags itself away. Brrrr! Then, terribly quickly, Grace's wish begins to be granted (though he cuts that part to the absolute bone), and we realise—in my case with something of a shock—that this immoral elderly woman didn't sacrifice her health out of unselfish love: it was a bargaining counter with Fate—her pain in exchange for Harry's keeping off other women, most of all off marrying. "De pain do count to keep 'Arry where I want 'im. It can't be wasted, like." Another interesting point here is that the principals in these love affairs are country men and women—what we may call the Domestic or Peasant class. I well remember in childhood days my friends in the Kitchen—where I used to spend a lot of time—often saying: "It's the Rich that do these bad things, Master Bob; the Poor don't get the time or the chance." It looks as if Kipling knew better. So the story runs out, with the bustling young Nurse closing the frame and bringing us back to Earth, tho' not before Mrs. Fettleley has failed to escape from having to see—what she did see.

Before we finish on this, a word about the two considerable poems that go with it: "Late Came the God" and "Rahere"; both to me, rather difficult ones. What I think they both mean is: Love Conquers All Pain, whether physical or mental. This I think rather resembles the poem "Azrael's Count" which comes at the end of 'Uncovenanted Mercies'. In this, the Angel of Death marvels at the way a woman will rush on to his sword without noticing it, in order to waste not a second in rejoining the One she loves. I hope someone will have something to say about these poems.

And so on to our third story tonight, "Fairy-Kist". It first appeared

in two American magazines in 1927, not seen over here till February 1928, and not put in a book till 1932. "I wish I could do a decent detective story," I said, "I never get further than the Corpse." That remark comes after nearly two pages, and if the author'd been an unknown instead of a celebrity, I venture to think that a lot of Magazine Editors would have rejected it. It's again a Frame and Picture story, the picture being the death of Ellen Marsh, and all that went with it, and the frame around it the dinner at Lemming's house. I humbly suggest that if the wish to do a decent detective story had been the opening sentence, the reader's attention would have been caught and held quicker than it is by the rambling account of Lesser Lights, ducklings, Portugal onions etc. A little of that could easily have been inserted as the story went on.

This is, I think, Kipling's one and only mention of trying to write a detective story, and it's interesting that another famous story-teller, Somerset Maugham, also—as far as I know—produced only one. This was his story 'Footprints in the Jungle' which, in my humble opinion, is a far better story than this, though I thought it was sadly botched when turned into a TV play a short while ago. 'Fairy-Kist' also has something in common with another well-known story that I'll mention later. The expression "Fairy-Kist" is not in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, but it has been described as "a dialect word, meaning bewitched, or 'touched' by the fairies". The story has not been noticed very much by modern critics, except Miss Tompkins, who refers to it several times in her book *The Art of Rudyard Kipling*. "It is a most complicated effort", she says, "in which the density of inwoven patterns baffles the eye."

I once read, somewhere, that Kipling started it as a murder story, but when he reached Wollin he became so fascinated with Wollin's state of mind that he allowed the examination of that to carry him off the path he'd started on. I don't believe that for a second; I'm sure he meant to study Wollin all along. To quote an opinion of Mr. Maitland's some years ago, he meant this to be a story of the examination of disease of the mind, not a detection of crime. Kipling tells us nothing of the story in his autobiography, but we do know that he used to put stories away for long periods, now and again re-reading them with close attention, revising and of course, cutting them. We can be sure that any change of direction in this story was undertaken deliberately—but I don't believe there was any such change.

The astounding behaviour of the Village Constable and the Doctor reinforces my conviction that the intention all along was the study of Wollin. Let's think about what would have happened if Keede and the Constable had acted correctly: if Nichols had reported at once to his superiors and Keede had disclosed at once his evidence about the motor-bike. What would the result have been? I suggest that the body would, by superior orders, have been guarded till morning, then examined where it lay; Wollin would have been run to earth by noon, and would have tripped down his cellar steps with his little revolver—and pulled the trigger! Surely it's in order to keep Wollin alive that we have instead the incredible conduct of Policeman Nichols, aided and abetted by Keede—a character Kipling obviously respected, since he used him in several other stories. We know what they did: they moved the body before it could possibly have been properly examined (the night was

dark and wet). Then the Village Constable carries out a procedure that even Maigret might have shied at doing without leave from higher up; he suddenly pushes Jimmy Tigner in front of the body, and then has the cheek to say it's what the French call a 'confrontation', as if a country bumpkin of a Bobby had ever heard of such a thing. And if that wasn't enough we have Keede—the respectable and responsible Keede—deliberately withholding evidence at the Inquest—evidence that would certainly have exonerated Jimmy, even if it meant the end of Master Wollin. Anyhow, with the aid of his Police friend at Sydenham, Keede gets on to Wollin who, from his description, might have been pretty formidable if he hadn't been so frightened. In connection with him we several times meet the word 'carneying'. Again, not in my dictionary, but I'd assumed it meant querulous or complaining; but certain experts who've worked on this story have decided that it means 'furry-mouthed' or 'sucking up'. It's described as a most unusual word; quite obsolete, but it might have remained in current colloquial use in Sussex.

