THE KIPLING JOURNAL

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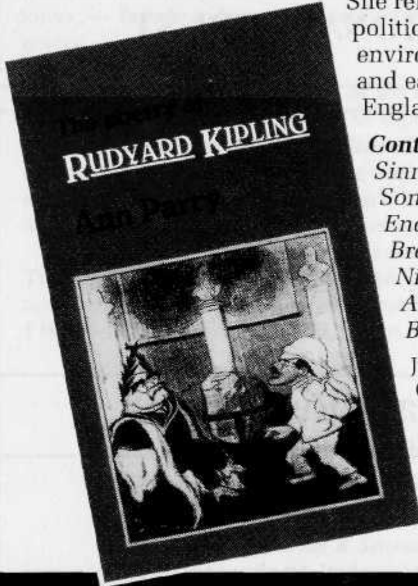

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This authoritative publication, established in 1829, runs to some 140 pages per issue, including illustrations. It carries many informative articles, reviews and notes, contributed by well known writers, on wide-ranging military and defence topics — British and international, current and historical, technical and general.

There is much to interest members of the Kipling Society, and there are not infrequently items directly related to Kipling's writings. We have recently published an article by George Webb on *The Irish Guards in the Great War*; another by Peter Lewis on *The War in the Mountains*, Kipling's evocative impression of the Italian front in 1917; and two reviews of new collections of Kipling. We have further items of this sort in mind.

The annual subscription for 1992 is £44 – but for members of the Kipling Society there is a special rate, £39.50. Enquiries and remittances to the *AQ & DJ*, 1 West Street, Tavistock PL19 8DS, Devon, England.

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SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS, JULY TO NOVEMBER 1992

Wednesday 22 July at Brown's Hotel, (Dover & Albemarle Streets, London W1):–

* at 4 p.m., the Society's **Annual General Meeting;**

* at approximately 4.45 p.m., **Tea** (to be booked in advance: for late reservations please phone Mrs Lisa Lewis on 0491-38046);

* at 5.30 for 6 p.m., **Professor Enamul Karim** (our Secretary for North America) on *Archetypes in Kipling's "Kim".*

Wednesday 23 September at 6.45 p.m. in the Pre-Raphaelite Rooms of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7. Admission £4, by pre-paid ticket only. **Miss Loraine Price** will speak on *A Jumble of Delights and Emotions: Kipling and the Burne-Jones Circle.* Full particulars and a booking form are enclosed – or phone Mrs Lewis (see above).

Wednesday 18 November from 5.30 to 7.30 p.m., an **Evening in the Library** at City University, Northampton Square, London EC1 (by kind permission of the University Librarian).

May 1992 NORMAN ENTRACT

"AHAI! HE IS TAKING HIS MEAL WITH THE OTHERS"

One of thirty superb woodcuts from a new edition of "Mowgli's Brothers" (the first chapter of *The Jungle Book)* to be published by HarperCollins this autumn as a hardback book, at £12.99. It will be advertised in our next issue, with details of a direct order scheme for members. The text is familiar, but the striking illustrations are not. As for the artist, see page 6.

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"THE TIGER'S ROAR FILLED THE CAVE WITH THUNDER"

But he was duly seen off by Raksha, who, as he knew, "had all the advantage of the ground and would fight to the death". Another woodcut from the lavishly illustrated "Mowgli's Brothers" (see page 6). The artist is Christopher Wormell, a young man who has achieved international recognition as a wood-engraver, last year winning the coveted Bologna Fiere Graphic Prize for book illustration.

EDITORIAL

In Yokohama a hundred years ago, on 11 June 1892, the English-language *Japan Weekly News* reported a "financial catastrophe" – the failure of the London-based New Oriental Bank. The abrupt closure of its Yokohama branch had seriously harmed the port's large expatriate community.

A temporary member of that community was Kipling, by then a literary celebrity, but keeping in journalistic practice with a series of impressionistic reports on Japan for the London *Times* and New York *Sun.* Having married in England in January, he was on a honeymoon trip round the world with his American wife; they had arrived in Yokohama from Vancouver in April.

What route they hoped to take thereafter is unknown: Kipling had talked of calling on Stevenson in Samoa. However, his wife was now pregnant, which must have coloured his view of when and where to stop and make a home. England was an obvious choice; but his wife's home ground, Brattleboro, Vermont, was on the cards; in March, on the way over, he had bought some land there.

This was his second visit to Japan; in 1889 he had spent a month there, sightseeing, mailing numerous despatches to the Allahabad *Pioneer* — but otherwise attracting no notice, for outside India he had been unknown. By 1892 he was a household name, wherever English was spoken.

Inevitably he cut a grander figure now, courteously noticed by the British Legation, lionised at a dinner at the Tokyo Club, reported in the *Japan Weekly News.* His current despatches had the impress of a maturer mind, and taken overall were less ebullient in style, more sober in subject – befitting *The Times.*

They still contained lyrical passages – on delights of form and colour in Japan in springtime; on the splendour of the Buddha at Kamakura. But there was new emphasis on Japanese politics (not unreasonably: in May the country was in political turmoil) and on the difficulty of doing business with the Japanese, given their strong resentment of the 'unequal treaties' that gave extra-territorial privileges to foreigners in ports like Yokohama.

Politics apart, many western merchants complained of chronic incompatibilities of business method, obliquities in the Japanese mind. Even if Kipling had not sensed this himself he had heard of it from expatriates in Yokohama's United Club. He had perception enough to recognise the prevalence of an altogether unfamiliar mentality; and he tried to express this alienation in verse: –

The stumbling-block of Western lore
Is faith in old arithmetics —
That two and two are always four
And three and three make ever six,
Whereas 'neath less exacting skies
These numbers total otherwise.

Equality of A to B
Is interesting – Greenwich way;
But does not for a moment pre-
dicate the like 'twixt B and A.
For East of Suez, be it said,
B is the sum of XYZ.

It may be heat or damp or dew
That warps the numbers one to ten so,
And twists the alphabet askew
Disproving Euclid and Colenso;
Or else there must be people who
Don't think as other people do.

Still, it was no Japanese shortcoming but the failure of a British bank, that curtailed his honeymoon. One of his despatches described the event. He headed it "Some Earthquakes", for it dealt with a real earthquake as well as the financial tremor. What he concealed in that account was his personal involvement as a depositor; he had lost £2,000, virtually all his capital, worth £60,000 in today's terms – and was left with nothing but some unexpended Cook vouchers (enough when refunded to take him and his wife back by sea to Vancouver) and $100 in a New York bank.

Of course, as subsequent events proved, he had an immense earning-power. What was disaster for others was an inconvenient episode for him. But it was characteristic of him, in recounting vividly the shock-waves when the news hit the expatriates' Club, to suppress his own concern. Actually, he was to play an active part, on 24 June attending a meeting of the bank's creditors, and himself proposing the steps that were eventually adopted, whereby 25% of their deposits was converted into Preference Stock against the bank's hoped-for resumption of business.

Much later, in his autobiography, he paid tribute to his wife's game response to news of the crash: "There was an instant Committee of Ways and Means, which advanced our understanding of each other more than a cycle of solvent matrimony." But retreat was unavoidable, and on 27 June back they sailed, to start a new life and build a new house in Vermont. A daughter was born on 29 December: two days later, Kipling inscribed in his wife's diary, "God be thanked for the ending of the happiest year of my life."

ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 1992

The Annual Luncheon of the Kipling Society, which took place on 6 May 1992, was again successfully held at the Royal Overseas League and was greatly enjoyed by a well-assorted company, who included:–

The Lord Annan; Colonel J.R. Archer-Burton; Mrs R.S. Archer-Burton; Miss T. Barringer; Colonel J.S. Bennett; Mr B.J. Bolt; Mrs G.J. Bolt; Mr F.H. Brightman; Mrs E.H. Brock; Dr M.C Brock; Dr W.N. Brown; Mrs B. Caseley-Dickson; Mrs J.W. Clayton; Mr S.J. Clayton; Mr R.J.W. Craig; Sir Ian Critchett, Bart.; Lady Critchett; Mr G. Cutler; Ms E. Deacon; Miss S. Dudley; Miss M.J. Eiloart; Mr N. Entract; Mr B.H. Garai; Mr A. Greenwood; Mrs A. Greenwood; Mrs W. Greenwood; Ms S. Johnson; Miss C. Kipling; Mr T.H. Kipling; Mr M.W.R. Lamb; Dr J.D. Lewins; Mrs L.A.F. Lewis; Mr P.H.T. Lewis; Mrs J. Lovett-Turner; Miss E.B.W. Luke; Mr J.H. McGivering; Mr J.A. McGuirk; Mr D. McMichael; Mr G.C. Morris; Mrs H. Morris; Mrs M. Moynihan; Mr M.J. Moynihan; Mrs M. Newsom; Mr R.C.O. O'Hagan; Mrs J. Olmi; Mrs A. Parry; Mr D.J. Peters; Mrs D.E. Pharaon; Mr G.C.G. Philo; Mrs F. Robinson; Mr O.H. Robinson; Miss M.J. Saunders; Dr G. Sheehan; Mr G.L. Wallace; Mr G.H. Webb; Mrs J. Webb; Mr A. Weale; Mrs F. Wade; Mr S. Wade

Mrs Ann Parry, Chairman of the Council, called on Dr Michael Brock, the Society's President, to say Grace. Later, after the Loyal Toast, she welcomed the President and Mrs Brock; the Guest of Honour and Mrs Morris; and Lord Annan as a Vice-President. She also spoke of the state of the Society: the following is a slightly shortened transcript: –

ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN

This Luncheon marks the 65th anniversary of the Kipling Society. All its work – talks and visits arranged, lively debates promoted in the pages of the *Journal* – contributes in no small measure to the continued scholarly and popular enthusiasm for the writings of Rudyard Kipling, and provides ample evidence of our vitality in our officially 'pensionable' year.

I extend a warm welcome to everybody here today, and especially our invited speaker, the historian Christopher Morris, fellow of King's College, Cambridge since 1931, and his wife Helen – both familiar figures at the Society's meetings. I also extend a special welcome to George Cutler, for many years responsible for printing the *Journal:* he has recently been seriously ill but is recovering and has our warm wishes for continued recovery.

Shortly after our last annual gathering we heard of the passing of a former President, Sir Angus Wilson. He had suffered ill health for several years, so we had not seen him often. However, we acknowledged him as one of the most sophisticated critics of recent years who have turned their attention to Kipling. He was a man wise enough to know that although his own political attitudes differed widely from his subject's, the likeness of what he called their "territorial sympathies" brought Conservative and Liberal together in concern to avoid "exterior anarchy" and preserve "interior freedom". For this Society, a fitting epitaph to Sir Angus is the graceful conclusion of George Webb's obituary notice on him in the *Journal:* "As our President, he lent us some of his own distinction."

Unfortunately another figure well known for his work on Kipling also died last year, one of our Vice-Presidents, the singer Peter Bellamy. He did much to restore Kipling's early *Barrack-Room Ballads* to the popular form of banjo song in which they originally made such rapid headway.

In the running of the Society, the year has again been eventful. Last July, in response to increased costs, Council sought permission, at a special General Meeting, to raise the rate of subscription. There was agreement about the necessity for this, and we are now confident that for the moment expenditure and income can be matched, and that, crucially, our Editor can continue to delight us with a *Journal* that is a contribution to scholarship and a lively means of communicating with members abroad. Special thanks to Peter Lewis for all his work which allowed us to calculate our real financial position and the steps necessary to remedy it.

