

THE  
KIPLING JOURNAL



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DECEMBER 1980

No 216



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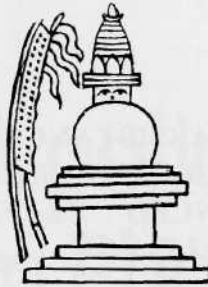
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## SOCIETY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DISCUSSION MEETINGS 1981

*All are on the first floor of 'The Clarence', 53 Whitehall, London SW1, at 5.30 for 6p.m. This is near Charing Cross Tube Station on the Bakerloo, Northern and Jubilee Lines.*

**Wednesday 11 February 1981** Bryan Diamond on *Illustrators of Kipling*

**Wednesday 8 April 1981** John Shearman on *Rudyard Kipling and the Motion Picture*

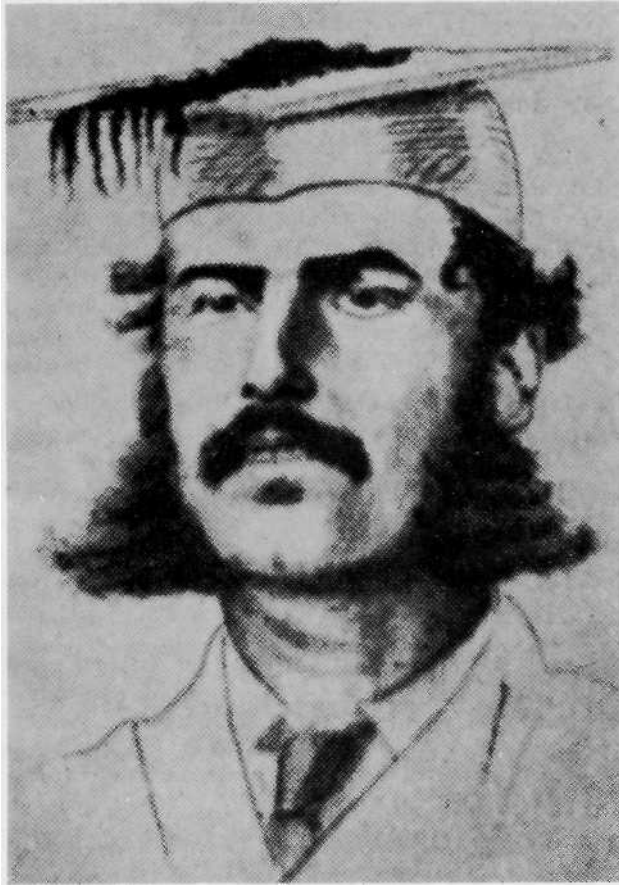
**Wednesday 8 July 1981** Trevor Daintith on *Rudyard Kipling and Robert Surtees at Table*

**Wednesday 9 September 1981** The Revd Dr Arthur K. Ankers on *They came to Bateman's, or Something of his Friends*

**Wednesday 11 November 1981** Mrs L. A. F. Lewis: *subject to be announced*

Dates and arrangements for the 1981 **Visit to Bateman's**, the **Annual Luncheon** and the **Annual General Meeting**, will be announced in the next *Journal*.

Thanks to the many members who have brought their subscriptions, styles and addresses up to date. Please keep up the good work!



ONE OF M'TURK'S DRAWINGS OF KING

Contemporary sketch by G. C. Beresford (Kipling's "M'Turk") of William Crofts (the main original of "King"), published in Beresford's idiosyncratic but readable *Schooldays with Kipling* (Gollancz, 1936).

Beresford describes Crofts as "a nervous man, perpetually on wires". He was "the showman among the masters, a tall, bright, whisk-about creature, with chin up and head pivoting for observations and discoveries. His hair was rather dark, and he sported side-whiskers that gave him standing and respectability among the Victorians, to whom a clean-shaven man might be anything, even an actor."

Crofts/ King is the subject of a letter on p 44—also an article entitled "Kipling's Latin Master" in September 1980.



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## EDITOR'S NEWS AND NOTES

### PUNCTUALITY

I am sorry the last issue was delivered so late: the original delay, explained in my editorial, was aggravated by problems at the printer's. I also hear with regret that the June issue, through an error, was consigned late to U.S. readers. Our aim remains to get the *Journal* out in Britain in the month printed on the cover, and sent abroad as soon as possible. The inconvenience of editing and printing from opposite sides of an ocean is real: but the difficulties of distance in exchanging letters, despatching copy, checking proofs and designing layout, diminish with practice. I wish readers a happy New Year, thank them for past forbearance, and hope the *Journal* may continue in the future to have their vital support.

### PINK HUSSARS

An unheard-of theatrical event is billed in New York—*The Story of the Gadsbys*, adapted for the American stage. Joe Dunlap and I are to meet the producers and see the play. A report will follow. Meanwhile will any reader who knows of any previous staging of *The Gadsbys* please let me know.

### SLIP OF THE QUILL

In September I produced a faulty footnote on "Ham and the Porcupine". Miss Nicholson (p 30) had referred to a letter about the Hedgehog being later expanded into the Porcupine story. Coincidentally Mrs Lewis (p 45) sent me the original letter, and I spoke of the suggestion that the Hedgehog letter was the germ of the Porcupine story as *persuasive*. I might better have said *perceptive*, since Miss Nicholson, who in 1935 had typed both letter and story, and in 1979 had mentioned the connection, was the authority on the origin of these species.

### KIPLING JOURNAL APPEAL

Further generous donations, from *Mr M. J. Moynihan, Mr L. M. Scarratt, Mr A. Scheyer, Mr P. W. Wilmot-Dear* and *Sir Angus Wilson* have brought the total above £400. This response is warmly appreciated: it helped to keep us going in 1980. The Appeal remains open (cheques to the Editor, for *Kipling Society Journal Account*). If any member feels able to persuade any institution or corporation to support us with a gift or regular endowment (we are a Registered Charity), it would be very helpful.

### DICKENS AND KIPLING

I have usefully met the learned Editor of the *Dickensian*—our elder counterpart, on which more in a later issue. Here I just note that a reference to schizophrenia in a letter to our *Journal* of last March ("Kipling, Dickens and Disease") was confirmed in a fascinating article in the Spring 1980 *Dickensian* ("Mr Dick the Schizophrenic"), on Dickens's extraordinary insight into thought-disorder and postural change, in *David Copperfield*.

As to Dickens and Kipling, striking parallels exist. Both leapt from journalistic obscurity to be sudden household names at twenty-four. Both wrote as no one had before—though in 1890 Kipling was often compared with Dickens, and in 1891 an unauthorised New York edition of his 1889 travel letters was by no coincidence named *American Notes*, the title of Dickens's book of 1842. Acerbities about America in both, and similar strong views on copyright, brought both authors some notoriety.

Common ground in America was otherwise slight, and in India slighter still. Yet Dickens had two sons there—Walter in the Army from 1857 till his death in 1863, Frank in the Bengal Mounted Police from 1864-71. Had Dickens, who died at fifty-eight, lived on, his populist instinct must have swept him on that imperialist tide that rose in later years. *Edwin Drood*, unfinished at his death, has a strong whiff of orientalism, if not *thuggee*, and its 'Sapsea Fragment' describes Dr Peartree, "a brown hulking sort of revolutionary subject who had been in India with the soldiers and ought (for the sake of society) to have had his neck broke". (Was this a veiled allusion to the untimely death in a Calcutta hospital of the soldier son whose parting for India at the height of the Mutiny hurt Dickens like having "great teeth drawn with a wrench", and who never came back?)

Sir Angus Wilson, addressing a Foyles Literary Luncheon last July, took the opportunity (reported Peterborough in the *Daily Telegraph*, 16.7.80) to speak for a literature neither elitist nor low-brow. He attacked that school of literary criticism that preferred "clever puzzles" unconnected with life to the richness and diversity of great writers, specifically, in Sir Angus's view, Dickens and Kipling.

Parallels in Dickens and Kipling—their meteoric rise and unconventional literary energy—need not be pursued too far. Still, when one of our members has just written a brilliant solution to *Drood*, and another has reviewed it, I am very glad to print the review (p 42).

## NEW ADVERTISERS

I welcome our three newest advertisers, members of this Society. By taking space they help us: I hope readers will in return bestow their patronage.

Mr Ardley of *The Bookshop, Faversham* (p iii) issues useful catalogues of Kiplingana. I have been pleased by the price and condition of items he has sold me. He finds many uncommon ones—which sell out fast—but also carries most of Kipling's standard works, cheaper than new for filling gaps in sets.

*Anne Boyes* (p 48, also see June 1980 p 12) is in the quality class of binder of good books. Her notice may well bring custom more diverse than the binding of the *Journal*—though this does merit preserving in style, old issues being rare, and a long run valuable.

The third whom I commend, our first in U.S.A., is *Mr William F. Hale* (p 48), whose pleasant Georgetown shop in Washington DC has a most attractive range in classic travel books, literature and criticism. He has found me several wanted books, and Kipling oddities I never saw before.

## AND NEWS FROM OLDER ONES

*Hewett's* India Tour takes shape: I hope it will materialise. The framework now exists, at rates which daily look more moderate. Whether there will be enough candidates to fill it is the question. From the *National Trust*, we may soon have an article on Wimpole Hall. On *Brown's Hotel*, I am discussing with Mr B. P. Banister,

the helpful General Manager, some possible notes on the Kipling-Brown's connection, which began with the honeymoon in 1892 and ended with the final illness in 1936. Kipling used to write there: his table, newly restored, is now displayed in the lounge.

Mr Cheney of *Sherpa Trekking* writes eloquently from Kathmandu. He has surveyed new routes in the Tibetan borderland, "country unknown to Kipling" but accessible today. He depicts hill villages, a sequestered lamassery, forests of oak and pine and rhododendron, placid lakes below black cliffs, the crimson-horned Himalayan Pheasant skimming by through mist, barren sunlit hills above the tree-line, glaciers and peaks beyond. [Though Kipling never saw Nepal or Tibet, his evocation of the Himalayan scene is magical; his lama is among the serenest figures in fiction; even that glimpsed "Tibetan shrine, with frost in the air, one star on the tip of a mountain, and a brown-cloaked Bhotiyali rustling up through dry maize-stalks to sell a chicken" ("Some Aspects of Travel" in *A Book of Words*), is perfect in its taut economy.]

#### OBITUARY      Mr John Victor Carlson, Victoria, Australia

We announce with deep regret the sudden death on 6 September 1980 of Mr Vic Carlson, President of the Melbourne, Australia Branch of the Kipling Society. He became its Honorary Secretary in 1948, succeeding Mrs Grace Broughton, and served as such for nearly twenty-five years. In 1973 he succeeded Mr R. J. H. Walker as Branch President. In 1975 he was elected one of our Vice-Presidents, in token of his long service to the Society.

Mr Carlson had an outstanding memory, and ability to quote poetry. His dedication to, and knowledge of, Kipling was an inspiration to fellow-members of the Society in Australia. He was also much sought-after as a speaker at other Literary Societies. He was active, too, in other spheres—a Masonic Grand Master, a Life Member of the Amateur Football Association, President of the Royal Society of St George.

Mr A. L. Brend, Treasurer of the Melbourne Branch, kindly sent us material for this obituary notice. His letter, including a reference to Mr Carlson having been in the best sense "a walking example of sentiments and character portrayed by Kipling", and also letters from Mr L. A. Crozier and others in Australia, are testimony to the affection and respect in which Mr Carlson was widely held. We extend our sympathy to his family.