Then, through carelessness on the part of Lemming in giving him his private address, Wollin realises that his visitors were from Channet's Ash. That, let alone a visit from the Police, is enough to send the poor devil to the coal cellar, to wait in terror for Zero Hour. Well, we know how the truth came out, and Wollin at least knew he was clear of suspicion—though not freed from his private horror, and here we come to the feature that I think 'Fairy-Kist' has in common with another well-known story, in fact a novel. Wollin, we're told, was on 'the break of life', a striking description that's rather hard to define, though it presumably means at an extreme crisis, where his reason might go one way or the other. And what was likely to be driving him crackers? Why, the War, of course; wounds and gas and gangrene—or so you'd think. The story this reminds me of is *Mine Own Executioner*, by that splendid writer Nigel Balchin, who died the other day. The central figure in that story is Lucian, an ex Air Force Officer who has twice tried to murder his wife. He too must be on 'the break of life'. Why on Earth? Why should he suddenly go for an attractive woman of whom he's very fond? The War, of course! When the analyst at last gets out of him that under Japanese torture he'd given away all the military secrets he knew, well! the whole thing's solved, isn't it? Another victim of the War . . . though the analyst is still uneasy that he hasn't dug deep enough. And indeed the War was not responsible here either. Though the Truth comes out too late, Lucian's mania dated back to twisted boyhood jealousy at seeing his father kiss his mother, and poor old Wollin's was caused by his distorted memory of a kind-hearted woman reading him a pretty little story about Flowers.

## DISCUSSION

Although (as the speaker pointed out) these are not "Problem Stories", there are, as is usual with Kipling, enough obscurities and casual asides, each capable of bearing a variety of interpretations, or no interpretation at all, to keep the enthusiasts happily arguing for an evening. Thus, allowing that Conroy and Miss Henschil both have a sort of waking nightmare, due to pre-natal influence, and that they have previous warning, why do they invariably coincide? There is some suggestion that the two were born at exactly the same time, **but** there is

no real solution. What is the meaning of the Nurse's final cryptic remark?

In the next story, where did Kipling get the idea of a "Wish House"? It was suggested that this is a Gypsy belief, but no-one was certain; what *exactly* was the Thing that shuffled up to the door? What do the accompanying poems mean? "Love Conquers All Pain"?, or is there another answer? Finally, does "The Break of Life" indicate an extreme crisis, a change of life in man, or what? Opinions varied on all of these points.

One member of the audience suggested that Kipling had a horror of psychic experience, stemming from his sister's breakdown (cf. "The Road to Endor"); no-one could be sure what the Wife of Bath had to do with the story; it was generally agreed that 'The Wish House' was superior, as a love story, to 'Love o' Women', being altogether more-mature.

T.L.A.D.

## STALKY AND KIPLING

### Part Two

by Hugh Brogan

The USC trained sons of officers to follow their fathers' career: prepared them for the army, not technically (no military training) but intellectually and morally. Kipling later called it "a school ahead of its time"; in fact it seems to have been ideally suited to it. It is a Left-Wing myth that the great revival of the public schools in the nineteenth century was due to the needs of the Empire for men to rule it: snobbery, religion, and the plain needs of the middle class to educate their sons adequately had much to do with it; but the Empire did need officers and civilians, and some of the schools did exist to a large extent to satisfy that need. In the last story of the book *Beetle*, now grown up, names three of them—Cheltenham, Haileybury and Marlborough. But the USC had no other *raison d'être*; and in the age of Imperial expansion that marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century (USC was founded in 1874) it is no wonder that it came into existence. Nor is it surprising that the mature Kipling, with his conviction that the British Empire was a great and permanent instrument of civilisation, should praise the school which served it, and try to show what could be learned there, and why it was valuable to that Empire.

So each of the tracts contains some didactic nugget. Even the first, *In Ambush*, makes it plain what is to be admired. The boys, it will be remembered, bamboozle Mr. King and Mr. Prout into supposing them to be trespassers and drunkards, well knowing that when the truth comes out they can not only clear their names but make the two masters look ridiculous. During their interview with King (at which they prepare to launch their thunderbolt) the following passage occurs:

"The temporary check brought King's temper to the boiling point. They could hear his foot on the floor while Prout prepared his lumbering inquiries. They had settled into their stride now. Their eyes ceased to sparkle; their faces were blank; their hands hung beside them without a twitch. *They were learning, at the expense of a fellow-countryman, the lesson of their race which is to put away all emotion and entrap the alien at the proper time.*" (p. 26; my underlining).