July also saw the move of the Society's Library to the Special Collections Room at City University. It is therefore a particular pleasure today to welcome John McGuirk, the Librarian at City. His help and guidance must not go without remark; and we hope that not only academics but those training at City's Graduate Centre for Journalism will take pleasure in the work of the eminent newsman now in their midst.

However, your main interest today is to listen to our guest, Christopher Morris. Some of you, like myself, will have first encountered him in his work as a historian. Nowadays, when so much history has been turned into the plots of discourse theory, I often reflect on his observation at the beginning of *The Tudors,* that "I see no need to apologise that, even in these days, history may still be about individual people."

Although best known as a historian, Christopher Morris also stands in what many of us here think of as the Kipling tradition. Indeed, he is one of a formidable connection of King's scholars who have contributed to the study of Kipling. No small part of that connection is here today – as well as our guest, there is Lord Annan, and the Editor of our Journal. The Kipling connection, however, is even more extensive, for Christopher Morris was taught at Haileybury by Charles Carrington, who recognised him as an outstanding student. More lately, he has shed light, as you will have seen in the *Journal,* on some of Kipling's later stories.

At last year's Luncheon, Professor Rutherford stressed that Kipling's art was primarily political, and that his unswerving adherence to certain principles produced lapses of "intelligence" that could set teeth on edge. In his recent articles, Christopher Morris has presented a rather different view of Kipling – particularly in the Edwardian years and after the War – pointing to the ambivalence, the refusal of closure and definition, that can frequently be found, for instance in "The Gardener" and "As Easy as A.B.C." I am sure we are eager to hear him continue and develop his thoughts further.

ADDRESS BY CHRISTOPHER MORRIS

"Kipling – from Debit to Credit"

In the Authorised Version one of Job's *cris-de-coeur* is rendered, "Oh . . . that mine adversary had written a book."[1] But, I am told, a more accurate version would run, "Oh that the Prosecutor had drawn up a proper indictment." This time last year Professor Rutherford gave us a truly proper indictment.[2] Proper in the sense of thorough, and also in the sense of appropriate. It is indeed proper for us to acknowledge that our idol has at least some toes of clay. The indictment was graced with an elegance I cannot emulate. And, in my fallible judgment, it was about 95% fair.

The gravamen of the charge was that the quality of Kipling's thought was too coarse to match his artistry; indeed that much of his thought was mere unexamined prejudice, lacking objective, analytical or sensitive vision. Up to a point this amounts to saying, "What a pity Kipling was not Henry James!" Nevertheless, there is substance in the charge. Although Kipling could and did think, he did have prejudices, even if by no means all of them were baseless.

We must, however, distinguish what Kipling wrote as a precocious

journalist of undergraduate age from what he wrote in his maturity. We forget sometimes that many of the earlier stories were dashed off overnight to fill spaces in the *Civil & Military* or the *Pioneer.* He himself referred to *Plain Tales* as "in many respects quite the worst of anything I've done".[3] We are apt also to forget that he left India at the age of twenty-three. Which of us did not think or utter something brash or callow before reaching that tender age?

Even quite late in his writing life Kipling could lapse, on his own admission, into "the purely male horse-play and schoolboy rot that women-folk bless 'em find it so hard to understand".[4] And regrettably "The Tie", perhaps his very worst story, appeared in his very last collection. Yet in the mature Kipling such crudities undoubtedly diminish.

I may be begging a question, for it has been held that Kipling never did mature, never outgrew the values as well as "the argot of the Upper Fourth Remove".[5] Nevertheless, the best of the later Kipling is hardly "schoolboy rot". There is, however, one grain of truth in the charge. Kipling happily never lost the child's sense of wonder. Without it he could not so readily have perceived Romance bringing up the nine-fifteen, nor have thanked his Maker because "I saw nought common on Thy Earth." That surely is a large part of his magic, and of his life-long romance with reality.

Moreover, the mature Kipling made ample amends for youthful indiscretions. He had once spoilt a good story by an aside about "the intense selfishness of the lower classes".[6] But he was to create two lower-class women of immense unselfishness – Badalia Herodsfoot (a tragic Eliza Dolittle) and Grace Ashcroft (a tragic Mrs Poyser).

Again, he was liable to satirize Americans – though not without provocation. There was the behaviour of Kipling's oafish brother-in-law; and there was President Cleveland's anti-British sabre-rattling over Venezuela. But remember that the crew of the *We're Here* are in every sense all-American. Remember that passage in *From Sea to Sea* where the future is said to lie at the feet of "the Anglo-American-German-Jew".[7] Remember also that "The White Man's Burden" was an invitation to Americans to share the burden.

Again, Kipling atoned very thoroughly for earlier crudities about "the Female of the Species". Has not the "Harp Song of the Dane Women" claims to be called his greatest poem? He atoned also with that astounding portrait-gallery of women, stretching in time from Mrs Hauksbee to Lady Castorley; and in scale from full-lengths such as Mary Postgate or Helen Turrell to miniatures like Rhoda Dolbie, who freed Frank Midmore from the toils of "the Immoderate Left";[8]

or the Widow Whitgift, who provided transport for the "Pharisees".[9]

Many of these women seem more life-like than the men. Is not Dinah Shadd more convincing than her husband, who bears more than a trace of the stage Irishman? And in *Kim* does not the Sahiba have to be kept behind curtains to prevent her taking over both the book and the boy? Moreover, breathes there a man with soul so dead that he has not fallen for Miss Philadelphia Bucksteed in ''Marklake Witches"?

Maturity also modified, perhaps eliminated, such strains of racism as existed in the younger Kipling. In any case, racism scarcely chimed with Masonry. In Kipling's "Mother-Lodge", you will recall,

> We'd Bola Nath, Accountant,
> An' Saul, the Aden Jew,
> An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman
> Of the Survey Office too;
> There was Babu Chuckerbutty,
> An' Amir Singh the Sikh,
> An' Castro from the fittin'-sheds,
> The Roman Catholick!

Two early stories are impolite about Eurasians.[10] But when Wee Willie Winkie is called a ''child of the dominant race'', the phrase in its context is plainly mock-heroic. Nor did Kipling say that no Indian was fit to govern other Indians (think of Purun Bhagat). He said only that a particularly spineless Bengali was ill-adapted for ruling a particularly warlike Frontier tribe.[11] That other Bengali, Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, is self-styled a "fearful" man but, like Mr Fearing in *The Pilgrim's Progress,* he proves a bonny fighter.

Nor was Kipling's imperialism of the crude, flag-flapping kind. His Empire was of course an empire of service, not one of exploitation. It was hardly even an empire of settlement, since Kipling's settler is somewhat footloose, apt to steal away "with pack and ponies", in search of "something lost behind the Ranges".

Kipling realised moreover that the Empire was impermanent, destined to be "one with Nineveh and Tyre". Does not Findlayson the bridge-builder overhear the Indian Gods prophesying the disappearance of the Raj? Kipling knew that in time the Wall would no longer keep back the Picts and the Winged Hats. Nor did he resent this. In 1897 he commended Canada, "Our Lady of the Snows", for taking powers to exclude British goods, and for proclaiming,

MISS BUCKSTEED

An illustration by Charles E. Brock, R.I., for "Marklake Witches" in *Rewards and Fairies.* The delightful but doomed Philadelphia, mounted on Troubadour, is expressing furious disapproval of something the local "wizard", Jerry Gamm, has done. (She is about to fall off her shying horse; reconciliation with Mr Gamm follows.)

"Daughter am I in my mother's house,
But mistress in my own.
The gates are mine to open,
As the gates are mine to close..."

Yet Kipling saw no need to apologise for the Empire. And this got him into trouble when disapproval of so-called colonialism became a recognisable side-effect of that insidious disease, middle-class guilt. Kipling's belief in the Empire rested on first-hand experience of it, on having seen the Ordes and Tallantires at work.[12] And no bearer of the White Man's Burden could have thought him unjust to "Pagett, M.P."

But were Kipling's views on other matters blinkered or unfair? If you examine them, without prejudices of your own, you may find some of them not wholly groundless. Kipling may indeed have to be credited with foresight as well as insight. If you think "A Walking Delegate" in *The Day's Work* unfair to trade unions, re-read "The Wrong Thing" in *Rewards and Fairies,* where Hal o' the Draft makes some telling points about restrictive practices. Better still, read that little-known story "The Benefactors", written in 1912,[13] where you will meet a prophetic vision of Mr Scargill in all his irresponsibility. Likewise, those of us who remember the student agitators of the 'sixties, thinking as they did in slogans, will be grateful to Kipling for having portrayed them as the Bandar-Log.

Again, was Kipling's view of democracy jaundiced or imperceptive? Remember "As Easy as A.B.C", that subtly ambiguous vision of the future. One of its many morals is that democrats and anti-democrats are equally given to lynching. Besides, as early as 1893, to an American correspondent whom he never met, Kipling spelt out his arguments.[14] "The People" were irresponsible because, unlike kings, they could not be beheaded. And he anticipated a later politician in saying, "'The People' is Mrs Harris. *There aint no such a person."* [15] Above all, he wrote, "there are in life such things as special knowledge, training, obedience, discipline and views that extend beyond the nose of the seer. How the deuce can you expect a million men keenly interested in their own domesticities to have those things?" Is that, we may ask, just ill-considered prejudice?

There were certainly reasonable grounds for disliking the Liberal government of 1906.[16] It was far from Liberal in its dealings with Ulster Protestants or suffragettes or strikers. It broadcast misleading signals as to what, if anything, would make Britain go to war; and it

took Britain into war less well prepared than any other great power. Its ill-judged generosity set the Boers free to oppress the Bantu. It economised with truth in failing to refute the lie that Army officers had mutinied rather than use force in Ulster.[17] For good or ill, its fiscal policy emptied numerous stately homes – in Kipling's words, "robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul". And the Marconi affair gave off an odour of corruption that Kipling was not alone in detecting.[18]

Kipling's views on such matters have of course been labelled "reactionary". But a searching question remains. Other writers have held views no less "reactionary", sometimes near-Fascist, or favoured policies more brutal than any that crossed Kipling's mind. There was T.S. Eliot, writing that "reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable".[19] There was D.H. Lawrence, hoping for a Europe united under a dictator elected by plebiscite for his "noblesse" but "responsible to God alone".[20] Or Yeats, seeing "a terrible beauty" (a phrase he stole from the dead Patrick Pearce) in a piece of pointless violence, disowned at the time by Sinn Fein and resulting in the death of well over 200 innocent bystanders.[21]

And on "the Immoderate Left" there had been Marx and Engels, advocating in 1849 the genocide of races for whom history had no further use, specifying Basques, Bretons, Scottish Highlanders and Southern Slavs.[22] There was Shaw, who thought it a shameful waste of resources to keep lunatics alive, and who wrote, "If we desire a certain type of civilization and culture we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit into it."[23] There was Auden, whose support for the left in Spain involved "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder".[24]

All these have been forgiven, whereas Kipling, if pardoned at all, has been pardoned with serious reservations or obvious reluctance. It behoves us to ask why.

Part of the answer lies in simple snobbery. Literary critics are Sons of Mary, brought up to look down on the Sons of Martha or on those who celebrate their doings. Besides, Kipling was popular. The common people heard him gladly. Therefore he could be dismissed as "vulgar". "The papers", he wrote in 1890 to Mr Oscar Browning of my College, "The papers have very cleverly taken 'vulgarity' for the note of attack. You *cannot* combat that charge and it always leaves the critic a little bit above you."[25] Sadly, Kipling did not live to read a younger poet's aphorism: "In literature, vulgarity is preferable to nullity, just as grocer's port is preferable to distilled water."[26]

But I want to suggest that the root cause of Kipling's fall from grace

was something else: Kipling can be embarrassing. I am not thinking of his sporadic lapses into sentimentality; of how, for instance, he ruins a fine story, "A Deal in Cotton" in *Actions and Reactions,* by making Mrs Strickland positively drool over her son – we could at least have done without her humming the Magnificat. But Kipling's generation had a sweeter tooth than ours: think of Barrie, or of H.G. Wells writing to his wife in baby-language.[27] There are sentimental strands in "The Gadsbys", in "The Brushwood Boy", in "William the Conqueror", in "An Habitation Enforced": but we would not wish them blotted from the canon. Nor is it easy to forgive T.S. Eliot for omitting that sentimental poem "The Flowers" from his anthology of Kipling's verse.

