



*The*  
**KIPLING JOURNAL**

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**KIPLING SOCIETY**



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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, WC2N 5BJ (Tel. 01-930 6733).

Be sure to telephone before calling, as the office is not always open.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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# THE KIPLING SOCIETY

## Forthcoming Meetings

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### COUNCIL MEETINGS

At 50 Eaton Place, SW1 at 2 p.m.

Wednesday 9th March, 1977.

Wednesday 15th June, 1977.

### DISCUSSION MEETINGS

At The Victoria (Room 10) 56 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1  
(Opposite the Grosvenor Hotel) at 5.30 for 6.00 p.m.

*Wednesday 13th April 1977.* Presidential Address by the Rt.

Hon. the Viscount Cobham, K.C., P.C., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.,  
T.D., LL.D.

*Wednesday 13th July 1977* Mrs G. H. Newsom will open a Discussion on Ways of Looking at *The Gardener*.

### BATEMAN'S VISIT, 1977

Mrs Betty Sutherland is kindly allowing Society members and guests to visit Bateman's from 1 p.m. on Friday, May 6th, 1977—a non-public day. The National Trust entrance fee (approx 50p) will be payable on arrival by non-members of the Trust.

It will not be possible this year to arrange lunch in the Restaurant, but tea will be available later in the afternoon.

### ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 1977

An announcement regarding this will be made in the June Journal.

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### KIPLING AND THE "NATURE NOVEL"

A curious work, *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*, by John Alcorn, professor of English Literature at San Francisco University, has just appeared, published at the Columbia University Press, 1977, and distributed in England by Macmillans at £7.95. 'The aim of this study,' says Prof. Alcorn in his Preface, 'is to demonstrate that between Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence there arose in English Literature a new story-telling convention, a convention that involved new themes, descriptive techniques, plot devices, methods of characterisation, and new ways of relating character to landscape; and that these changes, far from being gratuitous or accidental, reflect single basic insight about human experience, an insight which continues to make its force felt in English and American fiction in our own time.'

Professor Alcorn has committed the curious solecism of calling writers of this kind of fiction "naturists"—a term which has been used for years as a polite synonym for "nudists", and it is also hard to define exactly the kind of novelists whom he accepts as falling into his new category: 'he is likely to prefer a loose plot structure, built round an elaborately described landscape,' and furthermore he is 'a child of Darwin; he *sees* man as part of an animal continuum,' and is 'in revolt against Christian dogma, against conventional morality,' and so on.

One would think that if Kipling had a place in Professor Alcorn's brave new world it would be for such stories as 'An Habitation Enforced' and 'My Son's Wife': but not a bit of it! His entrée is by way of the *Jungle Books* and *Kim*: 'Both Mowgli and Kim are evolutionary reversions: they both return to a relatively animal existence, with its dangers and its freedoms. Like Mowgli, Kim escapes from the world of civilized restraint to seek adventure in strange and exotic India

But surely they both do the exact opposite: Kipling's moral in both cases is "Man goes to man". They begin in what Professor Alcorn calls 'the primitive, amoral life'—which is neither 'strange' nor 'exotic' to them—and fit themselves to enter the real world of men and women, there to play the parts for which their unusual upbringing has fitted them: Mowgli as a Game Warden and Kim as a Secret Agent. There is no 'search for roots in the soil which is the subject of our inquiry': they are both blessed almost from birth with unusually deep roots in the soil, and their quest is to find the best crop to cultivate from them.

Yet Professor Alcorn insists that 'Kim is a truant from responsibility; he is simply playing the Great Game. The pre-condition of the game is freedom from social duties and moral truths. Kim's adventures in high politics and espionage of empire have to do neither with England's glory, nor with justice, nor with truth. Kim is a boy; he is having fun. He is a creature of pure caprice.' But the boy of whom Professor Alcorn is thinking is surely Peter Pan: "I want always to be a little boy and to have fun!"

For the very small space allotted to Kipling, Professor Alcorn makes a surprising number of mistakes in fact. For example he states that Kipling's first stories 'made their appearance in the years 1895-1900': has he only read of Mowgli and Kim? But no: *Plain Tales from the Hills* is listed in his copious "Bibliography"—but is dated 1923. However most of the books in the six pages of this Book List have curiously arbitrary dates: perhaps they are the dates of the copies he happens to be using—but this is not indicated. And even the titles are not always correct: he refers to Kipling's *Jungle Tales* as if it were a title, and credits him with an autobiography called *Something About Myself*. It is also curious to note that Kim 'sat . . . astride the gun Zam 'Aammah'. Kipling wrote 'Zam-Zammah', and pictures of it printed and sold in Lahore a few years ago call it 'Zam-Zama'.

## THE KIPLING ESTATE

The publication of Mrs Bambridge's Will on 6 November (she left just under a million and a half) started fresh comments and assumptions in the Press. Philip Howard headed his front-page article in *The Times* 'Will orders burning of Kipling diaries'—readers soon found, to their relief, that the only surviving diaries were those of Mrs. Kipling, Elsie Bambridge herself, and her husband George Bambridge; and we are further re-assured that 'Mr. Charles Carrington, the author of the official biography' had read them all, and 'recorded that Mrs. Kipling's diaries consisted of jottings on visits and visitors, domestic changes, sickness and health, with rare comments on people she liked or disliked, and occasional references to the work Kipling had in hand.'

