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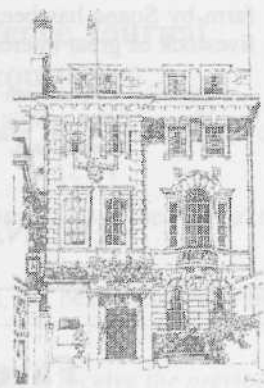

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SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS: SEE ALSO THE 'SOCIETY NOTICES' ON PAGES 35 TO 36

Saturday 20 June at 12.15 for 1 p.m. at Kiplings Restaurant, Highgate, an **informal lunch** (see page 44 of March 1998) depending on adequate support for this event.

Wednesday 15 July at 4 p.m. at the Royal Over-Seas League, Park Place, off St James's Street, London SW1, the Society's **Annual General Meeting,** and **Tea** (booking forms have been sent to U.K. members); then a recital by **Richard Leech,** "My friend Rudyard".

Wednesday 16 September at the Society's Library in City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V OHB. From 5 p.m. members will be able to inspect the Library in its new setting, and to browse at leisure. At 6 p.m. **Professor Tim Connell** (head of the Dept. of Languages, City University, and a member of the Society) on "The future of the Book in the age of telecommunication", with many references to Kipling. No advance notice is needed by members and their friends who wish to attend (unless anyone will need disabled access). Coffee/tea & biscuits will be provided from 5 p.m.; wine after the talk. For fuller details see page 54.

Wednesday 11 November at 5.30 for 6 p.m. at the Royal Over-Seas League, **David McAveeney,** author of *Kipling in Gloucester: The Writing of 'Captains Courageous'* (1996), on "Kipling and Gloucester, Massachusetts".

April 1998 MICHAEL SMITH

"THE JEST BEHELD WITH STREAMING EYES"
(See page 8.)

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A NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATION AT PAGE 6

This is a drawing by Reginald Cleaver, reflecting a line from Kipling's poem, "The Necessitarian", collected in *Humorous Tales from Rudyard Kipling* (Macmillan, 1931). "The Necessitarian" is a veritable ode to laughter, and was first published in 1904, accompanying that now dated and not particularly amusing story, "Steam Tactics", in *Traffics and Discoveries.* The first two and last two of its six verses are:

I know not in Whose hands are laid
To empty upon earth
From unsuspected ambuscade
The very Urns of Mirth:

Who bids the Heavenly Lark arise
And cheer our solemn round –
The Jest beheld with streaming eyes
And grovellings on the ground...

No creed hath dared to hail Him Lord,
No raptured choirs proclaim,
And Nature's strenuous Overword
Hath nowhere breathed His Name.

Yet, it must be, on wayside jape,
The selfsame Power bestows
The selfsame power as went to shape
His Planet or His Rose.

EDITORIAL

A GLIMPSE OF VICTORIAN HONG KONG'S 'NIGHT LIFE'

At pages 12-13 of this issue (in "Kipling the Globe-Trotter", Part III) there is mention of Kipling visiting a brothel while passing through Hong Kong in April 1889 on his journey eastward from India. He had described the experience in one of the despatches he sent back to India from his travels. It was published by the *Pioneer* in Allahabad in June 1889 (and would be collected ten years later in *From Sea to Sea);* but when a cutting of the *Pioneer* article caught up with him in New York in September 1889 he seems to have suddenly had belated misgivings about its suitability for readers of that paper.

Not that there is anything remotely salacious in his account: on the contrary, its theme is the pitiable way of life of expatriate inmates of brothels in Hong Kong, judged by his brief tour of four such establishments during one lurid night out. "Vice must be pretty much the same all the round world over, but if a man wishes to get out of pleasure with it, let him go to Hong-Kong."

He had been persuaded to "see Life" by a repellently callow and insensitive young "man about town" whom he had met in a bar, and who acted as his know-all guide. Kipling, fresh from the inhibitions of British-dominated society in India, was initially curious as to what he would find. "That the world should hold French, German and Italian ladies of the Ancient Profession is no great marvel; but it is to one who has lived in India something shocking to meet again Englishwomen in the same sisterhood." He duly met several, and Americans, and was appalled by the squalor and pathos of their ignominious situation, their demeaning dependence on alcohol and their unendearing use of swearwords. "If this be Life give me a little honest death, without drinks and without foul jesting." For "the worst of it was, the women were real women and pretty, and like some people I knew..."