But this does not sum up the lesson Kipling is instilling in this tract. He holds up the intelligence, enterprise, and, above all, the unpredictability of Stalky (and of the Headmaster) for admiration. "I've been had. I've been ambuscaded" says the school sergeant, who shares King's downfall. "Horse, foot, an' guns, I've been had . . ." Quite so; and that is just what an enemy of England should be after being exposed to the wiles of an English subaltern. Surprise; superior intelligence (in the military sense); reconnaissance; camouflage; all these military principles can be elicited without difficulty from the story; Clausewitz would have approved. And so the book goes on, from story to story. Indeed, the second tale and the last bear the same name—*Slaves of the Lamp*; the latter shows how Stalky uses the same tactics that worked against King to confound some Pathans. It is all very neat and instructive, and unfortunately seems to have had no effect. Kipling's contemporaries were subalterns in the 'eighties, majors in the 'nineties, colonels in the Boer War and general officers in 1914. I need not remind you how bone-headed, and above all how incapable of surprise, they were to show themselves during these epochs. *Stalky* failed of its effect, as did all other attempts to shew the cavalry mind its inadequacies.<sup>(1)</sup>

But there was more to the Empire than military tactics, and the main stress of *Stalky* is moral. Even the "tactical" stories, like *Slaves of the Lamp*, are meant to illustrate the dependence of tactics on character. And the Empire, of course, is something sacred. Kipling deals with all this; and in the latter detail, I am afraid, overdoes it: for a moment he becomes an overt preacher, like Hughes or Farrar.

The story in question is *The Flag of their Country*. It is quite simple. A volunteer cadet corps is formed at the school, which the boys use as a means of anticipating the drill requirements of Sandhurst and Woolwich. Hearing of the enterprise a Tory MP of small sense and jingo persuasion comes to address the boys; paints a purple picture of the beauties of patriotism and the glories of the Flag (a specimen of which he waves at the assembled school); is only saved from public humiliation by the tact of the Head; and causes the collapse of the cadet corps by presenting the Flag for the boys to march behind. A neat tale enough, the moral of which is clear—don't preach at boys, don't think you know all about them when you don't, above all don't vulgarise their ideals. Unfortunately there is another moral too. Kipling dislikes the man who clumsily and stupidly rants about the things that he (Kipling) holds dear; but he is also concerned to persuade his readers to share those ideals—he is, in fact, concerned to achieve what, in his tale, the MP, Raymond Martin, Stalky's Jelly-bellied Flag-flapper, attempts. Here is how he sets about it (he is describing Martin's speech to the assembled school):

"Now the reserve of a boy is tenfold deeper than the reserve of a maid, she being made for one end only by blind Nature, but man for several. With a large and healthy hand, [Martin] tore down these veils, and trampled them under the well-intentioned feet of eloquence, in a raucous voice he cried aloud little matters, like the hope of Honour and the dream of Glory, that boys do not discuss even with their most

(1) It would, of course, be amusing to find out how many of the junior officers who suffered under French and Haig and cursed their names had read and admired *Stalky* in their boyhood.

intimate equals; cheerfully assuming that, till he spoke, they had never considered these possibilities. He pointed them to shining goals, with fingers which smudged out all radiance on all horizons. He profaned the most secret places of their souls with outcries and gesticulations. He bade them consider the deeds of their ancestors in such a fashion that they were flushed to their tingling ears. Some of them—the rending voice cut a frozen stillness—might have had relatives who perished in defence of their country. [They thought, not a few of them, of an old sword in a passage, or above a breakfast-room table, seen and fingered stealth since they could walk.] He adjured them to emulate those illustrious examples; and they looked all ways in their extreme discomfort." (p. 212).

All will agree, I take it, that this passage is rather awful, like Mr. Raymond Martin himself. It is not so much, is it, that patriotism, however deeply felt still, is no longer quite what it was—that after the wars of the twentieth century love of country, at least in England, no longer seems something best expressed by killing, or even by dying.

"If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
 Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
 And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
 His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
 Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
 Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
 Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues—  
 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
 To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
 The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
 Pro patria mori.

No; Kipling's attitude requires criticism, and Wilfred Owen is the man with the right to utter it; but what one really winces at are his words. Other dead creeds have been expressed less offensively. The marvellous verbal tact which governs the rest of the book has deserted the author, and Kipling the Preacher, whose hectoring spoils so much of his other work, rises here to spoil *Stalky*. Mr. Martin is his own demon, whom he can't quite exorcise. The result is that *The Flag of Their Country*, alone among the *Stalky* stories, is distasteful to read today, and remains—nothing but a tract. Perhaps I should add that I don't think much of *Slaves of the Lamp*—II either, but on different grounds).

But if my suggestion is right, that the other stories *do* transcend their nature as tracts, and that therein their greatest merit lies, one has to face a most interesting question. I have said enough, I hope, to show that Kipling like all other Victorian school-storyists, was firmly and evidently didactic. He set out to write tracts, and one must agree that, in a sense, he succeeded. But also, as he remarks, "for reasons honestly beyond my control," the tracts turned into something else. It is high time to enquire what.