Mr. Howard goes on: 'Mrs. Kipling was a fierce burner of documents. She, and later her daughter, paid large sums to buy back some of Kipling's letters, for example those written between 1888 and 1890 to Mrs. Hill, the American wife of a professor at the University of Allahabad. They formed a continuous journal of his life at that period.'

The letters to Mrs. Hill seem still to have been extant when Professor Carrington wrote his biography—but no mention *is* made of these or other letters. I always understood that Mrs. Bambridge tried to purchase any letters of interest which appeared in the sale rooms, but was undecided whether she would burn them all, or edit a selection and burn the rest. It is to be hoped that she had never made up her mind which to do, and that the letters in her possession have survived—and are not included in the auto-da-fe commanded in her will.

Apart from those included in Carrington's biography, the only sizeable group of letters yet published seems to be those in Professor Morton Cohen's excellent volume *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard: The Record of a Friendship* (1965), but there are many miscellaneous letters scattered among biographies and autobiographies of his contemporaries, such as Sir Arthur Sullivan, Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, William Osier, W. D. Howell, E. Nesbit, W. E. Henley and A. E. W. Mason.

There was also a privately printed booklet of twelve copies of *Letters to Guy Paget* (1936). It is also probable that other letters were included in Lord Birkenhead's biography of Kipling which, according to David Norris in *The Sunday Times* of 7 Nov: 1976, in an article headed 'Kipling Life may be printed,' is likely to be published. According to him 'The Birkenhead biography is believed to show Kipling as a henpecked husband, dominated by a wife who refused to let him visit his favourite clubs and stopped friends calling at his home. I understand that Mrs. Bambridge may also have been annoyed by implications that she was the least favoured of the three Kipling children.'

With this kind of surmise finding its way into print, we can but hope that the Birkenhead biography *is* published, and as soon as possible. It too may contain hitherto unpublished letters (and there are also a few in, mostly the earlier, numbers of *The Kipling Journal*). From those which have appeared in the various settings listed above, it seems that Kipling, while not being a great letter-writer from the point of view of style, was an exceedingly amusing and informative one—and a collection or at least a selection would make a book of delightful and amusing reading for the general reader, and of absorbing interest for the enthusiast.

May we hope that the National Trust, now the beneficiaries of the Kipling Estate, will soon decide on publication and appoint an editor? Besides whatever may have survived at Wimpole Hall, there must be many hundreds of Kipling letters in public and private collections, here and in the United States at least.

R.L.G.

## THE UNFADING GENIUS OF RUDYARD KIPLING

By Roger Lancelyn Green

Annual Luncheon on 10 November 1976

To be standing here for the second time to propose the toast to the Unfading Genius of Rudyard Kipling is "an honour that I looked not for"—indeed it hardly seems possible that it's really happening and I don't really see why it should be. Perhaps it is just a reminder of steadily increasing age: it reminds me of a remark in the parody of Rider Haggard's *She*, written by two of his friends (who were also soon to welcome Kipling to the Savile Club) Andrew Lang and W. H. Pollock: "No one was ever old enough to have been Proctor *twice*!" In fact, like He, the character to whom it refers, I feel slightly embalmed.

This might suggest that I should be talking about *Egypt of the Magicians*—and I might do so, if I hadn't already said all I could about that, as about most of Kipling's other works. The only reason I can think of for being invited to propose this toast today is the best reason why I should *not* be asked—the fact that I have edited the last 78 numbers of *The Kipling Journal*—and that includes writing 78 editorials of varying length, and trying to find several new things to say about Kipling in each. I don't know how many *new* things I have found, but one of the remarkable things about Kipling—one of the facets of his greatness—is that whenever one re-reads any of his works, however well one knows it, one usually finds something new in it: some new meaning, or double-meaning; some reference that one has never realised before; some application that suddenly becomes personal for the first time.

To give a recent example of this. I might very well have had to let you down today, as there was to be a Government Inquiry about the proposed development of a farm in which I was rather deeply interested (the Inquiry was postponed at the last moment). But thinking of perhaps having to let you down, and the reason for so doing, my thoughts turned at once to my favourite Kipling story, 'An Habitation Enforced'—and I thought what a good sequel Kipling could have written had he been alive now: of what might happen if such an Inquiry was held in an attempt to save one of the farms in the story from being compulsorily purchased or built on by a speculator—"Gale Anstey", "Burnt House", "Rocketts", "the Home Farm" or "Griffons." And then something struck me for the first time (Perhaps you all "knew it all along", like Stalky, but no matter). I'd never really thought what the title of the story meant: if asked, I would probably have said that Friars Pardon had been forced upon the Chapins by the circumstances which brought them there and their own unexpected reactions (after all, it *is* the first story in *Actions and Reactions*!) But wait a minute! The title of the story is a quotation from Thomas Tusser . . . When did he live? . . . I looked him up . . . he was a contemporary of Shakespeare, in fact a little older. "Enforced." Yes, of course:—

"The Moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,  
Lamenting some enforced chastity."