#### OBITUARY      Dr Howard C. Rice, Vermont, U.S.A.

We announce with deep regret the death in November 1980 of Dr Rice of Brattleboro, author of *Rudyard Kipling in New England*—also a distinguished teacher, academic librarian, and authority on French and English literature.

A fuller tribute is being prepared by Joe Dunlap of New York, for the next *Journal*. Dr Rice's death occurring when this present issue was in preparation, I wished to report it without delay. I was among the first to learn of it. I telephoned to consult Dr Rice about a trip to Brattleboro, and was shocked to hear he had just died. I speak for many members, especially those who have enjoyed his hospitality and profited from his expert knowledge of Kipling's American period and of other wider themes, in expressing sorrow at his death, with sympathy to his widow and relations.

## AN APPROACH TO KIPLING

by Professor SHAMSUL ISLAM

[On 9 July 1980 Professor Shamsul Islam, who is well-known as the author of *Kipling's 'Law'* and *Chronicles of the Raj*, and now lives in Canada, was due to address one of our Discussion Meetings in London, but was prevented by illness. However, he sent us his speaking text which, with minimal alteration, has been adapted into the article which follows. We are glad to publish it as throwing light on the origin of an interest in Kipling, on the part of someone who went on to become an eloquent authority on the subject.

Shamsul Islam was born in 1941 at Amritsar, and educated at Government College and Panjab University, Lahore. He proceeded to a second MA and a PhD at McGill, by way of a formative reading reconnaissance and later a research fellowship at the great Kipling Collection named after James McG. Stewart at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. After a brief Associate Professorship in Tehran, and a longer period back at Panjab University where he became Chairman of the English Department, and a stint of research in England, and teaching attachments in Canada (at McGill and the Université de Montreal), he was appointed to his present position as Professor of English at Vanier College, Montreal. He is married, with a Canadian wife and one daughter: he now has Canadian as well as Pakistani citizenship.

Professor Shamsul Islam was a frequent contributor to the *Kipling Journal* some years ago: we hope he will resume the practice. Regarding a possible next book he is understandably reticent, but we gather his mind may be turning to comparisons between Kipling and Conrad. Perhaps he would care to try some of his thoughts in this *Journal*, first. *Ed.*]

### ORIGIN OF A DOCTORAL THESIS

Like Kim, I used to play hide-and-seek round Kim's Gun *Zamzamah* in Lahore, in front of the *Ajaib Ghar*—the Wonder House, or Museum. But although my acquaintance with Kipling goes back to my childhood it was not until some twenty years later, when faced with submitting a research proposal to the McGill Graduate Faculty, that I first seriously thought of working on Kipling. If I now focus on the origin of my interest, and the background to my two books *Kipling's 'Law'*<sup>1</sup> and *Chronicles of the Raj*,<sup>2</sup> this will perhaps best indicate my position on Kipling.

At that time my knowledge of Kipling did not extend beyond a hazy idea about *Kim* which I had read way back in school; I also knew that he had worked on the Lahore *Civil & Military Gazette*, and that he was generally dismissed as a propagandist for British imperialism. I now decided to *read* Kipling, and I spent summer 1965 at the

Stewart Kipling Collection at Dalhousie University, Halifax. At the end of the summer I had made my decision to write my doctoral dissertation on Kipling.

My reasons for this decision were:- *First*, Kipling was born in the Subcontinent, and worked in Lahore as an editor, so there was a sense of fellow-citizenship. *Second*, the most important part of his work was about the Panjab and Northern India, an area on which I could say something with confidence. *Third*, his admiration for Muslims and Islam drew me towards him. *Fourth*, what really clinched my choice was his controversial status in literature. I always like a good fight, and I thought—here was my chance.

#### FOR KIPLING, OR AGAINST?

The only question was on which side I should fight. Perhaps I should elaborate this. Kipling is one of those writers who evoke idolatrous admiration or bitter condemnation—there seems to be no middle way. It would indeed be possible to construct a kind of graph of Kipling criticism. In 1890, not yet twenty-five, Kipling awoke one day to find himself famous, though this was to be an uneasy sort of fame. Since he was the first effective chronicler of Anglo-India and the Raj he was immediately hailed as the bard of the tribe. The persistent political approach to the author was a problem from the start. The Kipling detractors appeared alongside the Kipling enthusiasts, and they did a fine job of demolishing Kipling: by the turn of the century he was dismissed as a jingo imperialist, a vulgar and superficial writer.

In the twenties and thirties he was almost forgotten. In 1941, five years after his death, T. S. Eliot could write of him as a "neglected celebrity", though he did much by the Preface to his *Choice of Kipling's Verse*<sup>3</sup> to stimulate a reconsideration—as did the essays of George Orwell,<sup>4</sup> Edmund Wilson<sup>5</sup> and later Lionel Trilling.<sup>6</sup> The fifties and sixties saw a gradual shift in Kipling's position in the literary world when serious, scholarly attention was paid to the artistry and complexity of his later, non-political work, in an effort to rehabilitate him as a first-rate creative artist. The work of Dr J. M. S. Tompkins<sup>7</sup> is notable in this regard.

However, critics were generally afraid to tackle his *ideas*, which continued (and still do) to be a source of embarrassment, particularly to those who had developed a kind of guilt-complex about the Empire. So there was a lack of judicious, comprehensive, critical

analysis of Kipling's thought, which remains controversial. I thought I could attempt, to a certain extent, to fill this gap, even if "the riddle of Kipling", to use Noel Annan's words,<sup>8</sup> remains yet to be solved.

I must add that I also took a look at the Indians<sup>9</sup> who had written on Kipling, and I found them unified in their condemnation for his lack of understanding of India, and for his imperialistic outlook. Almost all of these voices were Hindu, Bengali to be exact. So at that initial stage of my research (when I had not thoroughly read him) I thought to launch an *attack* on Kipling from the Pakistani Muslim side, in order to complete the picture.

#### MISCONCEPTION AND UNPOPULARITY

As I began to read and understand Kipling—in this respect I owe much to Dr Tompkins who supervised my work—I became increasingly sceptical of the soundness of my assault, and I started asking myself a few questions. *Was Kipling really a racist and a jingo? Was imperialism his central theme, or was he concerned with issues that went beyond? Was he as superficial as he was supposed to be?* As I read through him I became convinced that Kipling was not as bad as he was made out; that though he was an imperialist and a conservative, his imperialism could not be equated with British Imperialism alone; that imperialism did not constitute his total view of life; that a complex of ideas he termed "the Law" was central to his works; that he was a writer of depth and vision; and that most of the popular notions about him were largely mistaken.

I will illustrate the last of these points. Most popular views about Kipling are based on excerpts or quotations taken out of context, for extra-literary judgments. Take for instance the well known lines from the beginning and end of "The Ballad of East and West" (1889):

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall  
meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment  
Seat ...*

Every schoolboy knows these lines, which are regarded as proof of Kipling's racism: very few know that the poem is a celebration of brotherhood rather than a declaration of *apartheid*. Here Kipling

sings of the nobility and heroism of Kamal, a fierce Pathan freebooter, who becomes blood-brother to the Colonel's son. Kipling goes on to comment:

*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor  
Birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come  
from the ends of the earth!*

Although the sales of his books show that he was never really unpopular with the public,<sup>10</sup> there are of course certain obvious reasons for Kipling's unpopularity with the literary pundits. In some ways he stood for much that was wholly against the time. He mocked at aestheticism. He appeared as the prophet of the Empire. He had been a friend of Cecil Rhodes. He was a journalist, who focussed on two areas sure to bring him into trouble—the Army, and the Indian Civil Service. His picture of debauched Simla society could not endear him to Anglo-Indians. His anti-democratic stance, and pooh-poohing of the Indian National Congress, were enough to anger liberals and nationalists. There were other causes of offence. He was not "religious": in fact, while showing tolerant approval of Eastern religions, he was described as godless. He disapproved of Christian missionaries. He also disapproved of mixed marriages—and western-educated Indians. In spite of an American bride he had his quarrels with the Americans. And he held certain views not relished by supporters of the women's liberation movement. One can go on and on. Naturally he was not going to be very popular with everybody.

#### "THE LAW"—A CENTRAL THEME

My work on Kipling is not an apology for Kipling. It is an attempt to study dispassionately the complex of ideas he calls "the Law", which I believe is his central though most neglected concept. Kipling's "Law" was not confined to any particular body of enactments, but was a universal principle of Order, at both social and individual levels, laying upon men the obligations of disinterested suffering and positive action. The concept had its origin in the circumstances of his early training in India and England, though Indian influence remains decisive. Kipling's need for such a concept or philosophy is related to his temperament or outlook, his experience of profound despondency and frustration, and his sense of the hostility of the



universe and of the role of the Dark Powers in life. Against the pull of philosophic nihilism, the Law is a weapon and a defence. It is similar in many ways to the Hemingway code, and I have reason to believe that Hemingway was influenced by Kipling's Law.

This is what I think is fundamental in Kipling. Seen in these terms, he becomes relevant to the twentieth century, for the modern artist is also preoccupied with the irrationality and chaos of existence.

#### KIPLING'S IMPERIAL IDEA

The imperial idea—one of the bases of the Law—has been the source of much trouble for Kipling's critics and readers. He has too often been condemned for being an *imperialist* and a *racist*. I have dealt with the two issues at length in both of my books. There is no denying that Kipling was an imperialist, but one must draw a distinction between imperialism in general and Kipling's concept of Empire, his imperial idea. It may not be easy to do so, for Kipling does perceive traces of the imperial idea in the British Raj; hence the Empire becomes another instrument for establishing the Law.

Another obstacle in coming to terms with Kipling's imperialism is his failure to understand economic exploitation as the basis of colonialism. As Orwell has put it, Kipling does not understand that "an empire is primarily a money-making concern", and that "the map is painted red chiefly in order that the coolie may be exploited"; but then, as Orwell himself acknowledges, Kipling's imperialism, as opposed to the modern "gangster outlook", could be idealistic, romantic and gentlemanly despite its faults:

The imperialism of the eighties and nineties was sentimental, ignorant and dangerous, but it was not entirely despicable. The picture then called up by the word 'empire' was a picture of overworked officials and frontier skirmishes, not of Lord Beaverbrook and Australian butter. It was still possible to be an imperialist and a gentleman, and of Kipling's personal decency there can be no doubt.

I think that Orwell overstates the case, and here he is showing his own admiration for the romantic side of the Raj. However, his points about Kipling's idealism, and the need for a historical perspective, are well taken. One must also remember that despite his championship of

the Empire, Kipling was one of the most severe critics of Britain and the *sahibs* who ran the magnificent machinery of the Raj.

Moreover, the imperial idea is only a *part* of Kipling's complex vision: it does not constitute his total view of life. The imperial idea, as Alan Sandison<sup>11</sup> has aptly observed, is not essentially creative, though it can be used as a medium for the expression of one's artistic vision. This is precisely what Kipling has suggested. A profound sense of the onslaught of the Dark Powers, of man's helplessness before these negative forces, but of his need to defeat these formidable powers, creates the essential tension in Kipling's work. Thus, for Kipling, the imperial idea becomes another instrument of the Law—that code with which one can fight against the Dark Powers.