Kipling can be embarrassing in quite another sense. He can make you shame-faced if you have been "making mock of uniforms that guard you while you sleep". Or we may not want to be caught keeping a stiff upper lip, or subscribing to the work ethic, or even accepting that we have duties as well as rights. If we could keep all the commandments in "If –" we should certainly feel, and probably be, intolerably priggish. We are a little reluctant to admit that the manly virtues are actually virtuous, still less, that so-called middle-class values have some validity. Kipling told us unpalatable truths or, worse still, unpalatable truisms. His gods were indeed "the Gods of the Copybook Headings", and some of his wisdom could be called folk or proverbial wisdom.

Remember Kipling's warning to the Appeasers of 1933, in "The Bonfires":

> We know that Ones and Ones make Twos –
> Till Demos votes them Three or Nought.
> We know the Fenris Wolf is loose
> We know what Fight has not been fought.
> We know the Father to the Thought
> Which argues Babe and Cockatrice
> Would play together, were they taught.
> We know *that* Bonfire on the Ice.
>
> We know that Thriving comes by Thrift.
> We know the Key must keep the Door.
> We know his Boot-straps cannot lift
> The frightened Waster off the Floor.
> We know these things, and we deplore
> That not by any Artifice
> Can they be altered. Furthermore
> We know the Bonfires on the Ice!

We almost expect Kipling to say, "There is no such thing as a free lunch." And at moments he gets near to preaching what Mrs Thatcher supposed the Victorian virtues to have been – though he did not care overmuch for "the Gods of the Market-Place".

Unfortunately, once he is in the pulpit, Kipling may remind some of us of what we learnt at the feet of our governesses – of leading-strings we thought we had cast off. But, by the same token, there is hope on the horizon: a generation has arisen that knew not governesses. They should, however, be learning from experience that Kipling was quite often right. Therefore he will almost certainly attain, and retain, the esteem that is his due.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I have no hesitation in giving you the traditional toast: "The *unfading* genius of Rudyard Kipling".

VOTE OF THANKS BY THE PRESIDENT, DR MICHAEL BROCK

I am very glad to be allowed the privilege of thanking our Guest of Honour for his fine Address. We can all agree, I think, that he has achieved a highly successful speech for the defence, and one which was much needed.

It is unreasonable to suppose that a great poet and writer of fiction should have possessed, alongside talents in that direction which amounted to genius, all the cool, dry skills of a leading political analyst. We are apt moreover to forget the enormous differences between the political climate of Kipling's day and that of our own. We are brought up short by some of his political views and asides. We forget that such views were then very widespread. They are encountered in Kipling because he is still read: that they were held by others is overlooked, because those others have been forgotten. J.M. Barrie, as our speaker reminded us, outdid any sentimentalities to be found in Kipling.

Kipling's attitude in the Marconi Affair of 1912-13 may strike us as extreme and rather unbalanced; but it was no more extreme than Belloc's, and Belloc was a Liberal. My wife and I have edited a large number of H.H. Asquith's letters for publication. We are thus well placed to confirm that, massive as his governmental and political skills were, his record and that of his Liberal government were not without blemish.

May I ask you to join me in a very warm vote of thanks for a striking and timely Address, and one which has helped us all towards achieving a balanced view.

FOOTNOTES TO CHRISTOPHER MORRIS'S ADDRESS

1. *Job,* XXXI, 35.

2. *See Kipling Journal,* June 1991, pp 13-19.

3. To F.N. Doubleday, 28 August 1896, in *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling,* ed. T. Pinney (Macmillan, 1990), vol 2, p 247. (Cf. vol 1, pp 141, 152.)

4. To Robert Barr, 28 July 1894, in Pinney, *op. cit.,* vol 2, p 143.

5. E.g. Rebecca West, *New Statesman,* 25 January 1936; reprinted in *Rebecca West, A Celebration* (Penguin, 1978), pp 439-445.

6. "The Drums of the Fore and Aft" *(Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories),* p 331 in Macmillan, Pocket Edition.

7. Letter XXXIII in *From Sea to Sea,* vol II, p 31 (in same edition).

8. "'My Son's Wife"' *(A Diversity of Creatures),*

9. '"Dymchurch Flit'" *(Puck of Pook's Hill).*

10. "Kidnapped" and "His Chance in Life" *(Plain Tales from the Hills).*

11. "The Head of the District" *(Life's Handicap).*

12. *Ibid.*

13. Published only in *Uncollected Prose, Part II* (Sussex Edition, London, 1938, vol XXX) and in *Uncollected Prose* (Burwash Edition, New York, 1941, vol XXIII).

14. To Edward Lucas White, 10-17 December 1893, in Pinney, *op, cit.,* vol 2, pp 114-117.

15. *Ibid.,* slightly misquoting Betsey Prig in *Martin Chuzzlewit,* chapter 49.

16. The most objective account of the Liberal administration is still that of Sir R.C.K. Ensor in *England: 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1936). See especially pp 450-479.

17. For the so-called Mutiny see A.P. Ryan, *Mutiny at the Curragh* (Macmillan, 1956); Sir James Fergusson, *The Curragh Incident* (Faber, 1964); Sir Hubert Gough, *Soldiering On* (Arthur Barker, 1954), pp 98-112; David James, *Lord Roberts* (Hollis & Carter, 1954), pp 466-476; and Roy Jenkins, *Asquith* (Collins Fontana, 1967), pp 342-352.

18. See Kipling's poem "Gehazi", 1915, addressed to Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading, after his receipt of a peerage and other high offices and honours.

19. *After Strange Gods* (Faber, 1934), p 20.

20. *Movements in European History* (revised edition, Oxford, 1971), pp 306 & 321. The Epilogue to the suppressed edition of 1921 (attributed to "Lawrence H. Davison") is even more extravagant.

21. Including a man who protested when his lorry, his means of livelihood, was commandeered for a barricade. What Pearce had written was, "It is murder and death that make possible the terrible beautiful thing we call physical life." Cited by Father Francis Shaw, S.J., in "The Canon of Irish History", in *Studies LXI* (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1972), p 137. See also James Stephens, *The Insurrection in Dublin* (Maunsel, Dublin, 1916), pp 16-18; Robert Kee, *The Green Flag* (Quartet Books, 1977), vol II, pp 271, 274; Father Shaw, *op. cit.,* pp 125, 148.

22. In *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung,* January & February 1849, cited in George Watson, *Politics & Literature in Modern Britain* (Macmillan, 1977), pp 128-9.

23. Preface to *On the Rocks* (Constable, 1934), pp 145, 152. (Cf. pp 156, 161, 162.)

24. "Spain", 1937, verse 24.

25. Pinney, *op. cit.,* vol 2, p 24.

26. W.H. Auden, *Selected Essays* (Faber, 1964), p 11.

27. *Experiment in Autobiography* (Gollancz, 1934), vol II, pp 439-460.

"A GAILY-ORNAMENTED *RUTH OR* FAMILY BULLOCK-CART"

The Sahiba and her escort on the road with the Lama, in chapter IV of *Kim.* She sits under the rearward dome, largely concealed, but her presence is dominant. A drawing by Charles Fouqueray for a French edition (Delagrave, Paris, 1933).

FOUND IN THE ATTIC?

A NEW VIEW OF "MRS. BATHURST"

by GEOFFREY PLOWDEN

[In March 1992, in my foreword to Philip Mason's article on "Mrs. Bathurst" *(Traffics and Discoveries),* I said that here was a story which would not "lie down". Its extraordinary features have long provoked a flow of ingenious critical comment and controversy, which shows no sign of abating. The present issue not only includes a reader's letter on the subject but also this article, in which Mr Plowden proffers an interesting and novel theory: he attributes much of the undeniable force of the narrative to its apparently calculated derivation from standard formulae of classical Greek drama.

I welcome this contribution to the "Mrs. Bathurst" canon, and am far from supposing Kipling incapable of deliberately structuring the plot along such lines as Mr Plowden infers. Still, I dare say the next commentator will approach this tantalising tale from yet another angle: indeed the novelist Nicholas Freeling recently did so (at the Society's meeting in London in February), and authorised me to publish what he said, including his emphatic assertion that the second tramp *must* have been Mrs Bathurst. Published in due course it shall be – though we will not let one story engross the *Journal.*

The harsh view is sometimes expressed that "Mrs. Bathurst" was cut so ruthlessly that no underlying meaning need be sought; that by stylistic miscalculation Kipling mutilated it. I should be sorry to think so, but it is conceivable. A Canadian scholar, Maurice Hutton, in *Many Minds* (Hodder, 1927), wrote of the "proverbial fact . . . that an author is generally the worst judge, interpreter and expounder of his own work. Virgil . . . wanted to burn the Aeneid. Wordsworth never knew when he ... drivelled. Tennyson throws no light, only added darkness, on difficult Tennysoniana. Browning frankly left the oracles in Browningese to the Browning clubs."

Hutton, an admirer of Kipling, detected no such opacity in his work (but noted the oddity of Pyecroft seemingly quoting Browning in "Mrs. Bathurst"). Rather he categorised Kipling as "a moralist, even if his is not exactly ... the morality of the New Testament". Certainly Mr Plowden finds Kipling implying a pre-Christian ethic in "Mrs. Bathurst" – in terms of the implacable doom so essentially inherent in Attic tragedy.

Mr Plowden is himself a classicist, who after 'Greats' at Balliol joined the Home Civil Service, and worked in the Admiralty and other departments. His father had been in the old Indian Civil Service; his great-aunt, a friend of the Kiplings, was the often-quoted Edith Plowden; he himself is decidedly knowledgable about Kipling, and was well qualified to review Nora Crook's *Kipling's Myths* for us in June 1991. He is also an authority on Pope, and has written a learned book, *Pope on Classic Ground* (Ohio U.P., 1983), exploring the mass of allusions and underlying meanings in Pope's poetry. – *Ed.]*

This is not another attempt to solve "the mystery of 'Mrs. Bathurst'" by describing the events which Kipling has left us guessing about. It is, rather, an attempt to analyse the form of the story, and thereby perhaps to account in part for its power by showing that in it Kipling was reaching out to one of the highest kinds of European literary art.

In spite of its name, "Mrs. Bathurst" is really the story of Vickery. We know much more about him, including his fate, than about Mrs Bathurst. We know she had "It", but all we know about her actions is that she travelled from New Zealand to England, but not why, or with what result. But we know that Vickery was a widower, and had a daughter whose photograph he carried around with him, and possibly an infant child also. We know that he had reached a respected position as a senior rate, and was close to his reward of security and repose, when some guilt from the past was brought home to him by the wraith of Mrs Bathurst, appearing to him in the circus film-show; and that his degradation, exile to the "side-world" of the deserter[1], and death speedily followed. Obviously intending some parallel, Kipling has provided a pastiche fragment of Jacobean tragedy as an epigraph.