Now this (as one probably learnt at school from Verity's notes), does not mean that the flowers were forced to be chaste, but that their chastity had been violated—they had been forced—raped in fact. And so, of course, 'An Habitation Enforced' had been broken into—the Chapins had broken through the barriers (which Wilton Sargeant had failed to do by his 'Error in the Fourth Dimension') and become the accepted owners of the Friars Pardon estate, and the accepted inheritors of the Lashmars.

I'm afraid I've rather wandered—mistaken my way through the woods—probably the result of stringing together so many short items in 'News and Notes'. But, as so often in their case, I think I can find a cord, however slender, to connect what I have already said with what I know I ought to be saying—and that is something about the Kipling Society as it concludes the fiftieth year of its existence so far, and

about its *Journal*, the 200th number of which I hope that you will be receiving early in December.

To begin at the beginning: was another habitation enforced—that of Bateman's, Burwash, Sussex? Kipling was certainly averse to the founding of any Kipling Society, at least while he was still alive. In March 1921, Mr. J. H. C. Brooking, our Founder, put a paragraph in *The Times* asking interested persons to get in touch with him—and received only nineteen replies. Nothing daunted he called a meeting on 22 April, and it was decided by those few who turned up, to found a Kipling Society: but no one would agree to become Hon. Secretary, which Brooking felt unable to do as he lived and worked some 200 miles from London. Nothing came of this until the following year when he met General L. C. Dunsterville (Stalky in person) and by further entries in *The Times* "Agony Column", collected 78 applications for membership, and was able to include such high-sounding names in the field of Kipling studies as Admiral Ballard, Capt. E. W. Martindell and Major John Hay Beith (better known as the novelist and playwright Ian Hay).

A "foundation" meeting was held on 28 March 1923. Apparently hardly anyone turned up, and the Society failed to be founded, through lack of anyone willing to hold office. But at the meeting Dunsterville read out a statement which included the first definite reference to Kipling's reactions to the proposal of forming the Society.

'The idea of this Society was put before me some months ago and after careful consideration I eventually agreed to deal with its inauguration, which I trust is now nearly accomplished.

'Before taking the matter up I got in touch with Mr. Kipling, who at first resisted the proposal. In view, however, of the many proofs that I have received of the need of such a Society I told him, as an old friend, that he must bear with such an infliction as patiently as possible, because of the pleasure it will give to so many to belong to such a Society, and he has not since raised any strong objection...'

Again this attempt to found the Society proved abortive—mainly because no one could be found for the post of Hon. Secretary—a post which Dunsterville rightly described as 'very important as upon this person mainly depends whether the Society flourishes or dies ... He should be well-connected, energetic, tactful, a student of Kipling with plenty of spare time, and not afraid of travelling about to interview people.'

But the acquisition of Sir George MacMunn, author of several books on Kipling, and G. C. Beresford, the "original" of M'Turk encouraged Brooking to make a third attempt at the end of 1926, and the Kipling Society was officially formed at a meeting on 4 February 1927, with an initial membership of well over a hundred which had swollen to 750 a couple of years later.

Brooking, who was by now living near London, acted as Hon. Secretary for the first year and a half, and was also largely responsible for the first two numbers of the *Journal*, after which W. A. Young, the author of the 1911 *Kipling Dictionary*, took on the full Editorship, and continued until Dec: 1931, when Basil M. Bazley succeeded him. With the outbreak of War in 1939 Bazley was unable to continue, but Mr. E. D. W. Chaplin—already an experienced editor—took over



the *Journal* from No. 51 until his retirement after the July number in 1957, having edited 72 consecutive issues, including uninterrupted publication during the difficult War years. In answer to a cry for help from the Committee of the Society, I took over the next Number (No. 123), expecting to be succeeded before long by someone better qualified for the job—but I am still waiting (what offers?) and am meanwhile about to bring out my 78th number.

But I'm wandering again. The question of more interest (though I'm afraid it may never be answered) is what Kipling thought of the Kipling Society and its *Journal*.

This question was already being asked—and answered by guesswork—when Brooking gave his talk on the founding of the Society, from which I have been quoting, in 1929, and what he was able to report was this:—

'As to the statements that have been made as to Mr. Kipling's hatred of the Society, I venture to think that this is an exaggeration. I advised Mr. Kipling both verbally and in writing of this projected Society before its earliest days of publicity; and while what he has said and written to me about it was not of an encouraging nature, it may reasonably be inferred that as an admirer of Kipling, I would not have proceeded with the formation of the Society if that had appeared likely to incur so strong a feeling as hatred towards it. My own opinion is that Mr. Kipling is naturally interested in a Society which stands for his splendid ideals, but that his invincible modesty prevents him from recognising in any way such a supreme tribute to his genius, and that this aversion to recognition has been wrongly imputed to aversion to the Society itself.'

Speaking at a Discussion Meeting in 1932, Dunsterville, who was among Kipling's more intimate friends, wound up his talk as follows:

'In conclusion I would say a word as to Mr. Kipling's attitude to our Society. From his own lips I have no message for you, though I have had the pleasure in seeing him lately, looking strong and robust, you will be glad to hear. But if he could be prevailed upon to send you a message, it would be this, and I give it you entirely from my own fertile, and perhaps senile imagination: "I cannot be displeased at your admiration of my works, but I find the *expression* of your admiration rather harassing, and I am already sufficiently harassed, as you may guess. Please leave me alone." Looked at from this point of view, I do not think we have much to blame ourselves for, and we insist on our rights to live. In spite of our enthusiasm we are extremely well-behaved, and we are completely unobtrusive.'