The answer is, unquestionably, Literature.

The fact is that it was all very well for Kipling to set out to write propaganda for his old school; he hadn't a hope of confining himself to the task once a fictitious element was allowed to intrude. A master storyteller at the height of his powers, the problem inevitably presented itself

to him as, I imagine, the problem of ghost-stories did, at one level, present itself to Henry James: how could a cheap *genre* be redeemed for Art? One thing was certain: redemption was incompatible with propaganda, as *The Flag of Their Country* was to prove. Another thing is clear: it is not as propaganda that the tales survive today.

We must see Kipling, then, struggling to plan his book in response to two necessities: the necessity to persuade, and the (much more important) necessity to create a work of art. Struggle? The remarkable thing is how easily the victory looks. It was probably more difficult than it seems: Kipling was a fluent but careful writer. Yet in the result the strain only shows in two places.

We can see some of his reasoning. He dropped one story, which told how Stalky got his nickname, probably because the moral was too overt, the plot too unsubtle for his major purposes (it was later printed in *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides*, and is not at all bad). The three tales, *The Flag of Their Country*, *The Last Term*, and *Slaves of the Lamp Part II* arranged themselves—the first was supposed to be the spiritual climax of the work, the last term had to be described, to round off the book and to show the boys acquiring new perspective on their schooldays as they ended—Beetle particularly discovering that the Head had been training him up for a journalist's job in India—"I never knew—I never knew"; *Slaves II* illustrates school-training's after-effects—shows it being used, because useful indeed, essential, in the great world. Then, the tale, *A Little Prep*, comes immediately before *The Flag of Their Country*, and serves several purposes—it introduces the theme of military duty in India, never thereafter absent; it sets a standard of real heroism stirring real emotion in the boys, in the person of young Lieutenant Crandall, to provide an effective contrast to the cheap effects aimed at by the cheap rhetoric of Raymond Martin; it completes the apotheosis of the Head, who is shown to be wiser, more resolute, braver and bigger than even the most glamorous subaltern—as befits the chief of a school before its time, recommended by Rudyard Kipling as a model to the world.

The earlier half of the book, seen in the light of the later, is a prologue. The first four stories set the scene, establish the personalities of the boys and masters alike, and their relationships, and entertain the reader abundantly: Kipling thereby ensuring that when he turns serious, in *The Moral Reformers*, he will carry his audience with him. *The Moral Reformers*, coming fifth, in fact is the turning-point of the book. In it, you may remember, Stalky & Co., egged on by the chaplain, turn the tables on a pair of older boys who have been bullying a much younger one. The biters, having been thoroughly bit, become transformed characters. And one's reaction to the book as a whole is likely to correspond to one's reaction to this part of it. For one thing, here, if anywhere, the accusations of brutality, which Kipling tells us were brought against him when *Stalky* first appeared, must be sustained. There are several pages evoking a torture-scene, and it is Stalky, Beetle and M'Turk who do the torturing. The atmosphere is very well conveyed. But except for cock-fighting and a sort of Chinese water-torture of repeated questions ("What did you bully Clewer for?") we are not given any details, save the kind that evoke, but do not depict, like the names of the punishments inflicted—Brush-drill, the Key, Corkscrews

and Rocking to Sleep (about the last we learn that it takes three boys and a boxing-glove). Kipling had suffered all these things himself (and successfully rebelled against them) and did not mean to instruct future generations in their evil. But he did mean to convey the nature of bullying, of being bullied, and of the bully himself, and succeeds, painfully but truthfully, in doing so. Is it worth doing? I think so. I hope that bullying in its extreme form is less common than it was in our schools; but bullying in some form or other is a commonplace of life, and anything which analyses it is instructive.

It has been suggested to me that there is half-repressed sadistical relish in the tale. I confess I don't see it. It has been further suggested to me that this is because I myself am lacking a sadistic streak. To such a charge I cheerfully plead guilty, though I realise I may thereby admit my incapacity for appreciating much modern writing. But as a question of intellectual method, I do not see how we can conduct a critical enquiry if it is held to be possible that readers' differing temperaments can legitimately cause them to disagree about texts as to which their reason would agree. Of course art produces emotional reactions: but it is our cultivated minds which must assess and assay these reactions. In the present case, I find nothing in the text which can be shown either to be a piece of sadistic self-indulgence on the part of the writer, or to be calculated, deliberately or not, to satisfy a similar emotion in the reader: though I can see how a sadistic reader might use *The Moral Reformers*, in defiance of the author, to get his kicks. But that really cannot be avoided, except by the expedient of not writing about bullying at all. And Kipling would have made himself ridiculous if he had left the subject undiscovered in a book about a nineteenth century boarding school. Properly, he set out to analyse adolescent cruelty, and did so brilliantly. The story might be subtitled, *How To Cope With Bullies*.