He spent several nightmarish hours with one Englishwoman who was far gone down the road to utter degradation. For some reason she thought he was a doctor, and confided to him her hypochondriacal terror of cholera. He tried to soothe her, while wondering "whether she was going to walk round the room to all eternity with her eyes glaring at the ceiling and her hands twisting and untwisting one within the other."

Later, under the influence of drink, "she fell into a sort of stupor...

Asleep she was not unlovely, but the mouth twitched... the body was shaken with shiverings... there was no peace in her... Daylight showed her purple-eyed, slack-cheeked, and staring, racked with a headache... I was seeing Life; but it did not amuse me, for I felt that I, though I only made capital of her extreme woe, was guilty equally with the rest of my kind that had brought her here."

Kipling did not avail himself of the sexual services offered by these brothels – there is no reason to suppose otherwise – but he still felt a rather creditable compunction about his intrusive role as journalist-cum-voyeur. He was conscious that, "driven by no gust of passion," he had gone "in cold blood to make my account of this Inferno, and to measure the measureless miseries of life. For the wholly insignificant sum of thirty dollars I had purchased information and disgust more than I required, and the right to look after a woman half crazed with drink and fear the third part of a terrible night. Mine was the greater sin."

"THE STRANGER WITHIN MY GATE"

Readers of the 'Diary' feature in *The Times* of 8 April 1998 will have noticed a reference to the extreme right-wing British National Party making use of Kipling's poem "The Stranger", to promote their dubious wares on the BNP's website. It is there described as an "articulation of the wish of Britons to retain their country as a free nation preserved from a federal Europe". Learning of this, *The Times* had consulted the Kipling Society's Secretary, Michael Smith, who in response very properly deplored the BNP's cynical hijacking of a poem which had been written specifically about Canada: it is sub-titled "Canadian" in the Definitive Edition of Kipling's Verse.

It is indeed an unedifying appropriation, but the fact is that Kipling wrote so copiously and quotably across such a range of topics that he is all too apt to be selectively cited out of context, to reinforce other people's prejudices. "Never the twain shall meet" is one example: "Lesser breeds without the Law" is another.

Whoever in the BNP thought of exploiting "The Stranger" presumably recognised that it usefully expressed a reasonable-sounding xenophobia in homespun yet elegant language. The first two of its five stanzas adequately convey its flavour: "The Stranger within my gate, / He may be true or kind, / But he does not talk my talk –/ I cannot feel his mind. / I see the face and the eyes and the mouth, / But not the soul behind. // The men of my own stock, / They may do ill or

well, / But they tell the lies I am wonted to, / They are used to the lies I tell; / And we do not need interpreters / When we go to buy and sell."

"The Stranger" was a product of Kipling's extensive tour of Canada, where he was greeted and feted almost royally in the autumn of 1907; and it was first published in 1908 in a Canadian edition of *Letters to the Family* (Macmillan, Toronto), where it accompanied the 'Letter' entitled "Newspapers and Democracy". (All these *Letters to the Family,* but not the associated poems, were collected in 1920 in Kipling's *Letters of Travel, 1892-1913.)*

In Canada in 1907 he had had many political discussions, duly reflected in the 'Letters'; and a prominent topic in this self-consciously new country was the unremitting need for suitable immigrants, robust enough to face the challenge of the wilderness and to farm "the 'vast, unoccupied areas' of the advertisements".

Kipling inevitably heard many stories about the Doukhobors – members of a religious sect in Russia who had been emigrating to Canada in large numbers since the 1890s to escape persecution at home. One story told how a crowd of Doukhobors, becoming over-excited by the spectacle of a big fire in a Canadian city, "reverted to the ancestral type, and blocked the streets yelling, 'Down with the Czar!'" Another story, derived from a telegram which Kipling said he saw, was to the effect that a whole Doukhobor community had stripped themselves stark naked and were running in that state along the railway line "to meet the Messiah before the snow fell". They were being dutifully followed by exasperated policemen bearing supplies of warm clothing.