How unobtrusive was the Society? Well, I can only find one example in the *Journal* (No. 11; Oct: 1929) of a Member actually writing to Bateman's for elucidation of a problem—the old chestnut about "Rewards" in *Rewards and Fairies* being a rare kind of fay pronounced "Roo-arnds"—and received an answer from Kipling's secretary which ran: "I beg to inform you that the title of Mr. Kipling's book is a quotation from Shakespeare, and bears the same interpretation".

This, I think, is rather a churlish reply. In the first place the quotation is *not* from Shakespeare, but from Richard Corbet (1582-1635)—Kipling found the poem quoted in F. E. Paget's *The Hope of the Katzekopfs* which he read as a small boy at Southsea, and later found in its entirety in Percy's *Reliques*; and in the second place, why

couldn't the answer have stated simply: "Rewards is used in its obvious sense of compensation or recognition for some deed—as in the verse quoted, etc."

But we would very much like to know what Kipling's reactions were to the articles, letters, queries and so forth in the *Journal*. Did he roar with laughter over such an utter inanity as the "Rewards—Roo-arads" controversy? Did he get down from his chair in the Bateman's dining room and stamp round the table in fury, the great eyebrows tangling over the nose-piece of his spectacles at some gross mis-interpretation of some paragraph of his which delivered some pronouncement of real importance? And what merriment did he and Dunsterville have over Beresford's latest tirade against any recollection of Westward Ho! which did not fit into the book which he had ready to publish the moment Kipling was no longer able to sue him for libel—well, at least, condemn out of hand?

Re-reading the early numbers of the *Journal* one wonders how Kipling was able to refrain from correcting some gross error or solving some obvious problem. Alas, we shall never know! Did anyone think to ask Mrs Bambridge? It's too late now—and how much we miss her who, until her final illness began a couple of years ago, was our most honoured guest at these Luncheons. She always read the *Journal* in proof, and made many useful comments—but I never thought to ask this question—which, indeed, she would probably not have been able to answer, for she had married and left Bateman's for Wimpole before our Society was founded.

Even if Kipling would not recognise the existence of our Society, though he may possibly have sent us a kind of back-handed blessing via Stalky Dunsterville, it's a pity he did not jot down the correct answers to some of the questions asked—and often wrongly answered in early numbers of the *Journal*—for publication only after he was dead. But we shall never know what or how much Mrs Kipling destroyed after her husband's death: I think the only items we know to have been victims of the holocaust were Kipling's "idea book" in which he jotted down plots and bits of dialogues or verse, and the unpublished Stalky & Co., story which he read to Sidney Cockerell shortly before his death.

But how frustrating it is for a biographer or literary historian to come upon a question, however trivial, which the subject of his research could have answered, often in a single sentence, even in a bald "Yes" or "No"—and which weeks of research fails to solve!

I wonder what questions each of us would ask! Who was Vickery's companion in 'Mrs. Bathurst'? What and where was "my worst slip—still undecided"? I think I'd ask for the rest of the Song of the Battle of Navarino—and did he learn a genuine one from Captain Holloway, or did he simply invent the six lines which are all we have?

Another kind of question is about what books he read which may have sparked off ideas for his stories. We know, for example, from a letter to Rider Haggard that one scene in *Nada the Lily* started him on the Mowgli stories, and from *Something of Myself* that another influence on them was a recollection of James Greenwood's *King Lion* in an old volume of *Beeton's Annual* which he read at Southsea. We know (from an incident in 'The Propagation of Knowledge') that he had read and remembered Oliver Wendell Holmes's *Elsie Venner*, about

the girl who "was interestingly associated with rattlesnakes"—and may reasonably assume that this story of a pre-natal influence had had some, perhaps subconscious, influence on 'In the Same Boat'—"Helen all alone". But we do not know if he had read Edwin Lester Arnold's romance of re-incarnation, *Phra the Phoenician*, which has been suggested as giving the background idea for 'The Finest Story in the World', or the same author's *Lepidus the Centurion*: which is thought to foreshadow the Parnesius stories in *Puck of Pook's HUP*

The questions we could ask are endless:—

"I keep six honest serving-men  
(They taught me all I knew);

Their names are What and Why and When  
And How and Where and Who—"

And it is one of the penalties—or delights—of editing the Journal. For example—and these queries have come to me within the last two or three weeks—Does Kipling refer anywhere to the Jewish novelist Israel Zangwill, some Kipling letters to him having been found in Jerusalem? Which Kipling story is Saki referring to when he mentions "the Hindu villagers who changed their faith when two bears spent the night in their poppy field?" And—curious after what I've just said about his books—was Edwin Lester Arnold a close friend of Kipling's or merely a chance acquaintance?

But to return to Kipling's relations—or rather lack of relations—formed in this country while the author so honoured was still alive, were Browning towards the end of the last century (and probably Kipling knew Max Beerbohm's devastating cartoon of "Mr. Browning taking tea with the Browning Society"): and J. R. R. Tolkien a few years ago. We may perhaps take this to our credit—and we may certainly take credit for being (I think) the second-longest surviving of such Societies, the longest being the Dickens Fellowship, founded more than twenty years before our own.