This article will argue that the story itself is also a serious pastiche or imitation of tragedy – but this time of Greek tragedy. How far Kipling actually planned this effect will be considered briefly later, but for the moment we may note that, although he does not seem to have known any Greek, there is a sprinkling of Greek books at Bateman's, including translations of Aeschylus, Sophocles and part of Euripides – all nineteenth-century volumes and therefore preceding "Mrs. Bathurst".[2]

The chief theorist and critic of tragedy was of course Aristotle, but his *Poetics* is not at Bateman's. Kipling could have learnt much about tragedy from the article on it in his solid Victorian classical dictionary.[3] The same article also contains a substantial, though not fully rounded, account of Aristotle's views.[4] It would have been easy for Kipling to get up more on the subject from other books, and from his classically-educated friends.

A tragedy is a play, and "Mrs. Bathurst" is not. Nevertheless, "Mrs. Bathurst" is written almost wholly in dialogue, and can be read as the account given by Kipling of a play that he himself had a small part in. The play itself would have consisted of his meeting with Hooper, and then, after a change of scene, the conversation in the railway carriage, which Kipling gives us first-hand in direct speech, with some accompaniment from the Malays and the picnickers. We may look on Pritchard and Pyecroft as fulfilling, in part, the role of

the chorus in a Greek play, since they know the background of the principal characters and take some part in the action. Hooper is more like the messengers that regularly appear to describe off-stage events, such as the calamities of the heroes.

Of course, Vickery and Mrs Bathurst themselves never appear on this 'stage', but their words are also given in direct speech, so that they are brought before us by the same method as Hooper, Pyecroft and Pritchard. Once given that we are not going to see actors, there is not much difference between reading vivid dialogue at first hand and at second hand. Techniques of this sort existed in Greek tragedy, although they were not so highly developed. For example, the chorus in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* relate the sacrifice of Iphigenia ten years earlier, quoting the soothsayer Calchas and Agamemnon himself in direct speech, thus bringing before the audience or reader events that could themselves have been, and later were, a separate play.

A tragedy is a certain kind of story, told in a certain kind of way, about certain kinds of people. In Aristotle's famous and poetic definition, which has passed into the literary consciousness of Europe, its incidents arouse pity and fear, "and so achieve the catharsis of such emotions".[5] His exact meaning is debatable, but it is certain that throughout the *Poetics* he uses the capacity to generate pity and terror as the touchstone of what is truly tragic. He distinguishes six constituent parts of a tragedy: thought, diction, spectacle, music, plot, character.

Thought, he says, is shown by the characters in establishing that some particular matter is so, or not so; or in making some general point. There is a good deal of reasoning about particular matters, or philosophising about life in general, in "Mrs. Bathurst". *Diction* is the expression of thought in words; and as usual Kipling has taken vast trouble with the words of the characters, and of his scanty narrative also. "Mrs. Bathurst" has a harsh style, most noticeable after the sweetness of "'They'". *Spectacle* would include scenery, costume and the movements of the actors, including dancing. Again, Kipling has used his full descriptive powers to bring the brilliant scene to our mind's eye. Dancing, and the fourth element of *music,* are provided by the picnickers, mentioned at the beginning and end: they supply the musical function of the chorus and, as many have noted, their closing song comments on the action, as in a tragedy. So these four parts of a tragedy have a substantial presence in the story.

Aristotle has much to say on plot. A plot must have a beginning, a middle and an end, in logical sequence; must not be just a series of

episodes. It has also a *desis,* or tying of the knot, and a *lusis,* or untying. In Sophocles's *Oedipus Tyrannus,* the *desis* was before the play began, and the play consists of the *lusis.* In "Mrs. Bathurst", the *desis* was before the events we know about, and what we know about Vickery's actions and fate forms the *lusis.*

Our frustration with "Mrs. Bathurst" arises mainly from our ignorance of the exact nature of the *desis;* but while this obscurity may be un-Hellenic it is not necessarily un-tragic, since our lack of detailed knowledge does not necessarily weaken our emotions. The *lusis* consists, as Aristotle prefers, of incidents occurring unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another, leading up to the revelation of Vickery's death: it is managed with almost superhuman skill. We note that Kipling strictly observes all the unities, including the only one that really mattered to Aristotle, the unity of plot, since, at least once the story of Vickery has begun, all the parts are connected.

Plots can, says Aristotle, and the better ones do, contain a *peripeteia* or turning-point, which alters the situation of the characters. Plots can also contain an *anagnorisis,* a recognition or discovery, which is a change from ignorance to knowledge. The best plots are those where the *peripeteia* and the discovery are combined.

In "Mrs. Bathurst" the *peripeteia* occurs when Vickery first sees the film: this changes his life, and points it towards death. I would suggest that the film also provides a discovery, telling Vickery for the first time that Mrs Bathurst has left her safe haven in New Zealand and has come, as he thinks, to look for him: so we have the desired combination of *peripeteia* and discovery. There is a further discovery at the end, with the proof that Vickery is dead. This, according to Aristotle, is the least artistic sort, being effected by bodily marks; but in the circumstances little else was possible.

Aristotle says that tragic characters should not be either very good or very bad, but about as good as ourselves or a little better (he is not fully consistent on this point). We are to see such a person passing from happiness to misery, as a consequence not of depravity but of some fault or error *(hamartia).* Vickery is middling good: he is certainly no monster, since he is destroyed by conscience, to which a monster would have been immune. The other main character, Mrs Bathurst, is also presented as morally good.

Exactly what Vickery's wrongdoing was we do not know, so we cannot say whether Artistotle would have described it as an 'error'. However, if it was a betrayal of Mrs Bathurst it resembles Jason's betrayal of Medea in essentials, as well as in certain accidentals. One of Aristotle's most telling points is that a true tragic effect is obtained

by the spectacle not of enemies, or of people who are indifferent to each other, harming each other, but rather of persons who are bound by family or affection. Vickery harmed, we presume, his wife and daughter; and also, it seems, another woman whom he loved and was loved by; and the harm was returned to him.

The final test is, does the story arouse pity and terror? It did in me, when I first read it, and still does. Other readers will know whether it does in them. Perhaps more significantly, since it shows Kipling's intention, the characters who took part in the conversation themselves feel pity and terror at the end. Aristotle remarks that the plot should be so framed that a person who hears of the incidents, even without seeing them take place, should "shudder and take pity".[6] Pritchard, after hearing from Hooper of the discovery of Vickery's corpse, shudders and covers his face in pity.

Thus, once past the prologue, the story conforms closely to the Greek tragic pattern. Like Oedipus, Vickery starts in apparent prosperity, but then his guilt overtakes him, he 'blinds' himself with drink, and wanders away to die.

It may be objected that there is too much coincidence in Mrs Bathurst's appearance in the film. However, Vickery's state of guilt was such that if this incident had not caused his ruin, another would have done; so the coincidence was not really indispensable to the plot. Aristotle gives, with some approbation, a rather similar example, of the statue of a dead man falling on the man who caused his death: these things are not thought to happen at random, he says.

It is true that the prologue – that is, the story up to the first mention of Vickery – introduces characters and incidents that do not form part of the main plot. We must remember that Greek tragedians used well-known characters and situations: Kipling must be allowed a little licence to establish his own. Once we get to Vickery it all runs in classic form.

Besides, as many writers have noted, the episodes are connected in various ways with, and prepare for, the main story. In our terms, both are examples of seduction from duty, a form of *hamartia.* The realisation on the part of Pritchard and Pyecroft that they too could stumble would have increased their pity and terror at Vickery's fate. There is a fine dramatic irony in the ever-facetious Pyecroft's description of the captain's wrath as "thunder and lightning": did he recall those words, I wonder, when he heard how Vickery had died?

The problem of the second corpse must also be faced. Some of the explanations advanced might tend to upset my theory, but they can be

rejected on other grounds. First, the corpse wast not a woman's; if it had been, Hooper's informants who saw the two tramps alive, and Hooper himself who found the corpses in good enough condition to show Vickery's tattoo, would have known it, and we should have been told. And, with all respect, I cannot take seriously theories like Bodelsen's and Mrs Crook's. The corpse was that of somebody that Vickery had fallen in with by chance, and its function is to show that Vickery stood up to court death.

It would indeed be inartistic, as some have said, to introduce another character at the end, but I do not regard the corpse as a character, merely as an object. In a sense, the second tramp had to die, because he knew too much for Kipling's convenience about what was in Vickery's mind: if he had lived he would have talked, and spoiled the story by dispelling the mystery.

As to Kipling's intentions, I find it hard to believe that such a complex series of effects could have come into being except through calculation and effort. It is more credible that he read the books on his shelves, and decided to see what he could achieve in imitation, using his favourite theme of the outcast: after all, Oedipus was the supreme outcast. I think he had the artistic ambition for that. The music and dancing, where one would not really expect to find them, especially seem to point to a conscious intention.

He may have left a further clue in his repeated reference to the Greeks as the suppliers of food and beer for the party, and ''of all things at a price". At the very end Pyecroft suggests that they finish the beer, as if, perhaps, to say that the interlude of Greek inspiration were now over.

In any case, the story conforms to classic principles as well as could be expected in a modern prose work; and we feel Vickery's fate as tragic rather than merely painful, as Arnold might have said. If this reading is valid we should perhaps remember, in forming theories about "Mrs. Bathurst", that Kipling's chief aim would have been to create pity and terror, and that for this all Vickery had to do was to die as an outcast: the other characters needed to play no further part.

NOTES

1. See Kipling's poem, "'Wilful-Missing' (Deserters of the Boer War)".

2. Mr Fox and the staff at Bateman's kindly enabled me to inspect the books.

3. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* by William Smith, William Wayte and G.E. Marindin (John Murray, London, 3rd edn, 1891).

4. I have used Ingram Bywater's full edition, *Aristotle and the Art of Poetry* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909).

5. Bywater cites nearly sixty translations over four centuries. Among the many famous names represented are Milton, Lessing and Goethe.

6. *Phrittein kai eleein.* This was badly translated in the nineteenth century: I have found "shudder" only once, though one would have thought no other word possible. Bywater speaks of "the cold shudder experienced in moments of intense fear or horror". Kipling may perhaps have heard the phrase somewhere.

A Grecian medallion (artist unknown), seeming to show Zeus, wielder of lightning, arguing with Athene, patron goddess of Attica. An underlying naval theme is suggested.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Mr J.N.H. Brennan *(Wexford, Ireland);* Mr G.V. Coles *(Victoria, Australia):* Mr W.G.A. Crumley *(Shropshire);* Mr R.P. Jones *(Dyfed);* Princeton University Library *(New Jersey, U.S.A.);* Mrs D.A. Scott *(London);* Mr D.N. Vermont *(Hertfordshire);* Mr D.T. Verrall *(Sussex);* The Hon. Petronella Wyatt *(London).*

"THE ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR."

Bernard Partridge's cartoon was in *Punch* on 27 December 1899, "with apologies to Mr. Kipling" – whose poem, "The Absent-Minded Beggar", an appeal for funds for soldiers' families, was currently a popular and much-reproduced sensation.

BOOK REVIEW

BEGGARS IN RED: The British Army 1789-1889 by John Strawson (Hutchinson, 1991); xiv + 244 pp; 8 pp of illustrations; 7 maps; notes, bibliography & index; ISBN 0 09 174746 5; hardback £18.99.

Major-General Strawson has written a superb book about the British Army during the hundred years from the French Revolution till shortly after the Golden Jubilee of the "Widow at Windsor".

It is not a book of original research, and understandably so, as most of the original material must have been worked over, time after time. It is nevertheless studded with illuminating quotations from historians of the period, such as Cecil Woodham-Smith, Elizabeth Longford, Arthur Bryant, Jan Morris, Philip Mason and the Marquess of Anglesey; as well as from acute commentators who were sometimes also actors, including Macaulay and the Duke of Wellington himself.