Kipling concluded that these Russian immigrants were mentally unstable and unlikely to be readily assimilable into Canadian society. "The Stranger within my gates, / He may be evil or good, / But I cannot tell what powers control – / What reasons sway his mood; / Nor when the Gods of his far-off land / Shall repossess his blood."

What Canada needed was fewer such alien incompatibles, and more of good pioneering quality – preferably (if only they could be found) from Britain. That is the core theme of the poem: "The men of my own stock, / Bitter bad they may be, / But at least, they hear the things I hear, /And see the things I see; /And whatever I think of them and their likes / They think of the likes of me."

It can be argued that this is the facile philosophy of the saloon bar; and so it may be. Kipling had a powerfully populist streak. But it is interesting to find a forgotten poem of ninety years ago being exhumed today to lend fluency to the tendentious slogans of fringe politics. •

KIPLING THE GLOBE-TROTTER

PARTS III AND IV

by MERYL MACDONALD BENDLE

[Meryl Macdonald Bendle, as a granddaughter of Kipling's Uncle Fred (the Reverend Frederic William Macdonald, 1842-1928), is a first cousin once removed of Rudyard Kipling himself. She has been writing a biographical study, *Kipling the Globe-Trotter: A Driven Man*, from which we have already been permitted to publish two interesting excerpts. The first (June 1997, pages 25-33) was entitled "Travel, and the Celtic Inheritance"; and the second (September 1997, pages 32-40) was "The More Immediate Macdonalds, and John Kipling". Here are a third and a fourth.

The third describes Kipling's visit to his Uncle Harry in New York in September 1889, at the end of his eastward journey across North America while returning to London from India at the age of twenty-three. Uncle Harry was Kipling's mother's eldest brother, Henry James Macdonald (1835-1891), whose talents and early promise, never really fulfilled, were mentioned at pages 35 and 36 in September 1997.

The fourth excerpt deals with the summer of 1891, starting with Uncle Harry's illness and death, and going on to discuss a little of what Kipling was writing at that time. Both these excerpts are drawn from Mrs Bendle's text, with minimal editing; but notes have been added for the purposes of the *Kipling Journal. – Ed.]*

PART III

MEETING UNCLE HARRY IN NEW YORK

September 1889

While in New York, Kipling called on Uncle Harry, his mother's elder brother, at his Wall Street office.[1] Harry had not seen Alice for thirty years, and the thought made her son feel suddenly old. Time had not dealt kindly with his uncle, although he seemed to be comfortably off. He called Rudyard 'my boy', and yarned away to him about literature.

But first he handed his nephew some mail that was awaiting him: an envelope containing an 'enclosure'. Describing the matter in a letter to Mrs Hill[2], Rudyard said he was horrified to discover that his 'damphool' editor had sprung his letter about the Hong Kong brothel[3]

on an "innocent Anglo-Indian public" that June. So presumably the envelope had contained the relevant tearsheet from the *Pioneer*. But apart from editing it to extinction, what else was the editor meant to do with it?

Kipling does not mention showing the article to his uncle, but I would be surprised if he had not done so, there in his office with no women present. Over dinner that evening with his aunt and uncle (they had no children), Rudyard had to tell them all about himself and his life in India – and apparently did nothing to dispel their notion that he was some sort of "wandering scapegoat". Was there a link here, in their minds, with his brothel story?

In return, he was regaled with "much" family history. (It was Harry, we must remember, who at nineteen had earnestly hoped that his brother Fred's behaviour was in keeping with a Macdonald cadet, etc.[4] So Harry knew what he was talking about in this regard.) And what was Rudyard's reaction to the family history? It was "doubtless very interesting – if I had only listened to it", he wrote to Mrs Hill.

If he had only listened? Kipling, the journalist interested in all things, not listening to what his uncle had to say about his ancestors? I do not believe it. It may have been his way of saying, politely, that he did not want to discuss it with his pal Mrs Hill – or of implying that it was not sufficiently interesting to bother her with. Either way, I feel he must have decided there and then to keep the family history to himself, for the reasons I have already suggested.[5]

NOTES TO PART III

1. According to Professor Pinney *(Letters of Rudyard Kipling,* volume 1, p 340), Harry had qualified for the Indian Civil Service, but at the last minute had abandoned his appointment and his fiancée and gone to New York. There he worked on newspapers before joining a stockbroking firm, where he spent the rest of his working life.