Whatever Kipling may have thought of us, collectively, there is no doubt what we, collectively, think of him. Our interest, our admiration, may I say our affection for him and his works, have supported our Society for fifty years—may it flourish for at least another fifty—though I'm afraid I won't be editing *Journal* No. 400! And in that hope, that expectation, may I ask you to join with me in drinking to the Unfading Genius of Rudyard Kipling!

## NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following: *UK*: Mmes P. Carpenter, J. Gunn, Lt.-Col. J. Harvey-Kelly, Messrs. G. A. Allsop, F. N. Beaufort-Palmer, G. C. Greig (Jnr. memb.). *Denmark*: Mr. and Mrs. H. Rosenkilde. *Melbourne*: P. F. Duerden. *Tunis*: Mme Annick Slim. *USA*: State Univ. Library, Edmond, Okla.

## 'ONE SPOT BELOVED OVER ALL'

By Joseph R. Dunlap

Border and Breed and Birth, the Ballad asserts, disappear when two strong men of dissimilar origins stand face to face. Let us see how two strong men of differing and tenaciously held creeds became as one when they stood upon the particular portions of English land they loved most deeply. The two strong men in question were Rudyard Kipling and William Morris. They were known to each other, Morris being the life-long friend of Kipling's uncle Sir Edward Burne-Jones, yet little of Kipling's adult life was spent in England while Morris was alive. The latter died in the year that Kipling abandoned New England for old England.

Though between the two men there were vast differences of opinion and attitude, there were also some striking similarities. They were notably similar, for instance, in the strength of their likes and dislikes, loves and hates, which they were not backward in expressing as they commented, each in his own fashion, on the events of their own and other times, on the virtues and shortcomings of mankind, on the structure of society, on current taste, on industrialism and craftsmanship, and on many other matters. In their comments Morris the Socialist and Kipling the Tory understandably spoke different tongues, but the terms they employed to describe the significance to them of their chosen portions of England sprang from a common insight and the same deep emotional response.

Neither man found his particular "spot" until he was over thirty years of age, had acquired wife and children, and was well launched on his life's work. Yet they both had felt the need of a non-urban setting for their lives, so both had caused homes to be built for them soon after marriage. For Morris it was Red House in an orchard in Kent where he could entertain the friends who helped him make of it a "palace of art," and from which he commuted to the premises of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in London. In Naulakha, on the other hand, Kipling lived far from cities on a Vermont hillside outside the town of Brattleboro, where he wrote of Mowgli, the Brushwood Boy, Captains Courageous and many more persons—human and non-human.

But in a few years both men had left these pleasant homes of their first hopes and never saw them again. Morris found that health and business concerns made it necessary to live closer to his firm in London; while for Kipling the combination of an unpleasant brother-in-law, nervousness over the political hot air in Washington that took an anti-British turn in the mid-nineties, distaste for the Gilded Age, and other considerations brought him back to a more congenial land.

Six years passed before either one could settle in his own earthly paradise. The Kiplings decided that Rottingdean, where they had been living near Rudyard's aunt, Lady Burne-Jones, "was getting too populated", so by means of an early automobile and considerable persistence they discovered and acquired Bateman's, an early seventeenth century house near Burwash in Sussex. "Behold us," wrote Kipling to Charles Eliot Norton in November 1902, "lawful owners of a grey stone lichened house . . . beamed, panelled, with old oak staircase, and all un-

touched and unfaked. . . . It is a good and peaceable place standing in terraced lawns nigh to a walled garden of old red brick . . ." Morris, on the other hand, found Kelmscott Manor on a house agent's list in the spring of 1871. He had been looking for a summer place in the country, and when he went down to Kelmscott to look at it, he took to it immediately. "A heaven on earth," he wrote to his friend Charles Faulkner; "an old stone Elizabethan house . . . and such a garden! close down on the river, a boat house and all things handy."

Since Kipling could carry the tools of his craft wherever he chose, his new home became his base of operations, and London a place to visit. He established himself on the land knowing from experience that he could function best away from large numbers of restless people. Morris, in addition to his literary work, had a business to manage and designs to produce for the products of his firm, so for twenty-five years he lived an ambivalent life between the hustle and demands of London and the joy and peace he found on the upper Thames, west of Oxford. As the years went on and Morris was drawn into the glare and tension of public life, he appreciated even more deeply the renewal of his spirits at Kelmscott. "So to the land our hearts we give," wrote Kipling. For both men, house, environs and history constantly assured them of the rightness of their choice.

A striking similarity may be seen in the way they expressed the affection they felt for their chosen places. In 1882 Morris wrote of Kelmscott:

"It has come to be to me the type of the pleasant places of the earth, and of the homes of harmless simple people not overburdened with the intricacies of life; and as others love the race of man through their lovers or their children, so I love the earth through that small space of it."

Twenty years later Kipling, generously including the county of Sussex in his affections wrote the familiar lines:

God gives all men all earth to love,  
But since man's heart is small,  
Ordains for each one spot shall prove  
Belovèd over all.

Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea!