#### A QUALIFIED RACE-CONSCIOUSNESS

As far as the charge of *racism* is concerned, one can easily refute it, though one must at the same time admit that a very heightened and at times annoying race-consciousness is certainly there; but Kipling could not help going with this spirit of his times. It is for example true that he sees certain virtues in Anglo-Saxon blood; and he advocates the desirability of keeping to one's race, caste or creed; Englishmen who "go native" in his works always suffer terribly; and love affairs between Englishmen and Indian girls in his tales always end tragically.

But this is not the whole picture. His race-consciousness does not degenerate to the level of racial bigotry, or fascism, preached and practised by some of his contemporaries. "Natives" often hold positions of respect in his stories. At times Kipling frankly recognises their superiority over the English. Gunga Din is a better man than the average Tommy. The Sudanese "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" are worthy of admiration as excellent fighters. In matters of religion the East is way ahead of the West: Christianity for instance cuts a sorry figure in Kipling's Indian work.

And then there is *Kim*, the finest novel written in English about India, which gives the lie to Kipling's much-publicised racism, or imperialism. Here, although the framework is that of the imperial game of espionage and counter-espionage, the main focus of the novel is on the humanity, spirituality and timelessness of India. The

central figure of this novel is no sabre-rattling Tommy, no civil servant toiling in the remote corners of the Empire. The real protagonist here is India, who reveals herself in diverse ways—in the never-ceasing hustle and bustle of the Grand Trunk Road; in the saint-like person of Teshoo Lama in search of his River of the Arrow, where he expects to find his *nirvana*; in the glamorous and masculine world of Mahbub Ali, the Pathan horse-dealer of Lahore; and even in Kim, the white-faced boy who can pass for either Hindu or Muslim.

The theme of the novel is not the acquisition of empire, but Kim's search for identity, closely tied with the Lama's quest for annihilation of identity. Kim, though he chooses the world of action represented by Mahbub Ali, is more deeply influenced by the Search than by the Great Game: his spiritual and moral awakening is the direct result of the Lama's gentle influence. So *Kim*, and Kipling's genuine love for India, seriously modify his stereotyped images of India and the Raj.

The point is that one need be neither blind admirer of Kipling nor bitter enemy. There *can* be a middle way. My work on Kipling is an attempt at charting this middle course. I make a plea for a dispassionate, more historical, less hysterical reading of Kipling. This is not difficult to do today, when the British Empire is dead and gone, and in his own prophetic words

Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre.

#### EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Macmillan, London, 1975.
2. Macmillan, London, 1979.
3. Faber & Faber, 1941.
4. From *Critical Essays*, Secker & Warburg, 1946. See note 12.

5. From *The Wound and the Bow*, Houghton Mifflin, 1941. See note 12.
6. From *The Liberal Imagination*, Secker & Warburg, 1951. See note 12.
7. Notably *The Art of Rudyard Kipling*, Methuen, 1959.
8. From *Victorian Studies*, Vol III, 1959-60. See note 12.
9. Some of these Indian commentators are listed in *Kipling's 'Law'*, pp 3-4. They include A. R. Sarath Roy (*N. American Review*, Feb 1914); 'An Indian Student' (*Lippincott's Monthly*, Aug 1914); Bhupal Singh (*A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction*, London, 1934); K. Bhaskara Rao (*Rudyard Kipling's India*, Oklahoma Univ, 1967); and, an exception to the trend, Nirad Chaudhuri's appreciation of *Kim* in *Encounter* (Apr 1957).
10. See Appendix 4 on "Kipling's Earnings", in Carrington's *Rudyard Kipling* (3rd ed, Macmillan, 1978), which interestingly illustrates the near-truism that though unfashionable with literary intellectuals Kipling sold consistently well throughout his writing life and long after his death, to a wide reading public. That he earned £1m, which he invested wisely, from book sales; that much of his best work has never been out of print; that *Barrack-Room Ballads* for instance was reprinted at least once a year from 1892 to 1965, should be recalled, while his critical disrepute from 1900 to 1940 is acknowledged. Such incorrigible popularity may well have increased the irritation hostile critics felt, perhaps inflaming some of their more violent judgments, such as Orwell's—"It is no use pretending that Kipling's view of life, as a whole, can be accepted or even forgiven by any civilised person". Similar sweeping sillinesses, uttered by G. B. Shaw, H. E. Bates, and many others, darken counsel in what ought to be an area of objective debate, in which no doubt some damaging critical and political arguments against Kipling can be persuasively made.
11. From *The Wheel of Empire*, Macmillan, 1967. See note 12.
12. Essays on Kipling in the volumes mentioned in notes 4, 5, 6, 8 and 11 were collected, with several others, in the useful critical assemblage entitled *Kipling's Mind and Art*, ed Andrew Rutherford (Oliver & Boyd, 1964).

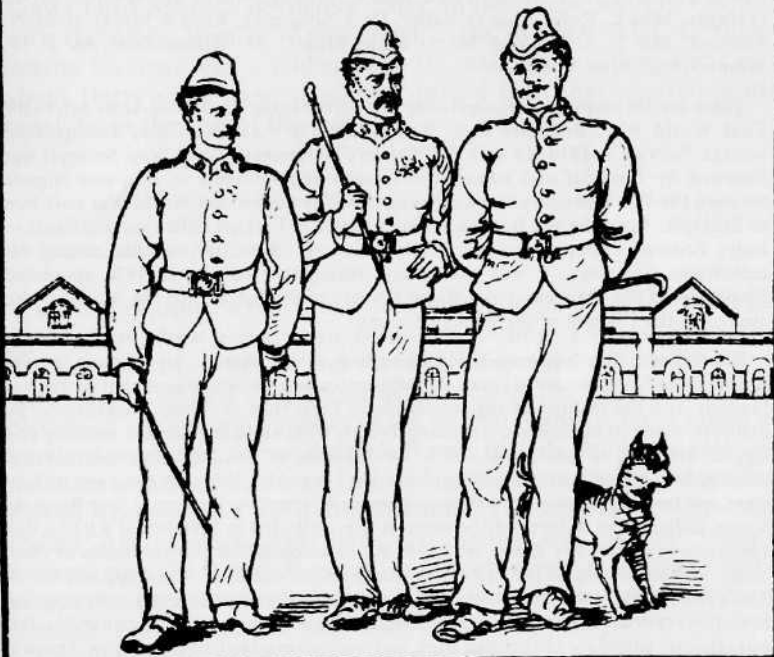
#### NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATION OPPOSITE

The cover of *Soldiers Three*, 1st (Indian) edn, 1888, with (1 to r) Privates Ortheris, Mulvaney and Learoyd, in barrack setting. The dog could be one of several, e.g. "Learoyd's Jock and Ortheris's Blue Rot—both mongrel Rampur hounds, chiefly ribs and teeth" ["The Solid Muldoon"].

The drawing, from the Mayo School of Art, Lahore [attribution in 2nd edn], though ascribed by Martindell to Lockwood Kipling the School's Principal, has less than his usual expressive delicacy in black-and-white. In successive printing the plate was retouched and much improved, though some changes—Learoyd's heftier stick, the dog's cocked paw—seem gratuitous.

This was No 1 of Kipling's six slim volumes in the *Indian Railway Library*, grey-green paperbacks priced at a rupee. *Soldiers Three*, later commonly published with *The Story of the Gadsbys* and *In Black & White*, was initially separate. Six of its seven stories had lately appeared in the *Week's News*, the Allahabad *Pioneer's* magazine supplement edited by Kipling. He was still obscure. Even in early 1890 a 4th (Indian) edition sold poorly enough to be remaindered, half-price. But now he had reached England, and soon the *éclat* of his reputation made them collectors' pieces.

# SOLDIERS THREE



BY

*Rudyard Kipling*

ONE RUPEE

## A FOURTH SOLDIER

by BRIGADIER F. E. STAFFORD

[At a meeting on 10 September 1980 Brigadier Stafford spoke on *The Fourth Soldier: a soldierly glance at Kipling's stories of the Soldiers Three*. Mr J. H. McGivering was in the chair. Others present included Revd A. R. Ankers; Mr D. S. Cottrell; Mr J. R. Gambling; Prof Elliot L. Gilbert; Mr H. R. Harlow; Miss A. M. Jackson; Mrs L. A. F. Lewis; Lt-Col C. H. T. MacFetridge; Miss C. Mundy; Mrs G. H. Newsom; Mr R. O'Hagan; Miss C. Rolfe; Miss D. Salter; Mr J. Shearman; Revd & Mrs G. H. McN. Shelford; Mrs F. E. Stafford; Mr S. Wade; Miss C. M. Wilmot-Dear; Mr P. W. Wilmot-Dear; Miss J. With.

There are not many men around today who served in the Territorial Army before the First World War. Brigadier F. E. Stafford, C.M.G., C.B.E. is of that distinguished vintage. Service in 1914-18 with the "Queen's" Regiment (Royal West Surreys) was followed by financial and administrative civil appointments in Iraq and Nigeria between the Wars. Military service during and after the Second World War took him to Ethiopia, Australia and Borneo. He later served in Foreign Office appointments to Italy, Eritrea, Ethiopia and the United Nations. Since he includes among his recreations *hagiology*, it was particularly fitting that he was in 1978 appointed Chairman of the Council of the Royal Society of St George. He has recently been elected to the Council of the Kipling Society.

His theme is that some of Kipling's earliest soldier stories, for all their literary brilliance and circumstantial detail, contain inaccuracies which suggest that he was less familiar with the realities of regimental life in India than is commonly assumed: by contrast, many of his ballads, stemming directly from authentic barrack memory and legend, are hard to fault. It is well to be reminded of this large and controversial subject, over which inconclusive argument has ranged for years, by someone with so clear and long a memory. He has been necessarily selective, looking at four Barrack-Room Ballads and at three of the seven stories collected in 1888 (when Kipling was twenty-two) as *Soldiers Three*. He leaves out of account four shorter stories in *Plain Tales*, and all but one of the half-dozen much longer stories of Mulvaney and Co. in *Life's Handicap*, *Many Inventions* and *Actions and Reactions*. He explicitly abstains from literary criticism, and confines himself to the question of military plausibility. His talk, slightly edited for the printed page, and with notes added, follows below. I hope it will stimulate other old soldiers to the defence or assault of his theme. *Ed.]*

### THE DRUMS BEGIN TO ROLL

In 1900, when I was a small boy in Brighton, a song called "The Absent-Minded Beggar" was being sung the length and breadth of Britain, in the upsurge of patriotic fervour aroused by our serious early setbacks in the Boer War. This wave of patriotism, amongst other things, sent "Fifty thousand horse and foot going to Table

Bay". I even chanted it myself in company with other small boys marching up and down in the gutters. (We also sang very rude rhymes about an old gentleman in a top hat with a beard, whom we called "Old Kruger".<sup>1</sup>) I sang it with greater gusto because my father was one of the fifty thousand who went to Table Bay. He didn't come back. That was my initiation to eighty years of Kipling.

My next stage was when the god of War landed me in India as a soldier of the King, and I became a "single man in barracks". This was October 1914. My battalion were Territorials: we had been turned into full-time soldiers overnight, three months earlier, and were posted to the Havelock Barracks, Lucknow, to take over from the King's Own Scottish Borderers. They, in their turn, went to France with the other Regular Army units, most of them, alas, to their deaths. So there was I, soldiering in the wake of Mulvaney and Co., about thirty years later—a shorter period than that separating us today from the end of the last war.