2. See letter to Edmonia Hill, dated 10 September 1889 (Pinney, *Letters of Rudyard Kipling,* volume 1, p 339). Mrs Hill and her husband had been Kipling's travelling-companions as far as the U.S.A. on his way back from India to London in 1889.

3. Despatch no VIII in the "From Sea to Sea" series contained an account of a Hong Kong brothel. It was published by the *Pioneer* on 18 June 1889; collected in *From Sea to Sea, and Other Sketches,* volume !.

4. See *Kipling Journal,* September 1997, p 35.

5. *Ibid.,* p 32.

PART IV

KIPLING'S ACTIVITIES IN MID-1891, AND "'THE FINEST STORY IN THE WORLD'"

News from America that Uncle Harry was sick sent Fred Macdonald hastening across the Atlantic to his brother. Rudyard, feeling restless and unwell, decided to join his uncle on the voyage for another brief holiday. [This was in May/June 1891 : in the previous October he had travelled to Italy.]

To avoid recognition he travelled under the name of 'J. Macdonald'; but his moustache, eyebrows and glasses, to say nothing of his conversation, were too distinctive to disguise. And when Uncle Fred, a man of the cloth, was challenged by reporters as to the true identity of his companion, he could not tell a lie. By now, Kipling was as celebrated in America as he was on this side of the Atlantic; more so in some respects, owing to the pirating of his work, and the consequent rash of unauthorised publications – including those written for the Indian papers, in which he had impartially insulted America and the Americans [collected in *From Sea to Sea].* By the time the ship reached New York, the world's press was waiting for him; but Uncle Harry had died.

Kipling returned home immediately, unwilling to be a target for reporters while his uncle was seeing to his brother's affairs; and in any case, he had *The Naulahka* to finish. He returned feeling no better for the out-and-back-again voyage; while the boiled pig's feet and sauerkraut, served up as the ship wallowed in choppy seas, did nothing for his equilibrium. He vowed never to go on a German liner again. But he did.

Work of any kind was now forbidden him by his doctor. He complained to a friend that he did not know what to do with himself, or how to do it.[1] And this time it was more serious: there was stiffness in his left arm and side, which could indicate the reason for his doctor's concern – that the right side of his brain, the intuitive, artistic side, was not functioning as it should. He went to the New Forest for a short holiday, and to the Isle of Wight [in July] with the Balestiers; and in between gorging himself on raspberries and cream, "three helps a day", and trying to "educate" his "pesky" arm by playing golf, he and Caroline Balestier reached an understanding.

It was while he was on the Island that the idea came to him for another weird tale, again typical of his mental state. "The Disturber of Traffic"[2] is about a lighthouse keeper whose head "began to feel

streaky from looking at the tide so long". He eventually goes mad, but recovers after six months in a Survey ship, "cured of his streaks by working hard and not looking over the side more than he could help... and now he's a wherryman from Portsmouth to Gosport, where the tides run crossways and you can't row straight for ten strokes together."

That month saw the publication of an even stranger tale, in which once again the sea plays an important role. '"The Finest Story in the World"'[3] hinges on the extra-ordinary visions of a very ordinary clerk who aspired to write great poetry, but could never achieve more than "wondrous bad" verse.

Charlie Mears is a twenty-five shillings a week London bank clerk, who has "never been out of sight of a made road". He is befriended by the narrator (Kipling), to whom he unburdens himself of his dreams, which, by agreement, the narrator writes down for his own use. Charlie describes the life of a Greek galley-slave, down to the smallest horrific detail – the banks of oars, to which the rowers are chained; the overseer with a whip, walking "up and down the bench to make the men work"; the men on the lower deck, whose only sunlight "squeezes through" the oar-holes as they sit up to their knees in water; and so on.

Charlie continues to have these 'dreams', which he thinks nothing of – compared with his own writing efforts. He jots down words which are meaningless to him – but which, as an expert tells the narrator, are "an attempt to write extremely corrupt Greek" such as an illiterate person might use. In translation, "I have been – many times – overcome with weariness in this particular employment." Longfellow's version, which Kipling had hacked out of his desk at Embankment Chambers with a razor-edged *kukri,* goes: "Oft was I weary when I toiled at thee."