Characteristically, Kipling gives vivid impressionistic glimpses of his county, then returns to his first point which is close to, but not identical with, that of Morris. As he concentrates his feelings on Sussex, Kipling remarks that others may find contentment in Baltic pines and Surrey glades—"each to his choice"—but this is his choice. Morris, however, employs his feeling for his chosen space in a more symbolic way, using its small size as a lens which allows him to expand his heart to include love for all the life of the earth and its seasons.

Behind this affection for their chosen areas one can glimpse the image of an embraceable England. Kipling called England a garden and a "cozy little country." Morris pointed out that although there are no "great wastes" or great "solitudes of forests," one finds "little

rivers, little plains, swelling, speedily-changing uplands, all beset with handsome orderly trees . . . it is neither a prison nor a palace, but a decent home." The aspect of England as a trim garden appealed to them ultimately; not the more than man-sized continents of Asia and North America that Kipling had seen, or, for Morris, the grim and sometimes terrifying landscape of Iceland.

Within the "little land . . . shut up within the narrow seas," in the tranquil countryside of Victoria and Edward, Kipling delighted in

Bare slopes where chasing shadows skim,  
 And, through the gaps, revealed,  
 Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim,  
 Blue goodness of the Weald . . .

Here through the strong and shadeless days  
 The tinkling silence thrills;  
 Or little, lost, Down churches praise  
 The Lord who made the hills.

And even before he knew Kelmscott, Morris was greatly attracted to the country of the upper Thames :

What better place than this then could we find  
 By this sweet stream that knows not of the sea,  
 That guesses not the city's misery,  
 Those little streams whose hamlets scarce have names.  
 This far-off, lonely mother of the Thames?

To Morris the Thames was a vital link between his two homes, and he knew the reaches of the river "from Hammersmith to Crick-lade."

For both men the past was very much alive in their areas; indeed, it was an integral part of the present and future. Situated where the tides of history had rolled in and out of England, Kipling was able to show his keen appreciation of being one with the men and women of many centuries whose footprints he discovered.

See you our little mill that clacks  
 So busy by the brook?  
 She has ground her corn and paid her tax  
 Ever since Domesday Book . . .

And see you after rain, the trace  
 Of mound and ditch and wall?  
 O that was a legion's camping place,  
 When Caesar sailed from Gaul.

Most of the Puck stories recreate persons who participated in events recorded in the history books, but Kipling makes clear in story and verse his very real admiration for the men of the soil : "Not the great or well-bespoke/but the mere uncounted folk," whose wisdom, accumulated through observant though unspectacular generations, may be used by the land-holder if he is wise, or ignored if he is not. The country man is "bailiff, woodman, wheelwright, field surveyor, engineer." Thus it follows that "whoever pays the taxes, old Mus' Hobden owns the land.'

In Morris's corner of Oxfordshire, history had not been lavish, but this did not affect his appreciation of the labour of ordinary persons

through the centuries, particularly of craftsmen whose handiwork had survived until this day. These works caught Morris's imagination. He speculated on the person of long ago who designed and ornamented the "little grey church" and the "little grey house" that make "an English village a thing apart, to be seen and pondered on by all who love romance and beauty." He may have been "the monk, the ploughman's brother; oftenest his other brother, the village carpenter, smith, mason . . . 'a common fellow.' . . . I have seen . . . work done by such men in some out of the way hamlet . . . work so delicate, so careful, and so inventive, that nothing in its way could go further." Morris believed firmly that such a workman could only have created this beauty because of the joy his work brought him.

Of the house he loved "with a reasonable love, I think," he wrote : "the old house [has] grown up out of the soil and the lives of those that lived on it; needing no grand office-architect . . . but some thin thread of tradition, a half-conscious sense of the delight of meadow and acre and wood and river; a certain amount (not too much let us hope) of common sense, a liking for making materials serve one's turn, and perhaps at bottom some little grain of sentiment. This I think was what went to the making of the old house . . ."

These views of Morris and Kipling on English traditional work and wisdom complement each other. They are tributes from highly skilled, highly articulate craftsmen to the skilled men of other crafts of all eras, and to the works of their hands.

It is, of course, no wonder that Kipling and Morris introduced their favourite locales, or places closely resembling them, into their imaginative writings. In the Puck stories Kipling combined his enthusiasm for history and the land by causing men and women, from a prehistoric flint worker to Laennec and his early stethoscope, to revisit the region. Though, understandably, they tend to speak with Kipling's accent, they portray the reality and movement of past life in Sussex by the sea.

When he wrote of his own day, Kipling emphasized the magnetism inherent in owning and administering an estate. He had exclaimed to Charles Eliot Norton in the letter already quoted: "[England] is made up of trees and green fields and mud and the gentry, and at last I'm one of the gentry . . ." Kipling's forebears had not been landholders, but he enjoyed that position with its outlook and responsibilities for nearly half his life. In "An Habitation Enforced" and "My Son's Wife" he recounts how this fascination acted on an American couple and an urban Englishman, all of them young and all of them well provided with money. From pasteboard beginnings, both tales move into the fullness of life on the land—sights, sounds, texture, people, motives, customs, and the conviction on the part of the principal characters that this is the only way to live. In the former story, the American couple—mercifully allowed to speak like ordinary humans and spared conventionalized eccentricities—discover that an ancestral tie with the place they settle opens all doors. In the other, a left-leaning Londoner who takes up a rural inheritance, soon becomes a right thinking slayer of foxes (old and young), and then must cope with a difficult tenant and a flooding brook.