#### IN INJIA'S SUNNY CLIME

Kipling explored a rich vein in soldiery and soldiering. His writings about them show a real sense of understanding. The soldier rarely formed a butt for the wit and sarcasm he sprayed on the "heaven-born" in India, and on politicians as a class. I want to talk of his picture of the common soldier of the British Army in India about a hundred years ago, in the Barrack-Room Ballads and in the tales of the three soldiers, Mulvaney, Learoyd and Ortheris. In those days the British Army in India was a combination of two separate armies—the Indian Army which had, basically, British officers and Indian soldiers, and the British Regular, or Crown, Army made up of units of all arms recruited in the United Kingdom, with no fighting Indian element. I am concerned only with the Crown Army.

I would like to make it clear that my remarks are not in the nature of literary analysis or criticism: they merely reflect my personal experiences in the surroundings of the stories, some years later. I would also like to pay tribute to Charles Carrington: his edition of *The Complete Barrack-Room Ballads* with its explanatory notes,<sup>2</sup> and his great biography with its comments on the ballads and stories<sup>3</sup>, are authoritative, informative and invaluable.

Anyway, there I was, a newly-promoted Corporal in barracks in India, in surroundings just as Kipling had described. Outwardly, conditions of service and life on the square did not seem to have greatly changed. The setting, the barracks, the parade grounds, the

Indian camp-followers, the inexorable daily military routine, the smells and heat of India, could hardly have altered. This became more and more clear.

The KOSB had already gone, leaving a rearguard to do the handing over. Among them were some very old soldiers indeed, of some twenty years service, wearing Boer War medal ribbons. Without doubt they were genuine old soldiers: after they had left, many of the useful items of personal property which they had sold at reasonable prices to our young soldiers had to be handed in as they were Government property. One of them, in true Ortheris tradition, had even sold to our Medical Officer the prized pet dog of the Cantonment Magistrate. These were men who could possibly have taken over a barrack-room cot from Mulvaney, and in turn handed it over to me: I mention this to show that I have a connecting link with Kipling's soldiers.

*I SMELT THE SMELL O' THE BARRICKS, I 'EARD THE BUGLES GO*

There were however two major differences between us and the "Ould Regiment"<sup>4</sup> of Mulvaney. We as individuals were demonstrably different from the earlier soldiers. We were civilians voluntarily turned into soldiers for the express purpose of fighting a war, not in order to earn a living. They were professionals, many of them driven to join the army, to "go for a soldier", as a last resort—

I'm 'ere in a tickly ulster an' a broken billycock 'at,  
A-layin' on to the sergeant I don't know a gun from a bat ...

Our life in barracks was not as harsh and rough as Kipling says it was thirty years earlier, yet there was, for us, no relaxation of discipline or lessening of military standards. We had hard-bitten staff from our regular battalion in authority over us, to ensure that the honour of our proud regiment was not sullied. But even thirty years earlier life could not have been all that harsh. We find, for example, Dinah Shadd, an ex-private's wife, when in England yearning for the servant she had had in India<sup>5</sup>. There was in fact an army of Indian servants anxious to give personal service at a price within the means of the rank and file; clothes could be washed and pressed, footwear polished, rooms cleaned and swept; there was tea at gunfire (the morning cuppa), there was even the barber, the *nappi*, to shave the soldier while he was still in bed at reveille. We had all this. These



services may not have been quite as well organised thirty years earlier, but they were undoubtedly available. Our basic pay was one shilling a day, which was the same rate as applied to Mulvaney.

A much more significant difference was that although we had our lines of "married quarters", there were no families in them. There were no resident women to bring passions to the boil, leading to adultery and murder—to " 'Love 'o Women' ", Danny Deever style executions, or other tragedies.

We served there for twelve months, but even when the battalion left India and went on active service to Mesopotamia, we did not leave the Kipling atmosphere. We went as part of an Indian Division, alongside troops and animals of the Indian Army, savouring the same heat, smells and dust, chasing not "Paythans" but Turks and Arabs, who had nevertheless equally deplorable ways of showing their dislike of us .. I had plenty of time to wonder how much authenticity there was in Kipling's soldier stories—how much of what he wrote could *actually* have happened, how much could *possibly* have happened, and how much was so fictional that it could *not* have happened.

AND I KNOW SHE THINKS O' ME

I begin with the very popular ballad, "The Ladies"—

I've taken my fun where I've found it;  
I've rogued and I've ranged in my time;  
I've 'ad my pickin' o' sweet'earths,  
An' four o' the lot was prime ...

I like it personally for its rhythm and cynical philosophy. It does not involve Mulvaney, but it is pertinent to the study of Kipling's soldier stories. Most of us know the song: but who is the singer?

Older than me, but my first un—  
More like a mother she were—  
Showed me the way to promotion an' pay,  
An' I learned about women from 'er!

He could not have been a soldier of the Line. An Army unit was tightly constructed and closely administered with its own rigid hierarchy. Discipline was strict and punishment severe. The singer of

this song who on his return to England is

sittin' and thinkin',  
And dreamin' Hell-fires to see

(a rather harsh retribution, I feel, for his liaisons), was no ordinary soldier. No common soldier would have had even a sniff of an opportunity of dallying with all, or any, of the four disparate females on his list—

One was an 'arf-caste widow,  
One was a woman at Prome,  
One was the wife of a *jemadar-sais*,<sup>6</sup>  
An' one is a girl at 'ome

even had he been stationed in the widely distant places he names. He would have been living in barracks under discipline. In Burma, even if he had got the job of "Actin' in charge of Bazar", which was not a regimental duty, he could not have "lived on the square, like a true-married pair", with his

Funny an' yellow an' faithful  
Doll in a teacup—

nor would he have been able to be "buyin' supplies off 'er pa", since the Commissariat, usually of the Indian Service, would have seen to that. As for his last amatory adventure—

Then I come 'ome in the trooper,  
'Long of a kid o' sixteen—  
Girl from a convent at Meerut,  
The straightest I ever 'ave seen—

this ignores the conditions prevailing in an Army troopship of those days. "Love at first sight was 'er trouble", but was he not rather old for that? and what was *she* doing there? and was there no parent or guardian to keep an eye on such a tender flower in the cramped conditions of a ship full of lusty soldiers, many of them time-expired? No, the ballad is more a parable than a narrative.

Turn now to another popular ballad, "Mandalay"—sung by a



BACK COVER DESIGN: *SOLDIERS THREE*, 1ST (INDIAN) EDITION

This, like the front cover (p 19), was later retouched and refined. However its crude bold impact does accord with the down-to-earth tone of *Soldiers Three*. Today, conditioned by a revolution of taste, we may forget how revolutionary in 1888 was literary depiction of the realities of barrack life. Brutality and squalor in Kipling's soldiers' tales and ballads jarred violently on some sensibilities, particularly of the aesthetic and "decadent" schools whose narcissism was encapsulated in the provocative maxims of Wilde—"Art never expresses anything but itself. They were uneasy, if not hostile, when Kipling "burst on the scene like a typhoon. It was now the turn of the shockers to be shocked. 'We are in the midst of one of the most cynically impudent triumphs of Philistinism the world has seen', wrote Richard Le Gallienne in dismay ..."<sup>1</sup>

Others were refreshed. The *Spectator*, reviewing *Soldiers Three*, found "no inanities of the officers' mess, no apotheosis of the gilded and tawny-moustachioed dragoon, no languid and lispng lancer ... The actualities of barrack-room life are not extenuated ... The author does not gloss over the animal tendencies of the British private, but he shows how in the grossest natures sparks of nobility may lie ..." *The Times* found the descriptions "brilliant", "gruesome", "lurid", and the *Soldiers Three* "admirable specimens of their class and profession, and interesting by the tenacity of their affection for one another".<sup>2</sup>

Many literary figures were captivated. Some few even thought Kipling's vulgar realism inadequate. The versatile and fastidious John Addington Symonds wrote in December 1889 to Arthur Symons, a poet of the aesthetic school, "You do not seem to think that 'an unusual insight into the average soldier's nature' is a very extraordinary gift. I regard it as almost priceless. Only I fear that Kipling has dressed up his soldiers with more of literary buckram than they ought to have. He knows the barrack-room. He has not given it *Cru* [crudity]."<sup>3</sup>

1. From Donald Davidson's Introduction to *British Poetry of the Eighteen-Nineties* (Doubleday, Doran, New York, 1937). Le Gallienne later much moderated his views.
2. From the leading article of 25 March 1890, anonymous but by Humphrey Ward.
3. From the *Letters of John Addington Symonds*, vol 3.



*DON'T GROW INTO PLASTER SAINTS*

Take now "With the Main Guard" [*Soldiers Three*]. Guard duty was a vital part of military life in the infantry, and was taken very seriously. The parading, the mounting, the relief of sentries, particularly in the case of the Main Guard, were subject to precise ceremony, movement and conduct. This guard was usually set from sunset to sunset, and was on duty for the whole twenty-four hours. In this story there is only one indication that there was anyone in charge of the guard. An unauthorised civilian (Kipling) was allowed to wander in and out of the Guard Room as he pleased—in another story he even turns out the guard<sup>9</sup>; rifles were tossed carelessly from bed to bed; water was sloshed about; and in general the behaviour of the guard would have given even a scoutmaster hiccups. This is ascribed to the *heat*.

The heat under the bricked archway was terrifying.

"The worrst night that iver I remimber. Eyah ! Is all Hell loose this tide?" said Mulvaney. A puff of burning wind lashed through the wicket-gate like a wave of the sea, and Ortheris swore ...

More than once I was on similar guard duty myself, in the plains, at the height of the hot weather. The heat at night was trying, but in my experience never drove men to the depths of despair, or a guard to behave, in the way described. At dawn, while

over the bastions of Fort Amara broke the pitiless day

some members of the guard, without being dismissed, ambled away to the swimming-bath—a luxury we did not enjoy.

*WE AREN'T NO THIN RED 'EROES*

In the same story, the tale of the fight with the Pathans at "Silver's Theatre", which Mulvaney told to keep up the morale of the others, is not only militarily incomprehensible, but farcical as well as tragic<sup>10</sup>. A mixed force of about two hundred men, drawn from both the "Ould Regiment" and the Black Tyrone, in which Mulvaney had previously served, had only two officers, a Captain and a very young subaltern. From a dominating position they rushed down into a *nullah* or

ravine, and indulged in uncontrolled hand-to-hand fighting, so tightly packed that Pathans and soldiers were jammed up against one another, eyeball to eyeball, scarcely able to move. In such stabbing, cut-and-slash conditions, followed by some shooting later, the carnage must have been dreadful. The casualty list is not given, but it is hard to believe the soldiers enjoyed it as much as Mulvaney says they did.

"Captain dear," sez a man av the Tyrone, comin' up wid his mouth bigger than iver his mother kissed ut, spitting blood like a whale ... "if wan or two in the shtalls have been dishcommoded, the gallery have enjoyed the performinces av a Roshus."<sup>11</sup>

The NCOs seem to have had no control, but at the end a Sergeant is found sitting on the head of the subaltern to keep him out of harm, and this is in harmony with the general conduct of the engagement. This unlikely incident has a sequel in the later story "'Love 'o Women'" [*Many Inventions*].