The narrator tells us that this is a form of metempsychosis, in which "The Fates that are so careful to shut the doors of each successive life behind us had, in this case, been neglectful." The narrator too must have died scores of times, but because he could have made use of such knowledge as Charlie had been shown, for him the doors remained shut.

Then Charlie describes a sea-fight with another galley, whose leader, a red-haired man with a red beard, came from the north. The narrator realises that Charlie is now describing a later incarnation when he was captured by Vikings and forced to sail with them.

Kipling's work schedule suggests that he had written this story on the heels of Flo Garrard's final dismissal of him; and, with his nerves at breaking-point, the rapid completion in 1890 of *The Light that Failed.* If that novel had been meant as a cathartic exercise in revoking past unhappiness, (as in the writing of "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep"[4] in 1888 in Allahabad, when he had stamped about the house in a retrospective

rage after an interval of many years), it failed. Indeed, in the short term it probably had the opposite effect – of lacerating an open wound, and bringing him a step nearer complete collapse.

What should we make of '"The Finest Story in the World"', where reincarnation is the pivot on which the story turns? Bearing in mind Kipling's ancestry, and the mental pressure he was working under at the time, I suggest that he was describing his own visions or memories glimpsed through the door the Fates had left ajar. But not in quite the same way as Charlie had done.

For Charlie the answer was simple. He fell in love – and his mind was emptied of all visions, except that of his beloved. The doors of his past lives had shut for good. And Kipling could see why. "It is that we may not remember our first and most beautiful wooings. Were this not so, our world would be without inhabitants in a hundred years... Charlie had tasted the love of woman that kills remembrance, and the finest story in the world would never be written." (End of story.)

But what of Kipling's remembrance? Whether its origins lay in a provident imagination or in his subconscious, this story is arguably one of his finest. But if we say that it *can* only be a work of his imagination, we should also bear in mind that he once described imagination as a form of imperfect memory – which brings us back to his subconscious and his *ancestral* memory.

It seems logical to assume that if we can, as we do, inherit certain physical and mental characteristics from our ancestors, we could also inherit their memories. Whether we want to is another matter; and most of us will be relieved to think that the ability to tune in to the right wavelength – to be a receiver, to use Kipling's own expression – is not given to many. But bearing in mind his ancient Scottish *and Viking* ancestry (clan historians state that every Macdonald who can trace his line back to Somerled has the blood of the Norse Kings of the Isles in his veins), it does shed fresh light on the subject that has been puzzling scholars for decades: why Kipling wrote with such feeling about the sea, and with such insight about the Vikings and their galleys.

If we dismiss the whole idea as preposterous, inconceivable, then let us consider the house-martins. Year after year, in the spring, succeeding generations of twittering house-martins return to their nests under the eaves of your house and mine, after over-wintering in Africa. And year after year, in the autumn, they and their young fly unerringly south again – with the young leaving before their parents. Scientists tell us that for millions of years migratory birds have navigated thousands of

miles by some sort of *inherited* map (and seasonal clock) that enables them to fly by the stars or the sun, or by electro-magnetic waves, to their destination. This miracle of migration never fails to work, although scientists themselves are still unable to tell us precisely how.

As for Kipling, two short breaks had not been enough to restore his health; and at last medical and parental pressure prevailed. In late August 1891 he set off again on an extended, world-round voyage.

NOTES TO PART IV

1. The friend was Mrs Meta de Forest. See Pinney, *Letters of Rudyard Kipling,* volume 2, p 37, for Kipling's letter to her of 23 July 1891, in which he mentioned his health; the food on the German ship; his intention of avoiding German ships in future; and his *penchant* for raspberries.

2. Published in the *Atlantic Monthly,* September 1891; collected in *Many Inventions,* 1893.

3. Published in the *Contemporary Review,* July 1891; collected in *Many Inventions.*

4. Collected in *Wee Willie Winkie & Other Stones.*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

We offer a very warm welcome to the following, listed to late April 1998:

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THE GREAT WAR AND RUDYARD KIPLING

by HUGH BROGAN

[Hugh Brogan, Professor of History at the University of Essex, is a long-standing member of the Kipling Society, and an authority on Kipling's life and works. On 11 February 1998 he addressed the Society on "The Great War and Rudyard Kipling"; it was an impressive presentation which his audience thoroughly appreciated.