Morris handled Kelmescott Manor and its environs in a different

fashion. In *The Well at the World's End* he placed it in an age that never was, while in *News from Nowhere* it survives into the future epoch he hoped would come to pass. In the former tale, a medievalistic fantasy, Ralph the hero travels through many lands, but he goes forth from, and returns to, the High House of his father's little kingdom of Upmeads. Morris's daughter May writes that Ralph started his adventure "from the very door of Kelmscott Manor transformed into the palace of a simple-living kinglest . . . [placed] between river and upland . . ." She traces Ralph's progress south past Farringdon and Uffington until "our familiar topography fails us." When, after many adventures, Ralph prepares to bring home his bride, he tells her: "thou needest not to fear the ancient house, for it is kind and lovely." While for Kipling his environs seem to have meant more to him than his house did, for Morris his love of the house and his love of the land interacted strongly. In *News from Nowhere* Morris, known as Guest, accompanies several young persons as they row up the Thames from Hammersmith to Kelmscott in the summer of 2090. In his vision of the future, after the Socialist revolution, the lives led by men and women were happy, industrious and productive, uncomplicated by an economic system which, he felt, destroyed both taste and lives in his own day. The people of the new society respect nature and feel a kinship with it. Though London was vastly changed and improved by the taste and spirit that followed the revolution, Kelmscott Manor, as part of the eternal countryside, had survived untouched. Ellen, who expresses many of Morris's thoughts, brings both aspects together as she exclaims

"Yes, friend, this is what I came out for to see; this many-gabled old house built by the simple country-folk of the long-past times, regardless of all the turmoil that was going on in the cities and courts, is lovely still . . . O me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and the weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows on it—as this [house] has done!"

The vividness with which Kipling and Morris described imaginary events and scenes shows how clearly their inward eyes saw past, present or future on their favourite territory. Furthermore, they saw them in terms of their own visions of an ideal England. For Kipling it was the beloved, stimulating, wise, healing homeland, in the perspective of the Edwardian social structure, that would endure under efficient leadership with a dedicated, upright people who did their work without fanfare, kept the Law and were "swift in all obedience." For Morris it was the reconstituted society when "mastery had changed into fellowship" in a land peopled with "happy and lovely folk who had cast away riches and attained to wealth." Indeed, Morris envisioned a transformation of English life so complete that the economic goals which motivate men and society would become totally irrelevant. Kipling lived to see unwelcome changes in the England which he knew. The times, it has been said, passed him by. Morris, on the other hand, would have welcomed changes leading toward the future for which he expended his time, his money and his health, but they never came. Each man in his own way urged his readers to see and respond to his vision, and though present day England resembles neither, the ideals expressed by Morris and Kipling have sunk into many hearts.



Perhaps it is significant that the homes which meant most to Morris and Kipling were not, so it turns out, the homes they built themselves, but rather houses that had sheltered English families for three centuries or more, in which their own presence was but one tenancy in the ongoing life of the place. Bateman's and Kelmscott Manor remain today as visible witnesses to the reality of the love of these two strong men for "one spot . . . beloved over all;" for "that small space of [the earth]."

Morris died in 1896; Kipling died forty years later. Between these two dates, it is interesting to note, Kipling briefly stretched out a hand from his chosen spot to that of Morris. In 1928 a leaflet was distributed by the Morris Memorial Fund in an appeal for funds to construct a village hall in Kelmscott: "sorely needed as a centre of social life and interest to the surrounding district." The General Committee included many outstanding names, and on the list of "Donations received or promised" one may read "Rudyard Kipling 2. 2. 0."

In death Kipling quitted Sussex by the sea for Westminster Abbey in London by the Thames. Far up the same river Morris sleeps in the peaceful churchyard of his beloved Kelmscott.

## TENNYSON'S LIGHT BRIGADE AND KIPLING'S

By Hayden Ward

In his recent study of Kipling, Philip Mason contrasts Tennyson's lyrical evocation of the charge of the Light Brigade with a sample of the wry, realistic war poems of *Barrack-Room Ballads*.<sup>1</sup> Coyle he asks, "Which do you prefer?" Our contemporary belief that the horror of war is uncompensated for by national or personal glory inclines us to prefer Kipling and to dismiss Tennyson's epic glimpse of battle as an absurdity. Kipling, writing before World War 1, did not find it absurd, but he did react to Tennyson's poem with a poem of his own, "The Last of the Light Brigade" (1891) [See *Definitive Verse*, pp. 200-202].

The first thing to be said is that Kipling does not dissent from Tennyson's conviction that the splendid courage and prowess of the Light Brigade are unsullied by the fact that "someone had blundered." Like Tennyson, Kipling feels that the merit of ordinary soldiers is increased just because their leaders prove incompetent and they must rely on their own discipline and skill.<sup>2</sup> The attitudes that inform the two poems concerning the Brigade are similar.

The irony of Kipling's poem is that Tennyson's glorious paean and its companion poem, "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade" (1882), have become set-pieces, "The things on Balaclava the kiddies at school recites," and the patriotic sentiment they express does not extend from rhapsodic civilian fantasies of the battlefield to the homefront. The ideal soldier ceases to count as a man once he has taken his place in the national mythology. Tennyson's stature as Laureate resulted in the pathetic humanity of the Light Brigade's survivors being overshadowed by a perdurable artistic ideal.