However, this does not, unfortunately, dispose of the matter. The fact is that *The Moral Reformers* is not a sadist's fantasy; it is a revenge fantasy. It is what the bullied would like to see happen, but occurs all too seldom. Stalky & Co. had right on their side, they avenged young Clewer—but they also avenged themselves for what they suffered as younger children. It is this, I think, that really gives the tale its appeal. We are all underdogs some of the time, and therefore our humiliated egos love to see top-dogs done down. But a critic must remark, sternly, that in life topdogs usually stay topsides; that a revenge fantasy may be fun, but that it may also be misleading; that revenge itself is a poisoned diet; and that therefore, as a tract, and probably as art too (since it professes to be realistic) *The Moral Reformers* must be reckoned a disturbing failure.

But it suggests a new light on *Stalky*. For *The Moral Reformers* is not the only tale of its kind in the book. On the contrary, the first four tales are all also revenge stories: in each the boys take on a master, or masters (respectively, King and Prout, King, King, and Prout again) and the worst enemy. Kipling here, of course, is playing on the old tradition of school stories, that old boys and masters are natural enemies. (This tradition derives, I think, from the profound psychological gulf between middle age and adolescence—which I don't propose to enlarge on here). But he exploits it with a gusto that is all his own, and which carries his readers with him. Who among us would not rejoice to hear our school-

master addressed thus, and to know that we had brought it about that he be so addressed?

'I stand *in loco parentis*.' Prout's deep voice was added to the discussion. They could hear him pant.

'F'what?' Colonel Dabney was growing more and more Irish.

'I'm responsible for the boys under my charge.'

'Ye are, are ye? Then all I can say is that ye set them a very bad example—a dam' bad example, if I may say so. I do not own your boys. I've not seen your boys, an' I tell you that if there was a boy grinnin' in every bush in the place still ye've no shadow of a right here, comin' up from the combe that way, an' frightenin' everything in it. Don't attempt to deny it. Ye did. Ye should have come to the Lodge an' seen me like Christians, instead of chasin' your dam' boys through the length and breadth of my covers. *In loco parentis* are ye? Well, I've not forgotten my Latin either, and I'll say to you: '*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*.' If the masters trespass, how can we blame the boys?' (pp. 23-24).

Kipling spares no pains to make poor Prout and King ridiculous. He does not make the mistake of *The Moral Reformers*—the tales may be instructive, but they are also farcical, and only a very dense reader would mistake them for attempts at realism. Most of us, sustained by common sense, know it is illusion, and therefore rejoice in the absurdities all the more (some people, of course, don't like farce). The traps into which King and Prout fall are so ingenious, on such a scale, and so funny that the reader is wholly captivated, and (Kipling hopes) made ready for the more serious tone of what follows.

But it does not turn out quite like that. The mood of farce, once established, is hard to break; and Kipling has worked hard to establish it, exploiting, in the very first tale, such stock figures of fun as the peppery colonel and the pedant with ginger whiskers. And the jokes continue, sporadically, to the end—one of the best is in *The Last Term*, where Beetle sabotages an examination paper, as many must often have wished to do. Secondly, Kipling's own hand betrays him. He loves the "unforgotten, innocent enormities" of his three young rebels; he is entirely on their side in their cunning, their dislike of games, of work, of house spirit, of school spirit; in their irreverence, their scruffiness (Beetle) insolence (M'Turk) and calculated subversiveness (Stalky). He cannot help it. Partly they are himself and friends when young; partly his own beautiful creations. He loves them, is conquered by them, and presently, for all his genius and toil and earnest good intentions, this proponent of order and the Tribe becomes the prophet of Anarchy.

For, in the last analysis, that is the appeal of *Stalky & Co.*, is it not? Kipling has anticipated Frank Richards: his boys, like Billy Bunter, are deplorable to all right-thinking minds; but they appeal to the wrong-thinker in all of us, and in Kipling; and this explains their continuing success. The author has given himself hopelessly away. By comparison all other writers of school-stories are prigs—even Frank Richards professed to prefer clean, manly boys. Kipling (it is the Bohemian in him) does not. He writes for that realm of the imagination which is always waiting for a Lord of Misrule. His cousin Florence Macdonald was allowed to sit in the room while he wrote *Stalky & Co.* From time to time he would break off, roar with laughter, read out the passage he had just written so that she laughed too, and then, "Come on, Florence,

what shall we make them do now?" This is scarcely the attitude of the usual writer of tracts.

As we have seen, he erects a lofty rationalisation to justify his tastes; he dares to pretend that the Empire needs raffish rascals like Stalky, inky scribblers like Beetle, more than it does upright school prefects; but it's no good. "The crammer's boast, the squadron's pride" may get "shot like a rabbit in a ride"; but he'll breed like a rabbit too, and, sadly, the world as it is must be governed by rabbits, for rabbits—not be predators like Stalky & Co. The rationalisation doesn't convince.