The subject is not only of intrinsic importance: it is topical in the sense that aspects of it have been treated very recently in the *Journal*, in December 1997, in various reviews of the new play, *My Boy Jack*, to which Professor Brogan referred in some detail. So here is his text. – *Ed.]*

Hope lies to mortals
And most believe her,
But man's deceiver
Was never mine.

The thoughts of others
Were light and fleeting
Of lovers' meeting
Or luck or fame.
Mine were of trouble,
And mine were steady,
So I was ready
When trouble came.

(A.E. HOUSMAN)

Many, many years ago, when I was a young academic at Cambridge, I found myself sitting on a sofa having tea with E.M. Forster. It was the season between Bonfire Night and Christmas. He said that, according to his bedmaker, old people hated Remembrance Sunday: it brought back too many painful memories.

I myself hated Remembrance Sunday, 1997. During the last

parliament I couldn't help noticing (like everyone else, I watch the television news) that every year in the week or so before 11 November, Tory M.P.s sprouted plastic poppies in their lapels (by the way, why are modern Poppy Day poppies so cheap and ugly?) as if they had contracted a rash. In 1997 they put the things on a full fortnight beforehand and so did members of the Government. There was no sign of the pacifist White Poppy movement, which made itself conspicuous a few years ago; but Peter Tatchell led a homosexual group to place artificial pink poppies (arranged in a triangular wreath) on the Cenotaph a week before the official ceremonies. The British Legion repeated its plea that two minutes' silence should be observed by everyone on 11 November *as well as* on Remembrance Sunday; and commerce (my building society) and the Prime Minister hastened to endorse it.

Since only one war ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month – not World War II, the Korean War, the Falklands affair, or the Gulf War – this seemed to me to be an objectionable idea: it seemed to suggest that only the First World War mattered, or that it mattered uniquely. In a way that is quite true, but I do not think it is a point that should be made at the time when all our battle-dead are being commemorated.

The whole shabby farce culminated on Remembrance Sunday itself, when a dirty, tattered Union Jack was flown over Whitehall upside down. The Ministry of Defence gallantly blamed the Crown Property Services Agency.

Surely this concatenation of self-serving humbug, enacted at the expense of what used to be the most sacred ceremony of the British year, is proof that those old painful memories are losing their hold on the nation. We would not insist so vulgarly that we remember if we were not actually forgetting, or putting the sagas aside. This forgetting is, I think, a development both inevitable and healthy. But we will do ourselves no service, and the dead no honour, if, as a people, we continue to pretend that the poppies mean as much to us as ever. Did those sons and daughters die so that we could play the sanctimonious hypocrite in their name?

Of course not. Yet I can see few signs that the popular imagination is ready to consider and discuss the wars of the twentieth century – the two World Wars particularly – dispassionately, honestly and knowledgeably. In the course of preparing this paper I went to hear a lecture by Professor Brian Bond on the First World War[1] in which he told how, recently, he had heard a young woman remark during a

television discussion that it was thanks to the public schools that Britain lost that war. Professor Bond wrote in to say that according to his information Britain had won. The BBC wrote back to say politely that he was entitled to his view.

Another anecdote: not long ago I had occasion to read a graduate thesis on women writers and the Great War. I was startled to find that the author, writing nearly eighty years after the Armistice, took it for granted that the absolute pacifists of 1914-18 were right. The war should never have been fought, and any writers, even women writers, who thought otherwise – who let their attitudes be tainted by patriotism or any other belligerent propensity – were simply written off as "militarists". It had not crossed the writer's mind that you could hate the war and the processes of waging war and yet believe that it must be fought and won. As Wagner once said of Mendelssohn, I seemed to see an abyss of superficiality opening before me.