#### NOR WE AREN'T NO BLACKGUARDS TOO

I take now "In the Matter of a Private" [*Soldiers Three*]. This also stems from the heat and boredom of men in barracks, but it contains the surprising statement that all work in the regiment was over at eight in the morning, after which the men had nothing to do but lie on their cots until sundown. Hot weather or blizzard, no military unit in India or anywhere else could function like that. Training of various kinds went on, guards and fatigues went on, there was always arms and equipment and clothing to be kept clean and spotless. Despite what is said in the story, it was never too hot, save for a couple of hours in the middle of the day, for games or exercise of some sort. Swimming in the bath, for instance! I do not know what organised games they had a hundred years ago, although cricket is mentioned in one of the ballads, but I do know how *our* days were spent in barracks. I should explain that we too had no electricity, no refrigerators, no fans, no mosquito nets; lighting was by oil lamps; water was kept cool in large earthenware jars; and the only movement of the air came from the lazy pulling of the punkah-wallahs. Our mid-day meal was based on the same basic ration of 1 lb of meat and 1 lb of bread per day per soldier, and was probably about the same as the Army cooks produced thirty years earlier. I mention this to show that

conditions had not changed much.

We thanked the Lord for one thing: being nominally a Rifle battalion we had black buttons and badges, which did not need polishing. Our sister battalion had brass ones. Nevertheless, while maintaining that the torment in the story is exaggerated, it is possible to understand the fraying of tempers and the festering of grudges in the close confines of the barrack-rooms. In this story Private Simmons, the unfortunate soldier who was driven berserk by being bullied—

'Simmons, ye *so-oor*,<sup>12</sup> chuckled the parrot in the verandah—

and who shot Losson, his tormentor—

'Get up, Losson, an' don't lie shammin' there—you an' your blasted parrit that druv me to it!'—

was "hanged ... as high as Haman in hollow square of the Regiment"; the Colonel's name was Deever.

"Black Jack" [*Soldiers Three*] is another story of intrigue and temper in the barrack-room. It tells of a plot by a group of twelve soldiers to murder a hated Colour-Sergeant. They feared Mulvaney, who lived in the same dormitory, and conspired to frame him for the crime by firing the shot from his rifle. This was when he was serving in the Black Tyrone, the twelve being "Black Oirish"—"the scum av the earth—the pickin's av the gutther" as he said. By good fortune he overheard the crime being planned, while he was sleeping off the effects of too much beer in some long grass in the cantonment area. How he turns the tables on them is an exciting tale which, after finishing the humiliating stint of pack-drill to which I have already alluded, he tells to his two comrades. However, in each barrack-room lived NCOs, one in full charge, responsible for good order. The gang of twelve could not possibly have made their preparations, nor interfered with the rifles, without being noticed: nor could Mulvaney. Also the rack of arms would be kept locked; and rifles were standard issue, despite the talk of Mulvaney's unmistakable "long-shtocked, cross-eyed bitch" of a gun; his rifle would have been the same as the others. He was able to take out his rifle, tamper with the breech-block, take the bullet out of a live cartridge to make it an explosive blank, and put it all back with nobody noticing it—so that at the appropriate moment it blew half the firer's face away. Technically it may have just been feasible, but I doubt if any of it could have

happened. No NCO appeared after the murderous shot was fired, and again the only officer involved in the aftermath was the ubiquitous Colonel.

*'WHAT MAKES YOU LOOK SO WHITE, SO WHITE?'*

In "Black Jack" too it is made clear that the penalty for shooting a fellow-soldier is hanging in the hollow square. Ortheris even describes how Mulvaney would look, *à la* "Danny Deever", before execution, if he had been provoked into shooting Mullins, the NCO who had falsely accused him—

'Yes,' said Ortheris calmly, 'you'd look fine with all your buttons took orf, an' the Band in front o' you, walkin' roun' slow time. We're both front-rank men, me an' Jock, when the Rig'ment's in 'ollow square. Bloomin' fine you'd look. "The Lord giveth an' the Lord taketh awai,—Heasy with that there drop!—Blessed be the naime o' the Lord.'" He gulped in a quaint and suggestive fashion.

There are other stories I would like to comment on—notably the deplorable mixture in "The Drums of the Fore and Aft" [*Wee Willie Winkie*]<sup>13</sup>—but I must confine myself to that minor masterpiece "Love o' Women". In it there are two stories, one in the framework of the other. 'Love o' Women' himself is the main story, but I am more interested in the framework one. Raines, "a quiet, well-conducted Sergeant", shoots at and kills, in barracks, in broad daylight, one of his own Corporals, and then calmly waits to be arrested. The killing is a *crime passionel* brought on by the Corporal making no secret of an affair with the Sergeant's wife. Ortheris says he was talking to the Sergeant on the verandah when the Corporal appeared and made a jeering remark—

' "Well," sez 'e, " 'ave they pushed your 'elmet off yet, Sergeant?" 'e sez. An' at that Raines 'e catches 'is breath an' 'e sez, "My Gawd, I can't stand this !" sez 'e an' 'e picks up my rifle an' shoots Mackie. See ?'

When Ortheris is asked by Kipling what he was doing with his rifle on the verandah an hour after parade, he says he was cleaning it, an unlikely story:<sup>14</sup> yet still more unlikely is it that he would leave it



casually lying about, with a bullet up the spout. Nobody at the trial asked about that.

The interesting part is that after the Sergeant was put under military arrest he was handed over to the Civil High Court to be dealt with. At the trial, because his men liked him, they slanted the evidence in his favour, and he received the comparatively light sentence of two years imprisonment in a civil jail. Had he been found guilty of murder, for which the prosecution pressed, he would have been hanged, by the civil authorities.

I have already mentioned the ritual executions carried out on military parade for barrack shootings, as Kipling calls them. Yet Sergeant Raines, who had done no less than Private Simmons, did not go to Court Martial, but was handed over to civil justice under the Indian Penal Code. Kipling tells this story in the first person; and in *Something of Myself* he mentions having attended, as a reporter, trials of military men in the civil court, including one for murder<sup>15</sup>. Then why, in so many of the *Soldiers Three* stories, is there specific reference to military executions for shootings in barracks? As the Raines story makes clear, murder was not a military crime but an offence against civil law. Such offences could not be dealt with by the military, except when troops were on active service, or far removed from a civil court, and even then the sentence had to be confirmed by the highest civil authority.

#### *‘I’M DREADIN’ WHAT I’VE GOT TO WATCH’*

This takes me back to "Danny Deever". There is nothing to show why he "shot a comrade sleepin' ", nor does the affair connect with the *Soldiers Three*. Undoubtedly the drama has its origin in fact, but it could not have happened in India in their day. My own belief is that it is a tale of other wars, of long, long ago<sup>16</sup>. But the ghost of Danny Deever—

They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,  
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'—

flickers anachronistically through the Kipling stories.<sup>17</sup> Carrington, as usual correctly, says there is no evidence that Kipling was ever concerned in a military execution. This is true: he could never have been. If there were any military executions in his day, they were for military offences on active service, far away from barracks.

This is where the soldier *stories* differ greatly from most of the

soldier *ballads*: so many of the latter are written from inside perception of a soldier's life and feelings, and as such can rarely be faulted even in detail. The general tenor is more "pi" and mealy-mouthed than a soldier would sing or utter, but the precepts and descriptions are genuine. The slang, the pidgin-Urdu and the general theme persisted even unto my day. Some of the ballads, including the two I began by mentioning ["The Ladies" and "Mandalay"] are not of this order, but it is clear to me that most of them came straight from the barracks and from soldiers' lore. The *stories* are in a different class—tales written by a master-craftsman, woven round a kernel of a story in a book, or a remembered recounted incident. Imaginative fiction spun round an idea from a military source, they spring from the genius of Rudyard Kipling: the errors and exaggeration in them are not to my mind blemishes. The stories are works of fiction and I would not like it thought that anything I have said detracts from them as superb entertainment written by a master. But the *ballads*, Kipling's soldiers' ballads, come straight from the fountain-head of soldiers' *talk*—

Now all you recruities what's drafted to-day,  
 You shut up your rag-box an' 'ark to my lay.  
 An' I'll sing you a soldier as far as I may:  
 A soldier what's fit for a soldier.<sup>18</sup>

WHEN THE CHOLERA COMES—AS IT WILL PAST A DOUBT

I will end with one ballad for which I can vouch, "Cholera Camp"—

We've got the cholerer in camp—we've got it 'ot an' sweet;  
 It ain't no Christmas dinner, but it's 'elped an' we must eat.

Cholera is a horrible thing when it breathes near you—

It's before us, an' be'ind us, an' we cannot get away,  
 An' the doctor's just reported we've ten more today!

The Angel of Death points his finger at random, here and there, patternless.<sup>19</sup> It is a theme that runs through the stories. I made the

acquaintance of the moving finger in that then extension of India, Mesopotamia—still in Kipling country. We had won a decisive victory over the Turks. After the action at Ramadi my battalion was allotted a camp site on the spot where Turkish troops had been encamped some weeks before. Their sanitary habits were far from impeccable. Predictably, we got the cholera. We struck camp and marched to sweeter land, to sweat it out in Cholera Camp.

But it runs as fast as troop-trains, and we cannot get away;  
An' the sick-list to the Colonel makes ten more today.

We knew better than to run out from camp away from it, but every day a small party marched out behind the drums to the burial ground—

An' at evenin', down the *nullahs*, we can 'ear the jackals say,  
'Get up, you rotten beggars, you've ten more to-day!'

We buried twenty-two men in the first twenty-one days. We were thirty days in camp, and lost one man a day. The score in 1880 was ten a day. Cholera bacillus was discovered in 1883, but no vaccine had got as far as Mesopotamia in 1918. The margin of ten to one in our favour showed what tremendous progress had been made in Army sanitation and medical services since the days of Mulvaney. We had the best of it on that very important score, the difference in fact between death by disease and life. On the thirty-first day we were clean, and marched out behind the drums. We kept on marching for another month or more, up the Euphrates, following and sweeping up the remains of the Turkish Armies.

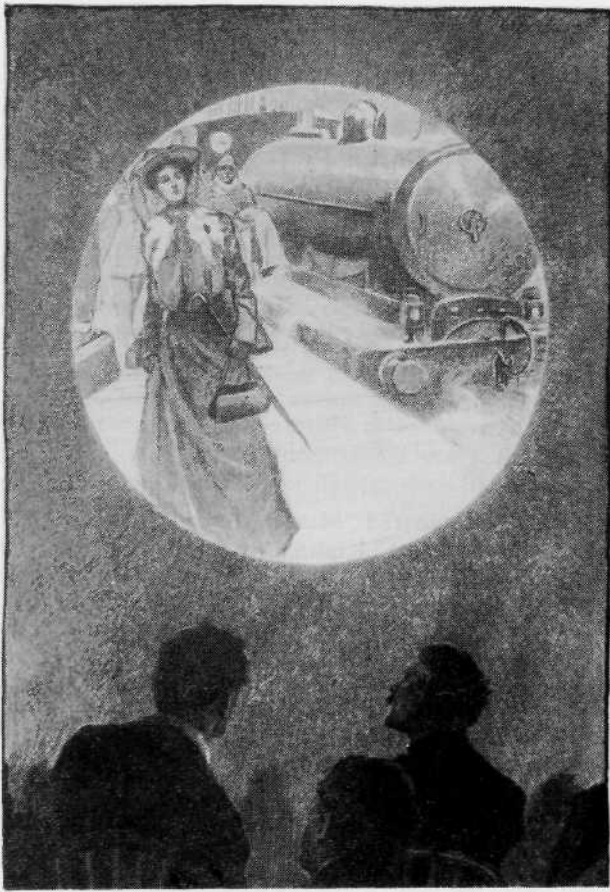
#### EDITOR'S NOTES

1 I would be glad to hear, perhaps to print, any of these crude political ditties from the mouths of children. When the streets take up the slogans of foreign policy ('*The Russians shall not 'ave Constantinople!*') it is an interesting phenomenon, one rare today. But should we here infer an unorthodox pronunciation of the name of the President of the Transvaal Republic? Enigmatically enough, H. G. Wells in his *Experiment in Autobiography* (Macmillan, New York, 1934, p 650) records: 'Sir Sidney Low told me once that [Cecil Rhodes] never learnt properly to pronounce the name of his protagonist [Wells meant antagonist] "Old Krooger". How, then?