Yet, yet, yet. Rabbits (*tace* Sigmund Freud) have dreams of being foxes, eagles, or hounds. Beetle, it is true, settled down—married a domineering American, had three children, and became rich, world-famous, and respectable—a rabbit, in fact. Time subdues almost all things. Only Stalky continued unregenerate till the end, surviving in the army. God knows how, until after 1919, when his services were finally dispensed with, on the old grounds of insubordination. But Beetle at least remembered his predatory past, and wrote a book about it—a book in which we can, through laughter, leave our burrows to enter an amoral, irresponsible, dangerous and entrancing world. In it we can escape, like Kipling, in the sense in which I used the word earlier.

*Stalky* makes a mockery of its author's worst and his noblest moments alike. Many there be who will feel no need of it, and can take time to deplore its many failings by the standards of high art. But for those who like low art, it is very rewarding. Surely there is a place for it?

## TWO PROBLEMS

By E. N. Houlton

The points I raise have no doubt already been noted and discussed by many readers: but they have puzzled me for a long time.

### (1) *Puck and Rewards and Fairies*

Sir Hugh and Sir Richard are about of the same age—say 18 or 19 in 1066, the time of the first two stories. They would, therefore, be 52 or 53 when they set out on "The Joyous Venture" in 1100—"on that same day Red William our King . . . died of a secret arrow." We see them both on page 75, tumbling aboard the Dane ship—Hugh flat on his back on the thwarts and Richard heels over head in mid-air. Hugh (looking naturally very cross) is correctly shown as a man in latish middle age, with bald forehead, hollow cheeks, and full beard and moustache.

If I may digress briefly: *Puck of Pook's Hill*, published by Macmillan and illustrated by the incomparable H. R. Millar, is one of the finest illustrated books in the world. I wish therefore to record my conviction that whoever "modernised" three of the prints, some years ago, by shortening Una's skirts and cutting her hair, will, without doubt, perish everlastingly. You might as well "modernise" the Mona Lisa. And—there is a Nemesis for such sacrilege and vandalism—they could have left her *hair* alone: the fashion has changed again, and little girls' hair today looks exactly like Una's, as Millar drew it in 1908. Meanwhile, the Millar plates (I wish I had the originals!) are spoilt. Truly, "Wisdom is justified of all her children."

To resume. Hugh and Richard re-appear, in 'The Tree of Justice' in *Rewards and Fairies*. Kipling was evidently not satisfied with the original illustrations of 1910, since they were replaced by some excellent drawings by Charles E. Brock—my copy is dated 1930. The events in 'The Tree of Justice' take place in 1106, "the summer of the year King Henry broke his brother Robert of Normandy at Tenchebrai fight." So Hugh would by then be getting on for 60. But in the print facing page 326, he is shown with Rahere, who has "one arm round Hugh, and one round the old pilgrim of Netherfield" who is King Harold—and he (Hugh) has been remarkably rejuvenated since we last saw him in the Dane ship. He is a clean-shaven, strong-jawed young man of about 20.

How did this come about? With the greatest respect and diffidence, I suggest that perhaps Mr. Brock—a fine and sensitive artist—may have been misled by the youthful behaviour of the two knights in the story—they spend days on foot, skipping about with the beaters at the King's hunt. In fact, the *last* story about them, "Old Men at Pevensy", is such a wonderful tale that it might have been better if Kipling had left them there: though I am glad he didn't!

(2) "*Regulus*" (*A Diversity of Creatures*)

In this "Stalky" story, the principal characters are "Paddy" VERNON and "Pater" WINTON. WINTON is "long, heavy, tow-headed—in aspect like an earnest, elderly horse—rigid and angular—taciturn and three-cornered"; he has never made a joke in his life—King asks at one point, 'WINTON, in all our dealings, have I ever suspected you of a jest?' and Kipling says "a boy is not called 'Pater' by companions for his frivolity."

The story begins with a brilliant account of a Latin lesson with Mr. King, in which the boys take turns to construe a Horace ode. Beetle comes first, then WINTON, then VERNON. VERNON makes a mess of it and King gives him an imposition. Then King says, 'WINTON, go on once more'. There is a smell of chlorine from the Modern side next door, and VERNON, chuckling, underlines a phrase in his Horace, translated in a footnote, "*This side will not always be patient*", etc.—which pleases King so much that he remits VERNON'S imposition. VERNON in fact has made a good joke—"King's mouth twitched to hide a grin."

They go to the next lesson, where WINTON will behave so strangely that we must be prepared, as it were, for the shock. "It might have been the blind ferment of adolescence," Kipling writes: "—he might have sought popularity by way of clowning; or, as the Head asserted years later, *the only known jest of his serious life might have worked on him, as a sober-sided man's one love colours all his after days*"—anyway, "at the next lesson—WINTON fell suddenly from grace and let loose a live mouse in the form-room."