Nor could I dismiss this piece of work as a mere token of one student's personal eccentricity. On the contrary, the writer was the typical victim of two generations of misrepresentation. It is hardly surprising that an age which finds in Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (which ought to be called *An Anti-War Requiem)* its most representative piece of public music, should be unaware that it is possible, in all seriousness and decency, to take more than one view of the Great War. Nor is it surprising that the British generally, so far as I can judge, now hold two logically incompatible beliefs; first, that all war is pointless and avoidable, that all admirals, generals and air marshals are vicious incompetents, that all servicemen are passive victims, rather like sacrificial sheep; second, that the sheep were heroes who saved their country. And attempts are now being made to launch a third fallacy, or should I say to resurrect one. On 11 November 1997 the BBC saw fit to run a TV news item on German atrocities in Belgium in 1914. The wheel has indeed come full circle.

As a professional historian I passionately repudiate all this inconsistent and irresponsible myth-mongering. Neither the pacifist nor the nationalist view of the World Wars – of World War I in particular – is an adequate interpretation; nor is a hellish blend of the two; and there are some things that are too precious to be relinquished to the self-serving posturing of demagogues, whether of the Left or the Right. Furthermore, a nation which wallows in sentimental falsification of its past is likely to misjudge and mishandle its present, with Heaven knows what evil results. The time has come to cry halt, as I am glad to report that a good many of my professional colleagues are doing;[2] and we, as members of the Kipling Society, have a particular obligation to raise our voices, for among the many burnt

offerings currently being set before the God of Slovenly Falsehoods is the reputation of Rudyard Kipling. It grieves me to say that to judge from the latest issue of the *Kipling Journal* we are failing somewhat in our duty.

The *Journal* in question (December 1997) contained eight pages of comment on the recent play, *My Boy Jack*, by David Haig. The comment was intelligent, good-humoured and well-informed, as was to be expected; and the Holts, in particular, had some important reservations; but except for one paragraph by the Editor (who had not seen the play), all the contributors fell into the same trap which, in my opinion, had swallowed up the dramatist. They all accept that the war was pointless, and that the dead died uselessly. The play amounted to an almost total falsification of the beliefs, views and principles of the Kipling family where the Great War was concerned, and simultaneously displayed a shocking ignorance, indeed I must say prejudice, about the war itself.

The tragedy we were shown was not the tragedy which actually befell the Kipling family; the interpretation of the war that was laid before us was one which no one at the time would have endorsed, except possibly Bertrand Russell and a handful of pacifists (16,500 conscientious objectors, as against 4.9 million who enlisted). To a historian, the piece was a travesty of the past, and a confirmation, if one was needed, that myth has displaced truth, and that too many of the British have lost touch with their actual past. Ours is a generation which has succumbed to sentimentality and to what, in my profession, is sometimes called "presentism": the inability to understand that the past is different, and that what seems obvious to us, or to some of us, would have seemed contemptible, even incomprehensible, to our recent ancestors. So my business tonight must be to remind you all of certain facts about the Great War, and to clarify Kipling's response to it.

Let me begin by saying a word about young John Kipling: it need not be long, since George Webb has already said all that is needful. John in life was not the sympathetic but probably neurotic weakling that David Haig makes him. He was an entirely typical specimen of the young men who rushed to arms in 1914 at their country's call. Over a million of them had volunteered by Christmas. I would like to stress how extraordinary this was: every other belligerent in 1914 relied on conscription; only Britain disdained it. It is inconceivable that John would have held back, and we know that he did not. He was not quite seventeen when the war began, and his bad eyesight might have kept him out of uniform, but he would not allow it to do so. Rejected on his

first application for a commission, he said he would volunteer to serve as a private. But his father applied to Lord Roberts, who got John a commission in his own regiment, The Irish Guards.[3]

John was immensely happy at this; what the action cost his father, Rudyard never told anyone, except perhaps his wife, who was paying too. Almost at once they realised that John's commission was just a deferred death warrant, for subalterns, some of whom they knew, were already falling like ninepins. They only had love, pride and courage to help them bear their loss, in prospect and in actuality. Their only consolation was that John died like a man, for a cause in which he and they believed. How much they would have agreed with George Webb, that "it ill becomes anyone today to trivialise John's determination to play his part";[4] yet that is exactly what Haig (who might have thought twice, given the name he bears) has done in his play, and what all do who take a glib view of the First World War.