His own analyses and descriptions are equal to his quotations. He makes his judgments unequivocally, like a good soldier, and they are generally fair and backed by proper argument.

There was obviously a problem of how much general history to include. There is enough for the purposes of a framework, and those sufficiently interested to read the book will be credited with a general understanding of the period. As a result, the younger Pitt hardly gets his just deserts; Addington possibly more than his; and many of the great names of nineteenth-century British history make only brief appearances. We get Pitt on Addington, but not Canning on them both, which I think is delicious:— "Pitt is to Addington / As London is to Paddington."

The book starts before the set dates with a chapter entitled "Triumph and Disaster" – no impostors these, but accurate descriptions of events in India and Canada on the one hand and the American Colonies on the other. We get the first of many fascinating insights into the characters of great leaders with a description of Wolfe, a general at thirty-two, reading Gray's Elegy to his fellow-commanders on the eve of battle and of his own death. (Clive was even younger: twenty-five at Arcot and thirty-one at Plassey.)

For a hundred years, such was the extent of empire, and the failure on the part of those governed often to concur about its benefits, that there was usually a war somewhere – if not in Europe in India, Afghanistan, China, New Zealand, South Africa, Sudan or the Gold Coast.

In Europe and Egypt the wars of Napoleon take up nearly half the

book. We are reminded of the poet Wolfe's moving words about Sir John Moore at Corunna, and much else about that great general's influence on the training and tactics of the Army. We ride with Napoleon's Marshals, and comprehend the genius of the Emperor himself, overcome at last by Wellington – "aloof, austere, infinitely patient, tirelessly vigilant", another sort of genius.

The Crimean War, the only other major European war during that century, is dealt with comparatively briefly. In fact the Indian Mutiny, called here the Sepoy War, occurring soon afterwards, gets as much space. According to G.M. Trevelyan, the Crimean War did not produce Army reform, presumably because of the dead hand of the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief.

That is not to say that reform was not long overdue, as has been shown by Cecil Woodham-Smith. It had to wait for Cardwell, appointed Secretary of State for War in Gladstone's first administration in 1868. The author quotes R.C.K. Ensor thus: "Cardwell's place among statesmen is that of the greatest British army reformer during the nineteenth century. In him economy and efficiency met." Such are the prerequisites for all reformers.

General Strawson deals succinctly and enlighteningly with these reforms, which had the effect of modernising, humanising and rationalising the Army – spurred on by, at once, the example and the threat of Prussia.

Earlier reforms are described; those of Dundas, Windham and the Duke of York – of whom we have a picture, straining his neck and credulity as he presumably watches his ten thousand men marching up to the top of the hill. There are other pictures, some familiar like Pitt with one hand in his pocket, and George III reviewing the Dragoon Guards; and some battle scenes: the Light Brigade at Balaclava of course, but also the defence of Rorke's Drift, and the attack on Abu Klea Wells. The maps are excellent, but we could have done with more battle plans, only Waterloo and Balaclava appearing.

The hero of the book is none of the generals, although we get a good sight of all the great ones from Clive to Wolseley, as well as the blunderers: it is Tommy Atkins, and his muse is Rudyard Kipling. Whenever possible, General Strawson gets a soldier to recount the battle: an infantryman in Fraser's Regiment at Quebec, Rifleman Harris of the 95th at Vimeiro, Henry Metcalfe of the 32nd Foot at Doudpore in 1858.

A volunteer from the dregs of humanity, often drunk and disorderly, rampaging in victory, sometimes finding his match in the Fuzzy-Wuzzies for instance; but steadfast when well led, honourable

in his conduct to his brothers-in-arms, accurate in his fire, resourceful at moments of crisis, constant in his loyalty to Regiment, Queen and Country, in that order. According to Charles Carrington [in his introduction to *The Complete Barrack-Room Ballads],* "Search English literature and you will find no adequate account of the British soldier, what he thought of his officers, and what he talked about the night before the battle, between Shakespeare's *Henry V* and Kipling's *Barrack-Room Ballads."* In the latter part of the nineteenth century Kipling has the field to himself.

The title, "Beggars in Red" [from Kipling's "The Widow at Windsor"], leaves out, but should not, the riflemen in green and the gunners in blue. They do get plenty of mentions in despatches, the riflemen especially in Sir John Moore's time; and the gunners, particularly the horse gunners, everywhere as is only appropriate. But few get named. So let me put in a word for Captain Ramsey, whose exploits at the battle of Fuentes de Oñoro on 11 May 1811 were read out on each anniversary, from Napier's account, to the assembled Bull's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery (the battle and the troop are mentioned), when I was a national service subaltern serving with it. I hope they still are today.

In his preface, General Strawson warns against the soldiers of today forgetting their history. When you have read the book, read the preface again. It has some wise things to say about today's Army, and particularly about the regimental system; and after pointing out that "the Victorian English did not on the whole think much of, or greatly respect their soldiers, whether officers or rankers", it ends with a quotation from Carrington's *Rudyard Kipling:–*

> "Yet, underlying the surface flow of anti-militarism there remained a hidden current of admiration, not rational and not articulate, for the redcoats, with their strange insignia and pomp, whose life seemed far removed from the workaday world of England in the nineteenth century. Who were they then, these smart neat young officers, this rough and hearty rank and file who led a double life: appearing sometimes in the police-court news as drunken, diseased reprobates; sometimes as the heroes of quite fabulous adventures in far distant lands, the thin red line of Balaclava, the storming-columns of Delhi, the defenders of Rorke's Drift, the men who advanced across the desert by night to Tel-el-Kebir, who marched through the mountain-passes in tropical heat from Kabul to Kandahar?"

DAVID VERMONT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[I am glad to receive letters intended for publication. However, since more are received than can in practice be printed, I must be selective, and reserve – unless expressly told otherwise — the usual right to shorten a letter. In some cases it may be possible for the text, and/or enclosures, to be summarised under "Points from Other Letters". – *Ed.]*

"MRS. BATHURST": BETRAYAL AND OTHER POINTS

From Mr T.L.A. Daintith, 15 Whitehall, Watchet, Somerset TA23 OBD

Dear Sir,

There is one aspect of "Mrs. Bathurst" *[Traffics and Discoveries]* which I do not remember being remarked upon: the question of unrewarded betrayal – unrewarded because the object of desire is unobtainable or an *ignis fatuus,* leading the searcher (almost literally in one case) into the wilderness.

As is often the case with Kipling, the story is told within a framework (the four men talking on a beach); but there is also, as it were, a mount enclosing the picture (the story of Boy Niven and the deserting sailors). Only then do we get to Vickery and Mrs Bathurst.

The first treachery is that of the maid. She sees a well-set-up sergeant of marines and he merely looks at her, no more. He does not appear to be a lady-killer, in fact he is rather bashful; but the maid is immediately smitten, and betrays her master to the extent of stealing a bottle of Bass. Her reward is nothing – not even a kiss or the expectation that Pritchard will return.

The second treachery is of course the desertion of eight sailors and marines who are foolish enough to believe a most unlikely story told them by a youngster. They wander round in a circle, with Boy Niven, a sort of Puck, luring them onwards until they get back to where they started. Again, the promised reward does not even exist outside their imagination.

Finally we come to Vickery. He pursues a flickering image on a screen – not the reality but the shadow. He follows a moving likeness, knowing it for what it is but still prepared to leave, to betray, everything that makes up his life – his ship, and even his daughter. (What is to become of a fifteen-year-old girl who is orphaned?)

The scale of the retribution matches the betrayal. The maid gets nothing in return; the sailors and marines are punished according to the rules; and Vickery is killed, struck by lightning – "smitten", one might say.

There are various small points which may or may not have some significance. When asked to get Sergeant Pritchard's "particular", the niece Ada knows immediately what is wanted, although he has not been in the bar for five years. She and her aunt seem to have had remarkable memories. Could there be some sort of balance between Vickery's daughter left in London, presumably alone, and Mrs Bathurst's niece Ada, presumably left in Auckland? One gets the impression that Ada was a young woman, even a teenager.

Hooper retrieved from Vickery's body what is generally understood to be the lower denture; but why should he have described it as a curiosity or souvenir? And would a denture of those days have survived a lightning-bolt in such a fashion as to be recognisable? Could the mysterious item have been Mrs Bathurst's gold watch, fused together?

When Vickery refers to his "lawful wife", is there any significance in his choice of words? Did he suggest that there was also an "unlawful wife"? Could this have been Mrs Bathurst?

The Western Mail, bearing Mrs Bathurst, came into Paddington Station. She would have travelled up from the west – Plymouth perhaps? Possibly she had been there in hope of finding Vickery; and he, not knowing this, came to the wrong conclusion; hence his murderous reaction to Pyecroft's suggestion of another man. Had she just arrived from New Zealand she would presumably have landed at Liverpool or Southampton, and would in any case have had with her more luggage than "a little reticule".

Perhaps the greatest mystery about "Mrs. Bathurst" is that no one seems to have asked Kipling to explain the knotty points. P.G. Wodehouse, who knew Kipling well enough to hold a correspondence with him, complained that the story had been pared away to excess, but he never raised the matter.

Yours etc.
T.L.A. DAINTITH

SOUTH AFRICANISMS

From Mr J. Cunningham, Silversprings, 140 The Burn Road, Templepatrick, Ballyclare, Co. Antrim BT39 ODQ

Dear Sir,

"Mrs. Bathurst" is indeed a deep mine, which seems to defy all attempts to work it out!

A small point which has always puzzled me is Hooper's repeated

use of the phrase "you see". I could never accept any of the suggestions I have seen as plausible, so should like to offer my own idea, that it is an attempt to reproduce some peculiarity in the speech of an Anglo- (as opposed to Dutch-) South African. I was re-reading "The Way that he Took" *[Land and Sea Tales]* which was first published in 1900, four years before "Mrs. Bathurst", and found just the same pattern of speech from the South African nurse who had been brought up in the Karroo.

Is their speech-form an attempt to catch some peculiarity of South African English – a peculiarity possibly lost since the stories were written? Hooper is rather a flat character otherwise, but is perhaps contrasted with the more travelled Pyecroft and Pritchard, as the specifically *South African* anchor in the tale.

There is a possible echo of this in "The Comprehension of Private Copper" *[Traffics and Discoveries]* dating from 1902. The renegade British South African constantly uses the expression "—eh?", at least until he loses his temper. Of course, his accent and speech generally are an important aspect of the story, in this case.

It would be interesting if any member more familiar with South African speech could throw light on the subject.

Yours faithfully
JOSIAS CUNNINGHAM

"BOW AND SPEAR"

From Dr J.D. Lewins, Magdalene College, Cambridge CB3 OAG.

Dear Sir,

At the 1991 Annual Luncheon Mrs Lisa Lewis recounted to me the difficulties she had experienced whilst working on footnotes for an anthology reproduction of "The Captive" *[Traffics and Discoveries,* 1904]. In this story, the central character Zigler uses a phrase that suggests it is a quotation, although not marked as such by Kipling: ". . . now I am the captive of your bow and spear" [Macmillan Pocket Edition, page 5].

Mrs Lewis mentioned the strangeness of one person wielding weapons for both close and long-distance combat, and her attempts at the time to trace the origins of the phrase. She told me that the *Readers' Guide* [volume 4, page 1880] suggests a biblical source, *Jeremiah,* VI, 23: "They shall lay hold on bow and spear". But this seems to have little relation to the Captive – title and theme of the story – and I regard it as unsatisfactory.