2. Methuen, 1973—a most illuminating compendium, extending the scope of the Ballads to include "Epitaphs of the Great War", and making much clear.
3. 3rd ed, Macmillan, London, 1978.
4. Probably the 59th (later amalgamated with the 30th to form the East Lancshires). On these vexed identifications, and on Mulvaney's career generally, two important articles, linking Kipling's allusions with the facts of history, are by R. E. Harbord (*KJ*, June 1959) and C. E. Carrington (*KJ*, Dec 1959).
5. "The Big Drunk Draft" [*Soldiers Three*].
6. Head groom. This one was "a nigger at Mhow", where perhaps he remained during his wife's evidently uninhibited *affaire* at Neemuch (Nimach).
7. A bold question. Kipling's acquaintanceship with private soldiers is well documented, and was known to be unusual: hence Lord Roberts consulting him in Simla on what soldiers thought of their conditions (*Something of Myself*, p 57). But his direct military experience was slight enough, and he was just twenty-one when he created Mulvaney and the others.
8. "Black Jack" [*Soldiers Three*].
9. But see *Something of Myself*, pp 55-56, for that incident.
10. Carrington (*KJ*, Dec 1959) agrees: "fantastically unreal as military history". But he links it with the uncommonly close hand-to-hand fighting at Maiwand (Afghanistan, 1880).
11. Such implausible heroics are indeed far removed from Kipling's usual realism. Carrington (*The Complete Barrack-Room Ballads*) has special praise for an unheroic stanza of "The 'Eathen"—
 

An' now the hugly bullets come peckin' through the dust  
 An' no one wants to face 'em, but every beggar must;  
 So, like a man in irons which isn't glad to go,  
 They moves 'em off by companies uncommon stiff an' slow—

"a description of coming under fire comparable only with that in the *Chartreuse de Parme*".
12. Pig. The opprobriousness of this epithet is enhanced if we accept the inference that Simmons, whom Corporal Slane addressed as "you sneakin' Sheeny butcher", was a Jew. (However Lockwood Kipling, in an interesting note on pigs, in *Beast and Man in India*, 1891, says the "name, Sûar, is universally considered the vilest word in all the copious abuse vocabulary of the country. We also use the word pig in this sense, but in a merely academic fashion, for we cherish the animal in life and praise it in death." Pigs in the East, he explains, are essentially *outcast*, "enjoying with the characteristic insouciance of their race a useful and filthy freedom; foul-feeding, slate-tinted, slab-sided, gaunt and hideous beasts". Moses, he adds, "never saw a Berkshire or a Yorkshire hog".)
13. However Carrington (*KJ*, Dec 1959) calls this battlepiece "a coherent intelligible account of a minor operation in war". The drummer-boy incident is from the 18th century, but the fight is from either Chardeh Valley (1879) or Ahmed Khel (1880).
14. This unlikelihood is indeed brought out in the story: "He might as well have said that he was dancing naked."
15. There is an inferential link between p 47 of *Something of Myself* and the second page of this story.
16. This concurs with Carrington's interesting note (*The Complete Barrack-Room Ballads*, p 161) on the Peninsular echo in "Danny Deever".
17. Brigadier Stafford tells me he had the importunate shade of Deever in mind as the Fourth Soldier in the title of this article.
18. "The Young British Soldier". *Rag-box* means mouth.
19. See "The Daughter of the Regiment" (*Plain Tales*), for Mulvaney's medical theory about figures-of-eight and the Wandering Jew.



### MRS BATHURST ON THE 'BIOGRAPH'

Illustration from a drawing by George Gibb in *Traffics and Discoveries* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, *Outward Bound Edition* vol xxii. 1904).

1904 saw significant beginnings—a Russo-Japanese War, an Anglo-French *Entente*, work on a Panama Canal. Rolls-Royce was formed, *Peter Pan* was staged, "safety razor blades" appeared. Marlene Dietrich was born. Cinema had yet to show its potential. *The Great Train Robbery* came next year. In Britain in 1904 the new art, jerkily dazzling, was an experimental barn-storming novelty, not legitimate theatre, rather amusement for the poor. It was certainly so in Pycroft's Cape Town, where this "new turn of a scientific nature" was displayed for a ticky (6d) at Phyllis's Circus.

Here is the crucial scene when 'quite slowly, from be'ind two porters—carryin' a little reticule an' lookin' from side to side—comes out Mrs. Bathurst. There was no mistakin' the walk in a hundred thousand. She come forward—right forward—she looked out straight at us with that blindish look which Pritch alluded to. She walked on and on till she melted out of the picture—like—like a shadow jumpin' over a candle, an' as she went I 'eard Dawson in the ticky seats be'ind sing out: "Christ! there's Mrs. B.!"

## TECHNIQUE AND EXPERIMENT IN "MRS. BATHURST"

by LISA A. F. LEWIS

[Mrs Lewis, a Council member and active supporter of the Kipling Society, perhaps does not need re-introduction in detail to readers at this stage. Her article on "The Prophet and the Country" appeared last March, her letter on "Ham and the Porcupine" last September, and in June we acknowledged her work on the Index of this *Journal*. We now welcome the following note from her on the ever-contentious subject of "Mrs. Bathurst" [*Traffics and Discoveries*]. Ed.]

Professor Gilbert compared "Mrs. Bathurst" to the work of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett.<sup>1</sup> Kipling was trying to tell the story *as we would hear it in real life*, as snippets of gossip from different spectators. As in an inquest, each witness contributes his part.

In support of this are two remarks of Pyecroft's: "I'm trying to say solely what transpired", and "I'm only giving you my *résumé* of it all, because all I know is second-hand so to speak, or rather I should say more than second-'and". Each man tells what he knows or has heard or seen, and we, the readers, do the guessing.

The cinema scene is central to the story. I cannot read it otherwise than that Vickery had promised to meet Mrs Bathurst at Paddington, but failed to turn up. He had been reconciled with his wife and got her pregnant, and was scared of telling Mrs Bathurst. So what he sees in the film, of her getting off the train and coming towards the camera, is the last moment of her idyll, when she still loves and trusts him. She is "lookin' from side to side"—expecting to see him. In the next few moments after she walks out of the picture she will realise that he has not come. She will wait a while, but in vain. (At the end of Kipling's writing career, in "Uncovenanted Mercies",<sup>2</sup> he showed damned souls in hell, waiting at a station for lovers who never arrive.)

Vickery's betrayal is eating him up, and he feels guilty towards his dead wife too. He is now free to marry Mrs Bathurst, but cannot get in touch. His time for searching is limited; he has to rejoin his ship; he does not know what happened to her. She has "melted out of the picture"—as footprints disappear in the *sand* mentioned several times in the 'frame' story. I feel this is the most likely explanation of his mental state, and accounts for his obsession with the film. Did she kill herself? go on the streets? marry somebody else? Is she too angry

to answer his letters? We are shown her "feeding a lame duck" when she lends a watch to a sailor; but we never see her "set 'er foot on a scorpion"—unless Vickery is meant. (Kipling said that this passage was the key to the story.)<sup>3</sup>

Vickery wants to die: he tells Pycroft so. Gilbert<sup>4</sup> and Dr Tompkins<sup>5</sup> were right when they said he stood up to attract the lightning. The story makes no sense if the second tramp is Mrs Bathurst, and I believe Gilbert was right when he suggested that the seated figure was only there to show that Vickery stood up. In the *Windsor Magazine* illustration<sup>6</sup> it does not look much like a woman, certainly not a woman of her attractiveness. (Not that writers necessarily have control over artists. "With the Night Mail" is incorrectly illustrated<sup>7</sup>; and Kipling once wrote to Rider Haggard<sup>8</sup>, "Pity one can't sprinkle lime over illustrators—like slugs".)

I would like to know if Vickery's physical symptoms, as described by Pycroft (his "white an' crumple" face; how he "walked an' he drunk an' he perspired in rivers"; how, when he "wasn't drinkin', in which case all 'is teeth clicked on the glass, 'e was clickin' 'is four false teeth like a Marconi ticker"), show any physical disease, or only the madness Pycroft speaks of.

I have a wild theory about the Boy Niven episode. If all those lovers in the 'frame', from the sailors with a girl in every port to the picnic party singing "The Honeysuckle and the Bee", are to show that the story is about the destructive effect of physical passion, then Boy Niven stands for a homosexual variety. Under the penal laws of the time, if for no other reason, this might promise you "a farm" (emotional security), but it couldn't deliver: you wound up on a desert island in danger of arrest. So the eight sailors (only six are named) who were "lovin' an' trustful to a degree" found themselves court-martialled, and blamed for misleading the "Boy".

This is nobody's favourite story, and I do not feel the experiment quite came off; but how new a technique it was in 1904—what an ambitious try—and how it keeps us fascinated!

## NOTES

1. See Elliot L. Gilbert, *The Good Kipling* (Manchester UP, 1972), esp pp 94-117.
2. *Limits and Renewals* (1932).
3. *Something of Myself* (pub 1937).

4. Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p 111n.
5. J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Art of Rudyard Kipling* (Methuen, 1959), p 90n.
6. *Windsor Magazine*, Sept 1904, 20, p 386 (illus. by Victor Prout).
7. *KJ*, July 1951, letter on p 16.
8. *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard*, ed Morton Cohen (Hutchinson, 1965), p59. Coincidentally or not, Kipling was referring to an illustration with an article by Haggard in the *Windsor Magazine*, Dec 1904.

## SOMETHING OF HIMSELF

A second instalment by C. L. NICHOLSON

[Our last issue briefly introduced Miss Cecily Nicholson, Kipling's last Private Secretary, now living in Newbury, Berkshire. She has given us some miscellaneous notes of reminiscences, which we are glad to print. Forty-five years after Kipling's death, few survive who knew him well. Miss Nicholson offers no "revelations". Bateman's was devoid of gothic goings-on. She also has regard for confidentiality. But her comments on atmosphere, routine and personalities are an interesting and authoritative supplement to what we know, and may sometimes correct what we think we know.

Miss Nicholson comes of a military and naval family: her grandfather (General Sir Lothian Nicholson, who served in the Crimea and at the siege of Lucknow), and her father (Major-General Sir Lothian Nicholson, a divisional commander in the First World War), and at least four uncles, all attained high rank. She herself has had along and varied career, as secretary to some interesting individual employers and with several organisations ranging from Stowe School to a wartime counter-propaganda outfit, the embryonic UNRRA and the Edwina Mountbatten Trust. Her Kipling connection, initiated through an employment agency, was as Private Secretary at Bateman's from 1932-40, and again at Wimpole Hall with Kipling's daughter from **1949-54**. She is a member of the Kipling Society.