Kipling articulates the irony in the third stanza of his own poem: "They felt that life was fleeting; they knew not that art was long." The classical aphorism implicitly contrasts the complacent attitude of Tennyson's educated readers towards the poor with the quietly desperate situation of the old soldiers. Kipling is touching on a paradox of the mid-Victorian literary treatment of the lower classes: their virtue in adversity was sentimentally celebrated, but the sordid actuality of their lives was ignored or minimized. The contrast between the heroic soldiers of Tennyson's poem and the "shiftless soldiers" in the workhouse (or near it) that Kipling's English public sees is not different except in degree from the Nancy of *Oliver Twist* and the wretched figure of an actual London prostitute. As Dickens does in the preface to his 1838 novel, Kipling, in his 1891 poem, indicates that one of the Victorian requirements for acceptable literature was that it sanction a middle- and upper-class obliviousness to the hideous reality of the working-class poor. Kipling's "thirty million English," contributing their "twenty pounds and four" to the destitute survivors of the Light Brigade, no doubt would say with Mr. Podsnap, "There is not a country in the world, sir, where so noble a provision is made for the poor as in this country."<sup>3</sup>

In developing the ironic disparity between the public adulation for the heroes of Balaclava and the public indifference to the aging survivors of the charge, Kipling makes an analogy between the soldiers in battle and their condition once back in England: the "mouth of hell" of the Russian cannon is preferable to the hell of the workhouse. The tone is once again reminiscent of Dickens: one thinks of Betty Higden's choosing to die rather than go to the workhouse.

Instead of the "noble six hundred" fronting the Russians, Kipling juxtaposes "twenty broken troopers" with no beds to "thirty million English" bragging of "England's might." His way of bringing the obtuse abstraction up short before the indisputable fact recalls not only Dickens's recurrent method of satire but also the classic moment when Matthew Arnold answers Roebuck's "unrivalled happiness" speech with the laconic "Wragg is in custody." Kipling does not make pompous and complacent speakers damn themselves out of their own mouths, as Dickens and Arnold often do; instead, he forces one to see that to "talk of England's might" without succouring the men who have been instruments of that might is immoral. Tennyson urged that the nation "honour the charge they made"; Kipling demands that it honour the men as well. Kipling points out not the perversity of an abstraction but its inadequacy. Dickens and Arnold do not believe that England is in a state of "unrivalled happiness." Kipling does believe in England's might, but he believes, also, that it is sadly diminished by a national deficiency of charity. As the concluding lines of the first stanza suggest, England is bound together only by the cash nexus, and past military service does nothing to compensate for the old soldiers' having no money or "service or trade." Without gainful employment, yesterday's heroes are denigrated as "shiftless."

The ultimate irony of Kipling's poem centres on the troopers' pilgrimage to Tennyson. As they had once followed, with splendid discipline, the orders of their incompetent leaders, they now submit to the orders of Tennyson's servant and stand, "in garments tattered

and frayed," before the great poet. The scene is a sad parody of a military inspection. Unlike Kipling, the troopers remain unquestioning of the moral order of a society by which they have been exploited and then forgotten. The common man, in peace and war, is doomed to be victimized by his superiors. His greatness, in Kipling's view, is that he bears it, most of the time, with a rueful good humour, suggested in this poem by the Sergeant's quotation from Tennyson's poem (the phrase from the *Times* account of the charge that, in fact, inspired the poem): again, "someone has blundered."<sup>4</sup> The irony here is not the old soldier's, but Kipling's

The troopers ask not for food but for more poetry. Their own case demonstrates vividly the illusory character of the idea that art can change social realities. The poem does not suggest that Tennyson's "wonderful verses," by which "the English were scourged with the thing called Shame," have any practical effect in leading to the amelioration of the lot of the Brigade's survivors: apparently, they are left still "to the streets and the workhouse." Yet, like the poet whose aid they seek, the troopers continue to have an ambivalent faith in the social function of art. Of course, the fact that Kipling wrote this poem suggests that he shares this faith. It is one way, out of many, in which he differs from the aesthetic philosophy dominant in the 1890's.

The end of the poem enforces Kipling's larger point that in late Victorian England moral idealism, especially in the form of patriotic fervor, is not rooted in the clear sense of actuality that makes moral action possible. Patriotic talk is mere "babble"; the school recitation of Tennyson's inspiring poem, and others like it, is mere childish "lispings," empty form without substance. "The Last of the Light Brigade" reveals Kipling to be no indiscriminating jingoist. Plainly, as many others of his poems and stories demonstrate, he believed in the imperial mission, in the rightness of British hegemony in world politics. But this poem reveals that he saw clearly that the mission would fail if the actual state of the nation was not made compatible with the nation's loftiest conception of itself. The idea, in broader contexts, is apposite today.

#### NOTES

1. *Kipling: The Glass, the Shadow and the Fire* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 19.
2. For a vivid account of the particulars of the charge, see Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 207-257.
3. *Our Mutual Friend*, Book 1, chapter 11.
4. See Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir* (London: Macmillan, 1897), I., 381.

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