It is also notable that the story opens with a quotation from *Isaiah,* XXVIII, 16: "He that believeth shall not make haste", used by Zigler himself within the story. Zigler is therefore capable of using biblical quotations in the author's mind.

Indeed, Zigler turns up later and uses the phrase again, in "The Edge of the Evening" [*A Diversity of Creatures,* 1917, Pocket Edition, page 274]: "You are the captive of *my* bow and spear now."

I then came across the earlier use of almost the same phrase in the poem "Arithmetic on the Frontier" *[Departmental Ditties,* 1886]. In formal quotation marks on this earliest occasion, Kipling's last lines read:

> The 'captives of our bow and spear'
> Are cheap, alas! as we are dear.

If the matter were confined to the two stories, I might have believed that the phrase was from a now unknown American author – as suited to the American character Zigler, and Kipling's love-hate relationship with the United States. But in the light of the earlier poem I now feel this is unlikely.

The poem has three quotations in all. The first is biblical ("All flesh is grass", *Isaiah,* XL, 6); the second Shakespearean ("villainous saltpetre", *Henry IV Part I,* 1, iii); so a biblical origin for the third is certainly feasible. But as an alternative for *Jeremiah,* would *II Kings,* VI, 22 serve? "And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou has taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow?"

The problem is that this is not the exact and formal quotation of the poem. Zigler could be forgiven for quoting erroneously, but would we forgive Kipling? Certainly the rephrasing contains some juxtaposition of the weapons of close and distant warfare; indeed a bowman armed with a short sword may be thought more likely than 'bow and spear', although I feel neither phrase is meant to imply a single warrior.

There are many allusions in Kipling's Indian writing to the Bible: characters such as Naboth *(I Kings,* XXI) in *Life's Handicap* (1891), an Old Testament image in an Indian context. Given two well known quotations in the poem, is it likely that Kipling would have chosen an obscure source for the third?

I had contemplated that the corruption is somehow connected with Masonic ritual, itself of biblical derivation. Zigler is made in "The

Captive" to refer to the narrator as 'Brother'. However, this proposal seems to fail in the light of the earlier poem.

But I feel the more likely explanation is that Homer nodded. Kipling in his poem, and in the pressure to fabricate the final couplet, elides two biblical quotations into one misquotation. Kipling likes the sound, but in re-using it in the subsequent stories acknowledges his peccadillo by dropping the formal quotation marks. *He* knows where it came from – the poem.

But can your readers cast more light?

Yours sincerely
JEFFERY D. LEWINS

"IF –"

From Mr M.A. Kyle, 102 Dora Road, Wimbledon Park, London SW19 7HJ

Dear Editor

Your editorial [March 1992] on the appearance of "If —" in Czechoslovakia prompted recollection of a similar instance on a smaller scale. In early 1984 Grenada was emerging from the episode with Bishop and his New Jewel Movement and the bloody upheavals which marked its passing. By March, political life had resumed, and old parties and new allegiances were both active in preparation for elections later that year. A new left-centre group under George Brizan — which subsequently formed part of the New National Party alliance, and went on to win the elections – marked its formation with a small newsletter.

The frontispiece of this cyclostyled sheet was a reproduction of "If –", accompanied by an exhortation to Grenadians to approach their renewed freedom on the basis set out in the poem. It was heartening to find this evidence of adherence to genuine values despite the years of mindless revolutionary shibboleths – but Brizan was a schoolmaster in a country where education was prized.

Yours faithfully
MICHAEL KYLE

POINTS FROM OTHER LETTERS

"WE DO NOT WANT HIS KIDDIES TO REMIND HIM"

From Mr Shamus Wade, 37 Davis Road, Acton, London W3 7SE

Mr Wade has sent us what he drily calls "a contribution from the rougher end of Kipling studies", found in the December 1922 issue of the *South African Railways & Harbours Magazine,* which gleaned it from the New York *Herald,* which in turn had it from *The Times.* It is a bizarre little tale and reads as follows: –

A really new Kipling story is a rarity. Here is one which comes . . . in the course of a review of G.B. Burgin's "More Memoirs and Some Travels". It concerns a "gifted lady" who recited "The Absent-Minded Beggar", the poem by which Kipling endeavoured to stir England to a sense of duty at the beginning of the Boer War, on a public platform. In order to give more reality to the poem, she had her three little boys with her, and impressively placed her hand on the head of each child when she came to the line, "Cook's son – Duke's son – son of a belted Earl" . . . [whereupon] there sounded an indignant voice from the gallery, ''Then you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, Mum."

KIPLING AT THE WHEEL? AND SPEEDING?

From Mrs M.M. Bendle, 89 Sea Mills Lane, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1DX

Mrs Meryl Macdonald Bendle, who is an authority on Kipling the motorist (and is a Macdonald, and related to Kipling), noticed an article by Sheila Markham about the pioneer days of the motor car, in the *Bookdealer* of 26 March 1992. It included references to Kipling, and quoted from his sprightly "Muse among the Motors".

She focussed on one passage in the article, to the effect that in 1903 the speed limit on British roads was raised from 12 to 20 m.p.h., at which the police were "hard-pressed to keep up with offenders".

Kipling, it continued, "was done for speeding, which annoyed him horribly as he took an entirely cavalier attitude to this one area of the law." There followed a reference to a "vicious" short story, "The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat" [1913, in *A Diversity of Creatures].* (The story had opened with a speed-check: "We pointed out that the road ran absolutely straight for half a mile ahead without even a side-lane. 'That's just what we depend on,' said the policeman unpleasantly.") The article attributed the animosity in that story to Kipling's resentment against police and magistrates alike, after being "ticked off by a policeman young enough to wear short trousers".

This had given Mrs Bendle food for thought in three respects: (1) *Was* Kipling ever "done for speeding"? (2) Did Kipling ever drive a car *himself!* (3) When the limit went up to 20 m.p.h., how *did* the police "keep up with offenders"?

On (1), Mrs Bendle asked Sheila Markham, who replied that she could not recall where she had found the reference to Kipling's "speeding"; leaving an impression that there had probably been a confusion over "The Village that Voted", which she had possibly taken as autobiographical and factual.

On (2), Mrs Bendle was fairly sure Kipling never did drive himself – but would be interested in any contrary view. "We know for certain", she writes, "that he never drove any of the Rolls-Royces himself: when the Kiplings were without a chauffeur in 1913 for instance, they felt their helplessness keenly. 'We go and look at the darn thing and want to kick it!'" [Letter to Arthur Gibbs, *Kipling Journal,* December 1985, page 18]

"However," she continued, "the question arises whether he ever had 'hands on' experience with his Locomobile or Lanchesters in the early days when the roads were comparatively empty, and he might have been tempted to take over from his chauffeur for a short spell. Again I think not, for several reasons: eyesight, lack of co-ordination (riding or driving horses was never his strong point, though he rode a bicycle satisfactorily – after taking lessons), and I do not think he had the temperament, or wanted to take the wheel."

On (3), Mrs Bendle speculated – and again would welcome readers' comments based on knowledge. Did a policeman in pursuit on a bicycle have a chance? Is there perhaps a clue in "Steam Tactics" *[Traffics and Discoveries],* where the plain-clothes policeman has "a brown telegraph envelope in his hands", with a detailed notification of a speed limit infringement further back down the road? Would a single policeman have sufficed to check speeds *and* to stop cars, as in "The Village that Voted"?

She wondered about the accuracy of such checks (what Woodhouse in "The Village that Voted" called "the usual swindle"); and thought it "small wonder that the AA came into being in 1905", partly with the specific purpose of employing patrolmen to warn members about speed traps.

Later, after writing in these terms, Mrs Bendle came across a partial answer to (3), on page 27 of the Summer 1992 issue of the new *AA Magazine,* in an article entitled "From Small Acorns . . . " by Tessa Nicholson. A standard police trap apparently needed three men. One was concealed by the road at the beginning of a measured length. On

seeing a car going fast, he waved to a second man concealed at the end of the stretch. The latter started his stopwatch at the signal, stopping it as the car passed. If it showed a speed over 20 m.p.h., a third policeman further along, receiving a signal to that effect, stopped the car and charged the driver.

M'TURK ON BEETLE

From Mr Frank Moor, 83 Eyhurst Avenue, Elm Park, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4RB

Mr Moor has sent us a photocopy of an article from the *Darjeeling Times* of 23 March 1927, which he found among his late father's papers. It is by G.C. Beresford, about Kipling at school, and seems to have been written originally for a periodical called the *Referee.* It is of interest both intrinsically and as an account published during Kipling's lifetime – unlike his eventual book on the subject, *Schooldays with Kipling* (Gollancz, 1936) which appeared after Kipling's death. The article reads as follows, with my own interpolations in square brackets: –

RUDYARD KIPLING AS A BOY

"McTurk" Recalls His School Days with Author of "Stalky"

The formation of a Kipling Society [March 1927] carries my mind back nearly fifty years to when I first saw Rudyard Kipling enter the school which was afterwards to be immortalised in *Stalky & Co.* I myself entered the United Services College, Westward Ho!, somewhere about 1876 [January 1877], and two or three terms afterwards [January 1878] a short, stout boy, who wore powerful spectacles to correct short sight, appeared on the scene. His name was Rudyard Kipling.

I was in the small boys' house at the time, and Kipling was put there too. [In the *Old U.S.C. Register,* Beresford and Kipling are listed as having been in "Campbell's (later Pugh's) House". Pugh ("Prout" in *Stalky),* after having responsibility for the small boys' house, was appointed to a house for older boys, into which "most of his original house accompanied him in his exodus" – according to *Schooldays with Kipling.]*

Kipling was, at that time, about twelve years old and, judged by the generality, an extraordinary boy. He differed from the ordinary boy, not in degree but in kind; and his authentic literary genius was already strongly in evidence. Although born in India, there was no Indian atmosphere about him; rather the contrary, indeed.

He was the nephew of Lady Burne-Jones, wife of the celebrated painter, and if he bore

any impress at all it might be said to be the intellectualism of the Burne-Jones/William Morris circle. English schoolboys are notoriously contemptuous of anything that savours of the intellectual or the "high brow", but it must be said that Kipling, in spite of his differing qualities, was very popular; his light-hearted, joking spirit won the goodwill and friendship of the whole school.

I have never met anyone who revealed future greatness so clearly as did Kipling. At the age of twelve his literary future was already in flower. Merely to say that he was deeply read would be inadequate. He had already moved off the main road of academic reading into curious and learned by-paths of letters; and I remember that at that time his favourite poet was Chaucer. History, too, in its obscure forms, attracted him, and only a tepid interest in science served to heighten his powerful literary abilities.

He might have, indeed, been described as a reading prodigy. He had soon read every book in the School, including those in the headmaster's and the chaplain's libraries. He read with the book close to his eyes, with four fingers inserted into the leaves. He read six lines at once, on the same occult principle, I suppose, as a chess prodigy can think six moves ahead, or a bank clerk can add up three columns at once.

Afterwards, when Dunsterville – "Stalky", now General L.C. Dunsterville – Kipling and myself shared the same study, the poet was often put under the severest cross-examination as to what he had read; for we could not believe that literature could be absorbed at such an amazing speed. We would suddenly snatch the book from Kipling's hand and closely question him as to the precise contents of the last six pages; but he always emerged from the ordeal with flying colours.

Not an Imperialist

It may come as a shock to those who know Rudyard Kipling only as the poet of Imperialism and Empire to learn that, as a boy, his mental attitude was rather the reverse. It may be that he drew his inspiration at that time from Burne-Jones and William Morris, or from that brilliant group of artist-thinkers in which his relations moved. He might have been justly described as a mild Liberal of a non-poisonous species.