Miss Nicholson here registers some disagreement with the Birkenhead biography. With its early frustration and later publicity, this had to be a controversial book. It is widely recognised as a readable and valuable work, one of the authorities: but it is certainly not immune from criticism regarding the late Lord Birkenhead's interpretation of, and sympathy for, his subject. In his account (chs 22-25) of Kipling's gloomy later years, and tension with his wife, Birkenhead's emphasis differs from Carrington's, whose irreplaceable but not necessarily infallible biography tends to a less depressing view. If arbitration on the discrepant facts and inferences is ever possible, it will take a major study. Meanwhile the spirited evidence of Miss Nicholson, who during the last years of both husband and wife was present in a position of privilege, is highly welcome.—*Ed.*]



## NOTES ON LORD BIRKENHEAD'S LIFE OF RUDYARD KIPLING

I have read a copy of the Countess of Birkenhead's talk to the Kipling Society [*Journal*, March 1980: address at the Annual Luncheon, 1979],<sup>1</sup> and I have also been shown copies of Charles Carrington's article in the *New Statesman* [2 March 1979],<sup>2</sup> and Lady Birkenhead's letter in reply [April 1979].<sup>3</sup>

I feel compelled to make a few observations, born of my experience as Secretary to R. K. from 1932 until his death, to Mrs Kipling until her death in 1939, and to Mrs Bambridge from 1949 to 1954.

During my years at Bateman's I saw no signs of hysteria in Mrs Kipling, and I certainly was not aware that R. K.'s last years were very unhappy. He was a sick man for much of the time, and suffered bouts of severe pain, but in between these bouts he took a lively interest in his garden and farm, as well as what was going on in the world, and was happy in the company of his many and varied visitors.

There is no doubt that Mrs Kipling's was a dominating personality, but in my time her absorbing idea was the care of R. K.'s health.

I did not read the original draft of Lord Birkenhead's *Life*; but the material he had used had just been returned to Mrs Bambridge when I went to Wimpole Hall. I remember her telling me that one reason for her turning the book down was that too great an emphasis had been put on politics. Having read the *Life* as published last year, I cannot understand how anyone could have been surprised at Mrs Bambridge's refusal, for I certainly would not have countenanced such criticisms of my parents—a feeling shared, surely, by most daughters.<sup>4</sup>

In her talk, Lady Birkenhead said that her husband had been a lifelong admirer of R. K.'s writings. He deceived *me*, for the strongest impression the book left on me was that Lord Birkenhead had disliked almost everything R. K. had written except the children's stories and *Kim*. It struck me, too, that he placed great stress on R. K.'s disagreements with Mr Stanley Baldwin's policies. However *that* may have been, I know that Mr and Mrs Baldwin (as they then were) paid a number of visits to Bateman's while I was there, and R. K. and Mr Baldwin much enjoyed one another's company.<sup>5</sup>

In more than one instance it seemed to me that Lord Birkenhead went out of his way to denigrate Mrs Kipling. One that I found particularly riling comes towards the end of his book (p. 323), when referring to Mrs Kipling's dominating ways: "The only telephone in the house was situated in her bedroom."

In fact, there was *no* telephone in the house during R. K.'s lifetime:

he refused to have one. Then, had there been one in Mrs Kipling's bedroom, it would have been in R. K.'s bedroom too, for they shared a bedroom. Lord Birkenhead should have followed the advice given to R. K. by Lockwood Kipling (see *Something of Myself*, p 187)—"you'll have to look up your references rather more carefully ..."

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Part of Lady Birkenhead's talk related to her husband's decision to undertake the biography. He had always admired Kipling's works. Being a friend of Captain George Bambridge, he could not believe the now notorious contract terms would cause trouble. He looked forward to the research work; and as this progressed he became fascinated by the complexity and contradiction in Kipling's character. Carrington's article, "The Kipling 'Mystery'", discussed the widely held illusion that after Mrs Bambridge's death masterpieces or other surprises would be found among his papers, or revealed when Birkenhead's suppressed *Life* came out. He summarised various abortive initiatives before his own (by Hector Bolitho, Taprell Dorling ("Taffrail"), Eric Linklater and Lord Birkenhead) to produce an official biography. He suggested why Birkenhead's draft had been rejected—there was a generation gap; Birkenhead had been growing up when Kipling's values were unfashionable; he was apt to be a debunker; his chief adviser had been Kipling's sister Mrs Fleming, an "imaginative psychopath"; he had written about Mrs Kipling in terms no daughter would approve; it was impossible that he would *not* offend Mrs Bambridge. However the eventual book was not the so-called Banned Book of thirty years earlier: it had been revised. Carrington paid tribute to it beautifully written, perceptive, accurate *on fact*. There was no reason why there should not be widely differing *opinion* on Kipling.

Lady Birkenhead wrote to say that Mrs Fleming had not been her husband's adviser, but that (by then recovered from her mental illness) she had provided valuable information on Kipling's early years. She denied that her husband, in life or writing, had been a debunker of cardinal values. She also disputed that criticism of Mrs Kipling had provoked Mrs Bambridge to reject the draft. Mrs Bambridge had herself spoken of her mother in terms more hostile than were to be reflected in the Birkenhead draft. This had shocked Lord Birkenhead. He had gathered that Mrs Kipling's possessiveness, and jealousy of Kipling's relationship with his daughter, made Kipling miserable: attempts to get Kipling away on his own for a break had brought on violent hysterics in Mrs Kipling. Mrs Bambridge had been willing for this picture of her mother to be recorded. Her rejection of the draft therefore remained a mystery.

I have found in the *Kipling Papers* what must be regarded as contributory evidence.

(a) Letter (16.8.48) from Daniel Macmillan to W. P. Watt, with Sir John Squire's report on the Birkenhead MS. Macmillan thought it needed cutting and altering. Squire found some diffuseness, some errors, some failure to comprehend Kipling.

(b) Letter (2.9.48) from W. P. Watt to Mrs Bambridge, with T. S. Eliot's report. Watt was dubious about proceeding with the book, suggested a settlement with Birkenhead. Eliot felt the proportions were wrong, the literary criticism and character analysis inadequate: the MS needed rewriting.

(c) Letter (25.3.49) from W. P. Watt to Mrs Bambridge, with Mr Michael Sadleir's report. Sadleir felt the MS was pedestrian, without distinction, lacking in design. Evidence from the Baldwins (e.g. the third Earl's addresses in *KJ* 165 & 180) seems to confirm that political differences never ruptured this close friendship.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*THE BURGLAR WHO LIKED TO QUOTE KIPLING* by Lawrence Block  
(Random House, New York, 1979, \$7.95)

Prolific Lawrence Block writes crime-stories in *New Yorkese*, that wry, wise, crackling, touching, swift, shallow dialect whose roots are in O. Henry, Damon Runyon, Raymond Chandler and Yiddish, to name but a few.

In this book Bernie Rhodenbarr, his—er—hero, is an erudite lock-picking burglar who owns a secondhand bookstore on East Eleventh Street. Bernie is commissioned to steal a unique copy of a work by Rudyard Kipling entitled *The Deliverance of Fort Bucklow*. It is a narrative poem of some three thousand two hundred lines in ballad metre, on an anti-Semitic theme. After having some copies privately printed Kipling had come to his senses and destroyed them all, except for one which he had inscribed and given to Rider Haggard.

Well, in a New York comedy-thriller set in the book-collecting jungle, what else would you expect? For good measure, you get a cop who is as bent as a set of French curves, a golden-hearted lesbian dog-washer, assorted international bibliomaniacs, and a dame named Madeline Porlock who gets iced\* in circumstances which direct suspicion straight at the—er—hero. How deftly Keats, Coleridge and Kipling are freely associated in the name of the dame!

Serious doubts and anxieties assail the reader over *The Deliverance of Fort Bucklow*. Three thousand two hundred mediocre lines? 1923—already a prolific Kipling year? Yet it is true that at this time R. K. was expressing anti-Zionist opinions. Could there possibly be ...?

But fortunately Lawrence Block has introduced enough deliberate mistakes (e.g. on pp 38–39, 41, 44, 120) to relieve our troubled minds. *The Deliverance of Fort Bucklow* is a slightly sinister spoof in a dexterous piece of fiction. Pull the other leg, Mr Block: we quite enjoy it!

August 1980

JOHN SHEARMAN

\*meaning 'killed', or perhaps I should say 'bumped off'—Ed.

*THE DECODING OF EDWIN DROOD* by Charles Forsyte (Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1980 (*Gollancz Detection*) £6.50)

*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* was only half completed when Charles Dickens died on 9 June 1870. In a pencilled comment in his copy of Forster's *Life of Dickens* Wilkie Collins dismissed it as "Dickens's last laboured effort, the melancholy work of a worn-out brain". Charles Forsyte, on the other hand, contends that it is "the most successful mystery story ever written", an assertion which he convincingly substantiates in his meticulously argued book.

Forsyte begins with a résumé of the six extant numbers of the twelve which were intended, combining a certain amount of biographical background; and this is followed by a detailed consideration of the various theories, opinions and informed accounts of how Dickens actually meant to unravel the plot. In spite of his failing health Dickens had quite obviously organised the whole story in his mind, though he left behind virtually no notes: the cover design depicts a scene which has not yet occurred, and he is recorded as having had conversations with friends and relations which show that he had no doubts about the rest of his plot.

Forsyte discusses, among others, the theory expounded by the American Droodian expert Howard Duffield, which involved the Thug followers of Kali (*The Bookman*, 1930) and was backed up by Edmund Wilson's essay "Dickens: the Two Scrooges" (*The Wound and the Bow*, 1941), which incorporated the Thuggee idea and also the 'animal magnetism' aspect. The latter is the belief that there are two distinct consciousnesses, each unaware of the other, one or other of which may be in control of the individual at any time; the switch-over may be stimulated by drugs, hypnosis, or conditions in the environment.

Forsyte's own theory discards the Thuggee line, but he continues the idea of dualism, making it a major theme of the plot. He bases his continuation of Dickens's mystery on three main clues: *first*, that as a keen amateur conjurer, Dickens would use his art of misdirection; *second*, that there are the testimonies of people to whom Dickens would not have lied, of what he was intending for the dénouement; *third*, that it seems that Dickens was determined to outclass *The Moonstone*, the recent best-seller by his ex-collaborator Wilkie Collins, and therefore that though he wanted the reader to be misled into assuming that the plot rested on the 'opium connection', it is highly unlikely that he actually meant to follow *The Moonstone* in that way.

In the second half of *The Decoding of Edwin Drood*, Forsyte has

attempted to finish *Edwin Drood*—not trying "to imitate the Inimitable, but rather to find a style that would be acceptable to readers today, and at the same time follow on the original narrative as smoothly as possible". He has made a very workmanlike job of it. Personally I found his continuation very convincing, though there are perhaps one or two slightly weak extrapolations of individuals, such as Datchery and the opium woman ('Princess Puffer'). The building of characters lacks Dickens's imaginative flair, but Forsyte successfully reiterates many of the phrases from the existing *Drood*, and utilises Dickens's metaphors, so that all in all he creates a highly readable, thought-provoking detective novel.

September 1980

HERMIONE GREER

[For a note on Kipling, Dickens and this review, see Editor's News & Notes.—*Ed.*]

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### KIPLING IN JERSEY

*From Mr F. A. Underwood, The Coplow, Station Road, Winterbourne Down, Bristol*

Dear Editor,

The photograph on page 25 of the June 1980 *Journal* was apparently taken at a cattle show in Jersey. The central section, omitting Mrs Kipling and everything to the right of the ear of the man in the cap, appeared in the *Daily Mirror* of 4 September 1934.