The first few dozen times I read the story, I took this to mean that WINTON had *already* committed his "only known jest", and that the unprecedented exercise had so "worked on him" as to "colour his after days"—he decided to do it again, hence the mouse. I still think this is the "natural" meaning. But the only "jest" already recorded is "this side will not always be patient"—and, being idle and inattentive, I "remembered", wrongly, that WINTON made it—but of course he didn't—VERNON did.

In fact the boys' names are so much alike—Paddy VERNON and Pater WINTON—that the reader needs to be constantly on the alert to remember which is which. One is almost tempted to ask, did Kipling confuse them? but this is unthinkable. He never did anything inadvertently: why did he deliberately give his two main characters names which are so confusingly alike?

## LETTER BAG

### 'AS EASY AS ABC'

Herewith a little snippet, hinting at yet more of R.K.'s foresight. On the back page of *The Sunday Mirror* of May 3, 1970, in a report on student disturbances in the U.S.A., ". . . California police used a helicopter with a bright light to try to break up a mob of . . ." etc.

I'm sure you know the passage in 'As Easy as A.B.C (1912) where (p. 12) the Board of Control's fleet of airships use just such a means to quell a rebellious crowd, and in America, too. *The Sunday Mirror*, was a bit simple in its reporting, and perhaps you have seen more detailed reference to the incident but the passage of 58 years has obviously been too little to evade the imaginative mind of Kipling.

I hope this may be of some interest to you and/or your members, and might instigate a watch on the American police to see when they realise the other weapon in the ABC armoury, the use of pitched sound!

D. R. KIPLING.

### KIPLING AND THE WORKING CLASSES

As promised I shall try to outline briefly the main stages in my interpretation of Kipling's attitude towards the working classes in the period 1889-1892.

1. Kipling first became aware of working class life in India through his contact with private soldiers and family life in army barracks. The principal private soldiers in his early tales are all given very specific English working class backgrounds, and a recurrent theme of the stories is the conflicting claims placed upon the individual by two different environments (i.e. working class life in England and barracks life in India). This is most clearly expressed in 'The Madness of Private Ortheris'. The final lines of this story show Kipling's bewilderment at Ortheris' yearning for the slums of London. Kipling's thoughts on this lead him to Thomas Atkins 'in general'—'But I could not come to any conclusion of any kind whatever.'

2. When Kipling arrived in England he himself suffered, like Ortheris, from the conflicting demands of two different environments. His immediate reaction was a dislike of London in general and of literary London in particular. But two aspects of London life he examined, and both fascinated him: the slums, and music halls. In *Something of Myself*, p. 81, he makes the point himself that he is particularly interested in getting to understand the 'English brother' of the private soldiers he knew in India (i.e. the other half of Ortheris). It was through his contact with the slums and the music hall that he achieved this understanding. 'Badalia Herodsfoot' was his immediate response—this is one aspect

of the private soldier's home life that (a) explains many of his attitudes and values that Kipling had already explored in his early soldier stories, though he himself, at this stage, did not understand them, and (b) Ortheris, inexplicably yearned for. But the music halls offered an alternative, and more attractive, view. Here was to be found the working class sense of vitality and humour he had always admired. These two facets of working class life needed to be balanced against each other.

3. The music hall is important, because when Kipling returned to England a new kind of Cockney artist was becoming popular, replacing the earlier stereotypes with a more realistic (though sentimental) portrayal of London working class life. *Something of Myself*, p.81, shows that Kipling was fully aware of this in the distinction he draws between the 'Lion and Mammoth Comiques' and the 'Bessies and Bellas'. Kipling had probably been fascinated by Music Hall for many years (i.e. from before he went to India) but when he arrived in London in 1889, he found a new form of vitality in the artists he saw, 'observed' is the word he uses, and this describes precisely the new Cockney songs.

4. *Barrack Room Ballads* is Kipling's final attempt to create an archetypal private soldier. It draws on both his Indian and his London experiences, and in this collection of ballads, he finally solves the problem that worried him about Ortheris. Tommy Atkins is shown in both military and civilian settings, and the qualities he represents are related both to the army and English working class life.

This is, I am afraid, a rather crude outline of my argument, but the best I can offer immediately. The kind of information I would like to have, or rather the topics I would like to know more about are:

1. Kipling's early experiences (i.e. pre-India) of the music hall.

2. Any information about his stay in London, especially, in my case, dealing with visits to the East End (the sketches in *Abaft the Funnel* give some tantalising hints on this) or any other connection with the London working classes or slums.

3. Any details about which music hall stars he saw or particularly admired. The most helpful thing I found on this was: James Benion Booth *The Days We Knew* (1943) esp. pp. 27-49, and there are other references in his various memoirs.

4. Any information about Kipling's friendship with Arthur Morrison, which almost certainly began about 1890, and, according to my information, lasted all their lives.