In our early days at the College every good schoolboy read Jack Harkaway and the *Boy's Own Paper* [Founded in January 1879]. We used to gird at the boys sitting about the formrooms in bad weather, reading Jack Harkaway and the *Boy's Own Paper,* fulminating at their absurdities, laughing at the constant repetitions of incident, and telling our victims that we were making a machine to write such stories.

I am afraid that the masters regarded Kipling with a disapproving eye; for at that time, in order to earn scholastic approbation, one had to stick rigidly to classical texts and to fill the academic mould so carefully designed by professional educators. The individual type was not considered, and perhaps the attitude of the masters is best summed up by quoting one ["King"] who prophesied that Kipling "would die of starvation in a garret as a scurrilous pamphleteer".

This reference to masters reminds me of one extraordinarily amusing incident. There

was a period at school when Kipling affected an Inflated and Turgescent Prose style reminiscent of the *Daily Telegraph* at its best, or George Augustus Sala at his worst; and in this style Kipling composed a school essay on the abolition of war. On one of the masters, a tall, gaunt, red-haired Scotsman, this effusion acted with the power of a dagger-wound. Unable to bear the strain of further reading, this master rushed into the class-room and flung the essay at Kipling's head.

After we had passed through various grades in the College, Kipling, Dunsterville and myself shared one study; and it was here that the seed which afterwards bloomed into *Stalky & Co.* was planted. And here I must make a general remark on what might be called "Stalkyism". The physical deeds recorded by Kipling in that work must not be taken literally; they are, rather, symbolic of a mental attitude. Stalky, McTurk and Beetle are spiritual Scaramouches who move in imponderables; they are critical entities, as their scorn and ridicule of the ideal of ordinary boys imply. But doubtless one or two of the incidents detailed in *Stalky & Co.* did really happen.

As Kipling grew older, his mental power increased. In verse he was always masterly, and his facility in metrical expression was really extraordinary. I always thought of him as a poet, never as a writer of prose; and whenever lines of verse happened to float through my head, I used to ask myself, "Is that Swinburne, Tennyson or Kipling?" When I mentioned this fact to Kipling, he said that it was the greatest compliment ever paid to him.

He was not always the poet of war. I remember saying to him at the College that, for the poet, love and war were equal themes, and hearing his reply: "War is no theme at all." Kipling revived the defunct school magazine, the *United Services College Chronicle,* which had ceased publication owing to lack of literary talent in the College. He edited and wrote five-sixths of the matter, except the games reports. Some of his early poems appeared in its columns. Whenever imperialistic sentiments appeared in this verse, he always apologised to Dunsterville and me.

One poem in particular ["Ave Imperatrix!"] caused much derision. It was occasioned by the attempt on the life of Queen Victoria tin March 1882] by a madman named Maclean, and composed in the study amid much laughter and the throwing of books at the poet's head. Although I have not seen the verses since that time, odd lines come into my head, disjointed and mutilated by the process of years. It began "Victoria, by Grace of God, our Queen," [the first line is actually "From every quarter of your land"], and went on something like this: "Whose fathers faced the Russian hordes/And, dying, left their sons their swords. . ./This be our greeting, late and coming slow/Trust us if need arise . . ./We shall not tarry with the blow ... " — which brought many books at the author's head. Needless to say, the masters liked it; and, I understand, the Queen expressed her appreciation. [In the Introduction to Beresford's *Schooldays with Kipling,* Dunsterville is very emphatic that Kipling did not write that poem tongue in cheek.]

While at the College, Kipling contributed articles to a Bideford paper, and I would give a lot to re-read them. Even at that time, I realised that Kipling would be a great figure in literature, although I did not believe that he would eventually emerge as a master story-teller. For at College, at least, he revealed no ability in that direction; he

could not tell original stories well, nor could he invent plots. To me he was always a poet. Kipling was also a good draughtsman of the imaginative type, and he limned grotesques with much skill and wit.

An amusing instance of Kipling's meteoric rise in India was vouchsafed to me in 1886 [Beresford went to India in that year to enter the Public Works Department in the Madras Presidency, but resigned in 1888], when I was on a troopship in Bombay, saying goodbye to a friend. On the boat I met an officer of the Gunners, who had been a Prefect of our dormitory at the United Services College. Kipling's name was mentioned at once, and I remarked that I had not written to him since he left the College [in 1882], nor he to me. The reply came sharp, like a patter of machine-gun bullets: "I shouldn't think so, indeed! Kipling is one of the best known men in India."

KIPLING'S STATURE IN 1899

From Mr D.J. Peters, The Cedars, Wellington Rd, Burton Joyce, Notts NG14 5GQ

Mr Peters has found, and sent, a yellowed cutting from the *Sunday Chronicle* of 12 March 1899. It is an article (by someone using the pen-name "Hubert" – is he possibly identifiable?) recounting an imaginary discussion among newspapermen in a London club, on the subject of Kipling's reputation.

That reputation was then – before the Boer War – at its height. Kipling, still only 33, was the most famous living author in the English-speaking world. The almost fatal illness in New York, from which he was in March 1899 beginning to recover, produced extraordinary manifestations of sympathy from around the world; his condition was a matter of front-page interest; it is one of the ironies of his life that more public attention was paid to his survival in 1899 than to his death in 1936.

This cutting from Mr. Peters gives an indication of that attention, at the same time providing some illuminating flashes of objective literary criticism. It reads as follows:–

POPULARITY, FAME AND RUDYARD KIPLING

The news from America that Kipling had turned the corner had put us all into good humour. We drained our glasses to his speedy and complete recovery. Even little Drivelle, the most captious and carping critic on the London press, joined more or less cordially in the toast.

"He's the Colossus of journalism," he said, grinning. "He's taught all you fellows your own silly business."

"HE'S THE COLOSSUS OF JOURNALISM"

"Little Drivelle" (centre), the "captious and carping critic", with two of the others who have just "drained their glasses" to Kipling's recovery of health. [Sketch from the *Sunday Chronicle:* see newspaper item supplied by Mr Peters.]

"He's a good deal more than that," I ventured. "Journalism, at best, is only Literature's poor relation. Kipling has given us Literature itself."

"Well, I'm not sure of that," Villars remarked. Villars, by the way, never is quite sure of anything; most of his judgments end with a "but". "I'm not sure of that," he repeated. "I think there's a good deal in what Drivelle says. When one remembers Kipling's enormous popularity, one can hardly believe that he has produced literature. Literature is never popular."

"Oh, I never pretended that he was popular on account of his merits," I returned. "It's probably the worst stuff he ever wrote, such as 'The Legs of Sister Ursula', and some of the noisiest and cheapest of his ballads, that have given him his popularity. He's not great because he's popular, nor popular because he's great. It's his genius that makes him great, and his luck that makes him popular. There never was a man had such luck. He came just in the nick of time. Just when we were all sick to death of fellows like Drivelle among writers, and fellows like John Morley among politicians."

"No, no, it's not luck," Drivelle cut in; "it's sheer cleverness. I give him every credit for that. He knows just how and when to be vulgar. And so the vulgar world goes mad about him, and blubbers at his sick bedside."

"Ah, but no!" Moldini exclaimed excitedly. "The popularity of your Kipling is because he brags, brags, brags eternally. You English are the brag people of Europe. And he who brags loudest wins your hearts."

Moldini is the London representative of a great Italian paper. He has a most remarkable acquaintance with the literature and art of all Europe, and literature and art are his favourite topics of conversation. He always annoys us so much because we generally find that he knows a great deal more about our writers and artists than we do ourselves. We generally listen to his criticisms with the respect that knowledge merits, but we were not going to stand his abuse of Kipling.

"Oh, shut up, Moldini," Jones of the *Daily Gust* shouted. "You can't understand Kipling. Kipling is so essentially English in his thought and his expression that none but an Englishman can properly appreciate him."

"Perfectly," Moldini replied, "and, therefore he is not great, because he is so — what do you say? – limited. Your Shakespeare, your Scott, your Meredith, your Tennyson, all your great ones, these the poor foreigner can understand and appreciate."

And we were obliged to confess that Moldini had scored.

"I almost think you're right," Villars said, turning to me, "and that Kipling has made literature, but that it's not his literature that gives him his vogue. That is owing to the journalistic instinct he has, which always enables him to say what a whole lot of other people are thinking.

"You remember that little poem he wrote just after the Jubilee – 'Recessional', I think it was called. It might well have been called 'The Day After the Fair'. A good many of us were feeling just a little bit ashamed of ourselves, for our too noisy jingoism and shouting and swagger, and all the rest of it. We felt we had rather overdone the thing.

"Then, just at that very moment, out comes our Rudyard with a poem calling on us all to be a bit more modest and humble. It hit our minds in the bull's-eye, so to speak. It was a most awful cheek of him, for he more than any other man had made the hullaballooing of Jubilee week possible."

"Exactly," I admitted; "it was Kipling's journalistic instinct which prompted him to write that poem just at that time. But, all the same, that poem was high art. It is one of the very finest hymns in the English language."

"Kipling", Drivelle began again, "is the expression of a phase — I might say of a craze. If he had appeared in 1880 he would have fallen as flat as a flounder. But he happened to catch our dear fellow countrymen just as they were about to have one of their periodical fits of patriotism, and he managed to shout louder than any of 'em.

"But fits pass. We're still kicking in the middle of this one now, but it will wear away like the others. Wait a bit till the new taxes are felt. Then it will all die down, and Kipling with it. The poet of a phase is never immortal. Popularity is no good introduction to posterity."

"That's not a bad phrase, Drivelle," I said, "and it's true, too. Just think of the fellows who were popular in the past, and not one line of whose writings is remembered today. Which of you, I wonder, could quote a sentence of Hayley's? And yet Hayley was the most fashionable poet of his day. His precious rubbish was most expensively bound, and was found in every cultivated home.

"Think of the row Byron made in his time, and who reads Byron now, except as a sort of duty? But that was because Byron and Hayley wrote nothing, or extremely little, that was really good. Kipling has written dozens of lines, and more than a few stories, that will live as long as men love fine literature –"

"That won't be very long," Drivelle interrupted.

"Time", I went on sententiously, "will winnow away tons and tons of Kipling's chaff, but a peck or so of good wheat will remain."

* * *

"The man who is popular in his own day is seldom or never popular thereafter," Villars said meditatively. "Why is it? Let us try to find out why it is. Let us drop the concrete Kipling and talk about the abstract question. Fame – Popularity. What is the secret of each? What constitutes each? Are they irreconcilable? Come, begin the debate," and he filled up his glass.

"The secret of popularity in every age", Drivelle said, "is vulgarity, sentimentality, stupidity, and slosh. Given those four qualities in a high degree, and, with a turn for self-advertisement, you have all the essentials of a mighty popular success.

"If the test of popularity is the willingness of the public to buy your books and to read them, then I have no doubt that Marie Corelli is more popular than Kipling. There are more people who enjoy her stuff, love it, think it splendid. And Marie Corelli is more vulgar, more sentimental, stupid and sloshy than Kipling. If, by a miracle, anyone were to arise more vulgar, sentimental, stupid and sloshy than she, that happy person would have still more popularity. The problem Villars thinks so difficult is really quite simple."

"The explanation is insufficient." Moldini spoke in the dogmatic accent of a man using another language than his own. "For the mass of mankind is always vulgar, sentimental, stupid, and that other thing you mentioned of which I know not clearly the meaning. Why then should the popularity ever go? Why should not this Signora Corelli, who I hasten to tell you is no countrywoman of mine, but a purely British product, be just as popular at the end of the twentieth century as she is now?"