Unfortunately the lady next to Mrs Bambridge is not identified.

15 August 1980

Yours sincerely,

ALAN UNDERWOOD

[Our thanks to Mr Underwood. Other readers have suggested Miss Cecily Nicholson (see p 38) as the unidentified lady. It seemed a poor likeness but I asked her. Miss Nicholson replied categorically that it could not be so. She had links with Jersey [her grandfather was Lieutenant-Governor, 1878-83] and had once been there, but not with the Kiplings, with whom she seldom went away—"my job was to hold the fort at Bateman's".—*Ed.*]

**CROFTS IN SARK**

*From Dr F. M. Hall, Glenham, Bossingham, Stelling Minnis, Canterbury, Kent*

Dear Sir,

Mr Crofts, the basis for King in *Stalky. & Co.* [see "Kipling's Latin Master", September 1980 *Journal*], is buried in Sark. My botanical interests used to take me there, and a chance encounter with the late William Baker, Seneschal, put me on to finding Crofts's grave, in the north-east corner of the north section of the graveyard. Its granite cross is still erect and somehow uncompromising, while many of the adjacent stones are leaning a little. The inscription is:

To  
 THE DEAR MEMORY OF  
 WILLIAM CARR CROFTS  
 ELDEST SON OF THE LATE  
 WILLIAM CROFTS  
 BARRISTER AT LAW  
 BORN FEB 10 1846  
 DROWNED WHILE BATHING  
 NOV 26 1912  
 REQUIESCAT IN PACE

In the days before Sark became popular Crofts was a regular visitor, usually staying at a house called St Magloire. He was well liked, known for his athletic activity, and remembered for his impressive whiskers. Mr Baker, a boy in 1912, told me of the shock the whole community felt when Crofts was found drowned in Les Laches, after failing to return from an early morning swim. Les Laches is a sheltered cove, very isolated, and approached by a very steep path which Crofts must have been fit to have used. Though described as *drowned*, I would think he had a heart attack. He would not have drowned in the anchorage, being a strong swimmer, and had he ventured outside the body would have been swept rapidly away: there is quite a tide-rip nearby.

17 February 1980

Yours sincerely,  
 MARCUS HALL

[We are grateful for this contribution. The *Readers' Guide* misleadingly describes Crofts as "drowned at sea, off the coast of Sark", perhaps not supposing he would bathe in late November. That, by the way, was precisely the time of year that Mary Musgrove happily bathed at Lyme (*Persuasion*, ch xiv).—Ed.]

## TWIN IN INDIA

From Mr Paul Machlis, Editorial Associate, Mark Twain Papers, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, U.S.A.

Dear Editor,

The *Mark Twain Papers* is engaged in the publication of Mark Twain's notebooks and journals, including the diaries of Clemens's world lecture tour of 1895-96. I enclose the text of a letter apparently sent by Clemens to Kipling. The only record of it in our files is a handwritten copy in the notebook of 1895.

Do you know if Kipling received and replied to this letter? In addition, do you have any information about Kipling's abandoned thoughts of visiting India in 1895/1896? Published sources available to me give no indication that in the fall of 1895 he had plans for such a visit, but only that he vacationed in England that summer, and was briefly in Washington DC the previous spring. Otherwise, as far as I can tell, he was in Brattleboro until the Kiplings left for England in August 1896. I will appreciate any information you can provide.

3 July 1980

Sincerely,  
PAUL MACHLIS

ENCLOSURE

Vancouver, B.C.

August 16, 1895

Dear Kipling,

It is reported that you are about to visit India. This has moved me to journey to that far country in order that I may unload from my conscience a debt long due to you. Years ago you came from India to Elmira to visit me, as you said at the time. It has always been my purpose to return that visit and that great compliment some day. I shall arrive next January and you must be ready. I shall come riding my ayah with his tusks adorned with silver bells and ribbons, and escorted by a troop of native howdahs richly clad and mounted upon a herd of wild bungalows; and you must be on hand with a few bottles of ghee, for I shall be thirsty.

Affectionately,  
S. L. CLEMENS

[John Shearman has checked the dates; but would anyone with recondite information on Kipling's intention or Twain's letter please tell us.

Kipling went to Elmira in 1889. His impact and after-effect are vividly described in Twain's *Autobiography* (Harper, New York, ed Neider 1959, pp 286-8). Twain, sailing from Vancouver in August 1895, went via Australasia to India. He found even the cool season trying but loved the country, "the only foreign land I ever daydream about or deeply long to see again". It was worth the journey to "qualify myself to read *Kim*. The deep and subtle and fascinating charm of India pervades ... *Kim*. I read the book every year and in this way I go back to India without fatigue."—Ed.]

## ANCIENT AND MODERN

*From Mr J. Shearman, Hon. Secretary, The Kipling Society, London.*

Dear Sir,

In the June 1980 *Journal* General Vickers who, readers will remember, was a Colleger at U.S.C, wrote about the new Kipling College at Westward Ho! I was happy to be able to tell him that Kipling College had joined the Society, and that I had given some small help in getting it a portrait of R. K.

I recently heard from Brigadier H. M. J. McIntyre, C.B.E., D.S.O., (a welcome new member of the Society), saying he was at U.S.C. for two terms before the move from Devon. Thus there are at least two gallant survivors from, to quote Brigadier McIntyre, "those Halcyon Days".

I would also mention that Miss L. A. Cormell Price, granddaughter of 'The Head', is a valued member of the Society.

20 September 1980

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN SHEARMAN

[I have had a courteous note of appreciation from General Vickers, for our publication of his piece: he refers to the old College as "that remarkable school of which I have always been so proud". I have also heard from the *new* College, with details of their efforts to restore the "twelve bleak houses": space permitting, we hope to summarise their progress in a future issue.—*Ed.*]

## LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE KIPLING JOURNAL

Though the *Journal* is much enlarged, we still have more material on hand than can be fitted in, and have deferred with regret some items of interest. Still, this is healthy. We hope and need to receive more. Wider choice makes possible a better-balanced selection of higher quality.

*Articles* submitted should be fairly brief. Our average page carries only 400 words of text. A 4000-word article, however good, may be hard to place. We impose no limit, but should remind contributors of a factor which will influence selection.

*Letters to the Editor* are welcomed: unless told otherwise, we reserve the normal right to shorten. *Book Reviews*, usually invited, may be volunteered: a range of 225 to 850 words is suggested. We will gratefully accept, even if we cannot quickly use, relevant and reproducible *illustrations*, *news cuttings*, *book excerpts*, *catalogue data* and other *miscellanea* which might enhance the *Journal's* interest. Since Kipling touched the literary and practical world at many points our terms of reference are broad.



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### NEW MEMBERS

We take great pleasure in welcoming Sir John Betjeman (*London*); Mr T. S. Bittleston (*Surrey*); Major H. C. Boulter (*Somerset*); Mr C. Bourgois (*Paris, France*); Mr T. Burkle (*Washington DC, U.S.A.*); Mr W. D. Carey (*Purcellville, Virginia, U.S.A.*); Mr C. G. Cogan (*Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.A.*); Mrs D. M. J. Compton (*Del Mar, California, U.S.A.*); Colonel H. A. Davenport (*Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.*); Mr E. T. Davies (*Ottawa, Canada*); Mr F. L. Derrett (*London*); Mr G. D. Fleming (*Ottawa, Canada*); Lady Franks (*Surrey*); Mr E. P. Grey (*Kent*); Mr J. Guest (*London*); Mr W. F. Hale (*Washington DC, U.S.A.*); Mr A. House (*London*); Mr J. C. L. Hulley (*London*); Mr D. T. Irvine (*London*); Mr F. Lacassin (*Paris, France*); Mr C. J. LaClair (*Washington DC, U.S.A.*); Mr M. Laudier (*Falls Church, Virginia, U.S.A.*); Miss E. Linington [*noms de plume: Dell Shannon, Leslie Egan*] (*Arroyo Grande, California, U.S.A.*); Brigadier H. M. J. McIntyre (*Cheshire*); Mrs B. McLeod (*Ottawa, Canada*); Mr C. Meyer (*Washington DC, U.S.A.*); Mr R. J. Muss (*New York, U.S.A.*); Mr M. A. Pakenham (*Washington DC, U.S.A.*); Mr T. R. V. Phillips (*London*); Mr A. T. T. Preston (*Kent*); Mr T. Preston (*New York, U.S.A.*); Mr I. Ritchie (*London*); Mrs L. Roberts (*Nedlands, Western Australia*); Mrs G. Ryan (*Wellington, New Zealand*); Mr J. B. Scott (*Surrey*); Dr J. K. Stuart Bell (*Ottawa, Canada*); Mr P. H. T. Tyler (*Essex*); General A. C. Wedemeyer (*Boyd's, Maryland, U.S.A.*); Dr K. R. Willison (*Long Island, New York, U.S.A.*); Miss C. M. Wilmot-Dear (*London*).

### STATISTICS, AND AMERICAN MEMBERS

These 40 names bring to 175 the tally of members who joined in 1980, a year in which paid-up membership rose by 25%. Our overall total, still imprecise while subscriptions are chased, addresses verified and intentions confirmed, is now between 850 and 900 worldwide.

Our New York Secretary, Joe Dunlap, visited England in 1980 and met our Membership Secretary. They agreed to try to improve and streamline the procedures by which our U.S. members are managed. At present, although many are handled by Joe Dunlap (who channels their subscriptions, writes necessary letters, and forwards individually the *Journals* he receives in bulk from England), others are administered from London, and yet others jointly. Actually, from the standpoint of most U.S. residents (and of the finance and convenience of the Society) New York should be their organising centre. It is cheaper, quicker and more efficient if dollar payments pass through our dollar account, if Joe Dunlap deals direct with U.S. residents, and if bulk-consigned *Journals* are enveloped and posted in New York. We shall be working towards this tidier system.

In loose terms (since members fluctuate, status changes, people move) we now have some 275 North American members (four fifths in U.S.A., one fifth in Canada): half are libraries and colleges. By contrast, in Britain individual members heavily outnumber corporate ones.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (1980-81)	<i>Britain</i>	<i>Overseas</i>
Individual Member	£4	£5 or us \$10
Junior Member ( <i>under 18</i> )	£2	£2 or US\$5
Corporate Member	£8	£10 or US\$20

*These rates are being held down with difficulty. Members still out of line are urged to come into it: donations covering subscriptions in arrears are needed and welcomed.*

## A NOTE ON THE KIPLING SOCIETY

This is a literary society, for those interested in Rudyard Kipling's prose and verse, life and times. A non-profit-making cultural organisation run by volunteers, it has the status of a Registered Charity in Britain. Its management and main activities are in England, but there are branches in Canada, Australia and the U.S.A. A third of its members, including many colleges and libraries, are in North America.

Founded in 1927, the Society has attracted many notable literary and academic figures, including of course the leading authorities in the field of Kipling studies; but it also caters for an unspecialised public of general readers, from whom its wider membership is drawn. Its managing focus is the Secretary in London, John Shearman. He and other office-holders arrange various activities, including regular talks and discussions in London, and an Annual Luncheon; answer inquiries from correspondents; and maintain a specialised Library.

The *Kipling Journal* is sent free to members. In this issue, notably on pages 4, 5 and 47, can be found some general information about the Society. More may be obtained from John Shearman or Branch Secretaries. Applications for membership, corporate or individual, are welcome: the Society and its *Journal* depend on such support.

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