I don't think I have time now to go into the matter of 'Badalia Herodsfoot' but in my book I argue that this story was a major influence on other slum stories of the nineties, though it's more complex than this alone—the Tommy Atkins of BRB also has a great influence, as does Kipling's use of phonetics. Together with this book, *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction*, I have edited an anthology *Working Class Stories of the 1890's*, which reprints 'Badalia' together with various other stories of slum life by Morrison, Nevinson and other writers of the time. There is a great deal about Kipling in both of these.

I am also just beginning work on a new project which will involve considerable further study of Kipling. Together **with** several other

writers I have been commissioned to write a social history of the English novel: my particular commission being two volumes on the period 1875-1914, and Kipling, I hope, will feature strongly in this. But this, of course, is still some time in the future.

PETER KEATING.

### 'JUST-SO' ILLUSTRATIONS

It was the day after reading Elizabeth Coxon's letter on the 'Just-So' illustrations that I found a new volume, "The Beginning of the Armadillos", illustrated by Giulio Maestro, and I feel sure that other members will be as interested in this as I was. My initial apprehensions were dispelled when I found that the text is authentic R.K. The book is published by Macmillan at 21s. and is printed in America. The artist is a young American with obviously bright and cheerful ideas and while I admire the original, Kipling illustrations as much as anyone, I feel that this book will be perfectly acceptable even to the most traditional members of the Kipling Society.

My main criticism is that Stickly-prickly is more like a spiney Ant-eater than a hedgehog, and Slow-and-Solid's shell has a rather square outline reminiscent of a German army helmet. Painted Jaguar is delightful, a colourful chubby chap who is fair game to the wiles of the others.

J. CUNNINGHAM.

## PUCK SONGS TO FOLK MUSIC - A REVIEW

We had a delightful surprise last November, when the Argo Record Co. sent us, for review, a new stereo record comprising twelve poems from "Puck" (3) and "Rewards" (9) set to Folk Music arranged and partly composed by the singer, Peter Bellamy, who is described as "probably the most respected traditional folk singer under 30."

The poems chosen are by no means all "expected" ones. They include "Frankie's Trade", "Cold Iron", "The Looking-Glass" and "King Henry VII and the Shipwrights."

Only two or three have any chorus. The solo singing is entirely by Mr. Bellamy, and several songs are unaccompanied. His elocution is excellent, every word comes clearly through, and the whole programme is a remarkable effort on his part.

Accompaniments, where these do occur, are either fiddle, guitar or concertina, the last two being played by the singer. The most attractive is the concertina, which plays the best tune of all, to "Philadelphia", which ends the programme.

The remaining poems chosen are: "Poor Honest Men", "Sir Richard's Song", "Minepit Shaw", "Oak, Ash & Thorn", "Brookland Road", "Our Fathers of Old", "A Three Part Song".

Particulars of the Disc are: Argo Stereophonic, 33 1/3, C Control, No. ZFB 11 (ZRG 3369/70). Title "Oak, Ash & Thorn". Artistes, Peter Bellamy & 4 others. Price 29s. 11d. (1.49½) from all record shops, but not direct from Argo.

The programme has the approval of Mrs. Bambridge, and it is most pleasing that the whole idea seems to have emanated from these gifted members of the younger generation.

MARGARET BAGWELL PUREFOY.

# KIPLING'S INDIA

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In association with the Kipling Society a special, quite unique tour to India and Pakistan, has been planned by Cooks to take place during October/November 1971. It will visit the places Kipling lived in and wrote about, beginning with his birthplace in Bombay and ending on a high note of adventure with a visit to the Khyber Pass and Kabul.

The underlying idea of the tour is to bring Kipling and his works to life in situ, so it will be accompanied and commentated by an expert on the subject, ROGER LANCELYN GREEN, Editor of the Society's Journal and author of several books on Kipling, who with his wife recently toured India and visited many of the places on the present Itinerary.

No trouble has been spared in the planning and organisation of the tour to justify its description of unique: it has been timed, for example, to reach Agra (Taj Mahal) at the time of the full moon; garden and tea parties will be held in Bombay, Delhi, Lahore and Peshawar at which the Members will play hosts to local writers, poets and other personalities; a late night visit to a Game Reserve offers a chance to see Tiger, etc., etc. But although filled with good things (including, of course, all the normal sightseeing everywhere) sufficient time has been left free for rest, leisure, shopping, or other personal pursuits.

The tour will leave London by air on October 24 arriving back on November 13 and travel in India and Pakistan will be by air, car or coach as appropriate. Hotels used will be first class, all rooms having shower or bathroom. Cost, fully inclusive £462 per person in double or £479 in single rooms. For further information and descriptive leaflet please write at once to:

**Mr. H. J. Grant,  
Manager, Special Promotions,  
Thos. Cook & Son Ltd.,  
45 Berkeley Street,  
London W1A 1EB.**

*N.B. Membership of the tour will be limited to 30 persons. Members of the Society who may wish to participate but are unable to commit themselves immediately are nevertheless recommended to make a provisional registration which will carry no obligation without good notice.*

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