"Oh, poor dear, she's not nearly bad enough for the Johnnies of a hundred years hence," Drivelle replied. "By that time taste will have fallen so low that it is impossible to imagine now the sort of stuff they will buy and read."

* * *

"You're quite right, Moldini," I said. "You nearly always are. Drivelle is always most superficial when he thinks himself most profound. To be popular, an artist must appeal

to the thoughts and emotions of the ordinary man and woman of his time. He must hit them on the mark, he must never be over their heads. They must be able to understand him without bothering to think much. If he can say commonplace things in a clever way so much the better: the essential is that the things he says must be commonplace. He must handle the subjects of the exact moment. Like the successful pantomime songs, he must be topical. He must be exactly at the average level of taste and intelligence.

"If he goes the least bit above it, it's all up with him. That is why it is almost impossible for a great artist to be popular, or for a popular artist ever to acquire Fame: Fame, which means the approval of posterity. Your great man can't be commonplace, try he never so hard. He can't think or write down to the average level. And so people on that level pass him by. He has to wait for the intelligent to find him out, and point out his merits to the unintelligent. Sometimes it takes a century."

"All true enough," Villars said, "but if each generation is equally stupid, how does Fame ever arrive?"

"Fame", I said, "is the favourable verdict of successive generations of the best critics. The famous man is scarcely ever the popular one, either in his own day or afterwards. Even today, for one who reads Shakespeare with pleasure – with pleasure, mind, not as a duty or a school exercise – there are at least a dozen who read Hall Caine with unaffected enjoyment. But Shakespeare has become a superstition.

"Let us see how Shakespeare's reputation has been acquired. It is a good case in point. In his own life he was not thought very much of. No fuss was made over him. His personality was so little interesting that it is difficult to discover much about it even now. Ben Jonson, in complimenting him, evidently thought he was doing the handsome thing by a playwright who was distinctly inferior to himself.

"Then the best critics began to find him out. They have gone on finding him out ever since. They wrote about him, they commented on him, they interpreted him. They made the mass take notice of him. Then the Germans discovered him, and wrote whole libraries on the subject. Finally he has been forced upon the public. He has become a school book. Some knowledge of him (precious little, by the way) has become a part of polite education.

"His Fame is due, not to the mob, but to the cultivated critics. People go to him feeling that they really ought to see beauties in him, that it's a moral duty, and so they do. But all the same, when you hear a fellow saying that he cares for nothing but Shakespeare and the Bible, you may take your oath that he precious seldom opens either.''

* * *

"Shakespeare", said Moldini, "finds worshippers in every age, because he wrote of things, of emotions and passions that re-occur in every age, that never cease to be potent. Jealousy like Othello's, coquetry like Cleopatra's, mad young love like that of Romeo, doubt that hinders action like Hamlet's, these are never fashionable, because they are eternal and universal. All jealous men are Othello, every woman, in some of her moods, is Cleopatra.

"You must notice also that Shakespeare did not even make most of his characters Englishmen. They were Italians, Romans, Danes, anybody and everything. Every one of

Shakespeare's great characters is more than an individual; he is a type. He stands for a lot of individuals. That is why he has Fame. There is no reason why a play like "A Midsummer Night's Dream", *par exemple,* should appeal more to people three hundred, two hundred, one hundred years ago than to the people of today. There is nothing of the moment in it, nothing fashionable, as it were. A thousand years hence it will be just the same. That is why Shakespeare has Fame.

"Now, your Kipling deals only with the things of today. Today you are caring for India, for instance. Twenty years ago you cared nothing for India, twenty years hence you will care nothing. So, twenty years hence, perhaps more, perhaps less, but some day certainly, you will care nothing for your Kipling."

"Possibly we shall care nothing for India, though I think you're wrong," I said. "India, what with her famines and her mutinies and Russia and the rest of it, will take good care to keep us in mind of her existence; but even if it were not so, we shall always care for pluck, I take it, and for grit and for devotion to duty, and these are the real subjects of Kipling's best work.

"I think there is something in what Jones said. You know, Moldini, you are a foreigner, a most intelligent foreigner, but still a foreigner. Naturally you see in Kipling only the glorification of England's fighting powers; only a sort of super-patriotic swagger. There is that, of course, perhaps too much of it, but there is something else.

"It is true he bids us be proud because we have won India, but it is equally true that he shows us, as never man has shown before, our duties to India, our awful responsibility for her. If he has glorified the soldier, he has made us realise what some of us never realised until he came, the quiet, unromantic, unexciting devotion of the Civil Servant. He has made us feel that if we are to keep India it will not be merely by being strong, but by being just, too.

"There is something solid at the bottom of all Kipling's shouting and swagger. You remember his 'M'Andrew's Hymn', with its burthen of 'discipline, order, obedience'. If he has filled us with a swelling sense of our Empire's magnificence, he has left us no room for doubting that that Empire was won, and can be maintained, not by ships and guns alone, but by 'discipline, order, obedience.'"

"So," said Moldini, "if he has done that then he has done a great thing. I do not wonder then, that you all watched by his bedside, and that everyone I met in the street spoke to me of him."

"Yes, by Jove, they did," Villars cried, bringing his hand down with a bang on his chair-arm; "no other writer has ever tugged at the national heart-strings as Kipling has. We all felt while he was in the valley of the shadow that there was no other man whom England could not better spare – not one.

"He came, as was said just now, in the very nick of time. We were sad and sorry and stuffy, and living in a sort of sickly hot-house atmosphere. He came like a breath of keen air from the sea. The whole nation — the whole English race — is healthier and better for Kipling.

"His reward is not his popularity; that doesn't count; that he shares with Marie Corelli, Hall Caine, and all sorts and conditions of bounders and bounderesses. His

reward is to know, as he must know, that he has strengthened our arms, uplifted our hearts, and made us a damned sight more dangerous lot than we were before.

"Once more then, here's to Rudyard Kipling! May he live to see Armageddon, and the day after!"

And again he emptied his glass, and so did the rest of us.

JUST SO, FILMED

From Professor Thomas Pinney, 228 West Harrison Avenue, Claremont, California 91711, U.S.A.

Professor Pinney sends us pages 21-22 of the 'Calendar' section of the *Los Angeles Times* of 3 May 1992. There, in an article by Barbara Isenberg, we find (we had already seen indications of this in British papers) that there are plans on the part of two well known and successful producers, Steven Spielberg and Cameron Mackintosh, to make an ambitious 'animated movie' out of Kipling's *Just So Stories.*

Mackintosh (it is explained) having already mounted two small musicals in England, based on that book, "somebody in the audience alerted Spielberg to the project". Spielberg, liking the music, soon entered negotiations with Mackintosh, from which a major film is likely to result.

It is expected to retain much of the flavour of the stage musical. On this, the article cites "British composer George Stiles, 30, and lyricist Anthony Drewe, 31," as stressing the theme of the "quest for knowledge" in Kipling's book. Stiles regards "The Elephant's Child", among others, as "a wonderful story" which is "basically a simplistic, high-fantasy children's tale", but is narrated "with wit and language to entertain adults as well as children. The great animated features have managed to do that – entertain the people who take the kids [to the movies] as well as the kids themselves."

The "popular, literary roots" of *Just So Stories* are "typical Mackintosh" – he being "the man who made millions off such stage blockbusters as *Cats, Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera;* while Spielberg, producer of *Raiders of the Lost Ark,* is described as having "long directed and produced the same sort of wide-appeal spectacles that characterize most Mackintosh shows".

It will be interesting to see how much of the literary charm of *Just So Stories* survives transformation into animated film; in any case, Kipling himself – though that particular book meant much to him – was sufficiently innovative, besides being much attracted by the cinematic medium, to have welcomed the attempt.

THE KIPLING JOURNAL

AN EXPLANATORY NOTE

The *Kipling Journal,* house magazine of the Kipling Society, is sent quarterly to all members. Its contributions to learning since 1927 have earned it a high reputation. It has published many important items by Kipling not readily found elsewhere, and a vast quantity of valuable historical, literary and bibliographical commentary, in various shapes, by authorities in their field. In the academic study of Kipling, no serious scholar overlooks the *Journal's* wealth of data, soon to be re-indexed. Over two hundred libraries and English Faculties, in a dozen countries, receive it as corporate members of the Society.

However, though scholarly in general tendency, it is not an austerely academic production. It aims to entertain as well as to inform. This is both necessary and easy. Necessary because our membership is as representative of the ordinary reader as of the university researcher. Easy because there exists an inexhaustible reservoir of engrossing material — thanks to the great volume and variety of Kipling's writings; the scope of his travels, acquaintance and correspondence; the diversity of his interests and influence; the scale of the events he witnessed; the exceptional fame he attracted in his lifetime; and the international attention he continues to attract.

The Editor is glad to receive, from members and non-members alike, articles or letters bearing on the life and works of Kipling. The range of potential interest is wide, from erudite correspondence and scholarly criticism to such miscellanea as justify attention, e.g. reports of new books or films; press cuttings; sales catalogues; unfamiliar photographs; fresh light on people or places that Kipling wrote about; and of course unpublished letters by Kipling himself, particularly ones of any biographical significance.

Authors of prospective articles should know that length may be crucial: the volume of material coming in steadily exceeds the space available. A page holds under 500 words, so articles of 5000 words, often requiring preface, notes and illustrations, may be hard to accommodate quickly. Even short pieces often have to wait. Naturally, as with other literary societies, contributors are not paid; their reward is the appearance of their work in a periodical of repute.

The Secretary of the Society arranges distribution of the *Journal,* and holds an attractive stock of back numbers for sale. However items submitted for publication should be addressed to **The Editor, *Kipling Journal,* Weavers, Danes Hill, Woking, Surrey GU22 7HQ, England.**

THE KIPLING SOCIETY

AN EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Kipling Society exists for anyone interested in the prose and verse, and the life and times, of Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). When founded in 1927 by J.H.C. Brooking and a few enthusiasts, it met with predictable disapproval from Kipling himself; but it quickly gained, and thereafter retained, a substantial membership. It remains today one of the most active and enduring of the many literary and historical societies in Britain. Being the only one in the world that focuses specifically on Kipling and his place in English Literature, it also attracts members from many other countries, who receive the quarterly *Kipling Journal* (subject of a note on the previous page).

As an essentially non-profit-making cultural organisation, run on a voluntary basis to provide a service to the public as well as to its members, the Kipling Society is a Registered Charity in Britain. Its activities are controlled by its Council, but routine management is in the hands of the Secretary. However, its large membership in North America is mainly co-ordinated from Rockford College, Illinois, and there is also an active branch in Melbourne, Australia.

For fuller particulars of its organisation, and a list of impending meetings, see pages 4 and 5 of this issue. The Society's main London activities fall into four categories. *First,* maintaining a specialised Library which scholars may consult, and which is located in City University, London; *second,* answering enquiries from the public (e.g. schools, publishers, writers and the media), and providing speakers on request; *third,* arranging a regular programme of lectures, usually but not exclusively in London, and an Annual Luncheon with a Guest Speaker; *fourth,* publishing the *Kipling Journal*

Kipling, phenomenally popular in his day, appeals still to a wide range of 'common readers' attracted by his remarkable prose and verse style, his singular ability to evoke atmosphere, and his skill in narrative. These unacademic readers, as well as professional scholars of English literature, find much to interest them in the Society and its *Journal.* New members are made welcome. **Particulars of membership are obtained by writing to the Secretary, Kipling Society, 2nd floor, Schomberg House, 80/82 Pall Mall, London SWIY 5HF** (or, for those living in North America, to the address at the foot of page 4).

The annual subscription rate is £20 — for both individual and corporate members, whether in Britain or abroad. This remains the 'minimum' rate: many members very helpfully contribute more.

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