My concern tonight, however, is not with John, except incidentally, but with Rudyard. I seem to see three, or possibly four phases in his attitude to the war, but in the time available to me I can only glance at the first of them: his interpretation of the issues which brought Germany and Britain to war with each other, and his justification of British belligerency.

Here again I have to register a protest about *My Son Jack.* Quite early in Act 1 Kipling, in 1913 or thereabouts, is made to give a jingoistic speech in the course of his agitation to bring in conscription. Nothing wrong about that in principle, but the speech was silly. Kipling warns against Germany because, if it came to war and Germany won, German methods of laying bricks would be imposed on England. This and the other points made Kipling sound like the dottiest sort of saloon-bar Euro-sceptic. No doubt this was intentional, but to anyone knowledgeable about Kipling it was deeply offensive, for whatever we may think of his politics, he wasn't silly, nor was he even unrepresentative.

Like many other Englishmen, he had been watching Germany with increasing apprehension ever since the Kaiser started building his great navy in 1897; and the perception that imperial Germany meant to overthrow British pre-eminence if she could, by war if necessary, was reinforced by a vague but strengthening sense that German civilisation itself was growing sinister. Above all Kipling knew, as did everyone else of his time, that Britain was dependent on freedom of the seas not merely for the preservation of her empire, but for mere survival: a point that was true of no other Great Power, and which the Kaiser and his men would have been well-advised to consider before they began so frivolously to threaten Britain's lifeline:

"Then what can I do for you, all you Big Steamers,
Oh, what can I do for your comfort and good?"
"Send out your big warships to watch your big waters,
That no one may stop us from bringing you food.

"For the bread that you eat and the biscuits you nibble,
The sweets that you suck and the joints that you carve,
They are brought to you daily by all us Big Steamers,
And if anyone hinders our coming you'll starve!"

Kipling was, it seems, obsessionally convinced that the Liberal government was neglecting or botching Britain's defences; in this he was grossly unfair, and he was unrealistic, too, in brushing aside the extreme political difficulties that would have frustrated any government which tried to introduce conscription in peacetime; but his support for Lord Roberts's National Service League was neither foolish nor unwise nor dishonourable – indeed, knowing how near the British Expeditionary Force came to destruction in 1914 for lack of numbers, we must surely wish that the League had succeeded – and if David Haig had known what he was talking about he would not have suggested otherwise.

The outbreak of war in 1914 seemed to confirm Kipling's worst forebodings. We, posterity, must strive for a larger view. The First World War was such an appalling disaster that there can only be one verdict on the European generation which brought it about: they failed scandalously in an essential duty and must be blamed; but they must also be pitied. For although it can hardly be denied any longer that it was the wanton decisions of Austria-Hungary and Germany which made the great tragedy inevitable, all of the other powers had made contributory mistakes in the years before the war, and all were to suffer horribly. So although it is still difficult for us, our task is not to take sides, but to understand. Such a cool approach will better help us to appraise Kipling than either retrospective jingoism, or retrospective pacifism.

Given the world which had shaped them, and in which they had to take decisions, it is no surprise that in 1914, after long hesitation, the British Cabinet felt obliged to go to war. It was clear that German power posed a long-term threat to the British Empire; Grey, Asquith, Haldane, Churchill and Lloyd George believed that it was their duty to defend that empire. A successful defence required that Britain have friends, or rather allies; therefore when Germany attacked France (which of all the main belligerents of 1914 seems to me to have least

to apologise for) Britain must support her associate (I doubt very much that Britain would have gone to war only to aid Russia). It might have been difficult to unite the country behind this proposition, but the Schlieffen Plan spared the Cabinet from having to make the attempt. The brutal invasion of Belgium made it a matter of honour to fight, and showed what all Germany's opponents or rivals might expect if they did not resist her successfully.

It is impossible to exaggerate the effect of the rape of Belgium on English minds. As Lyn MacDonald has remarked, it gave the Allies a Cause.[5] Even Bernard Shaw, who leaned over backwards to see both sides of the question in his *Common Sense* (and reaped years of intense unpopularity as a result), eventually denounced the Germans as idolaters and pompous noodles for their failure to see the political imbecility of their conduct.[6] H.G.Wells denounced "blood and iron" and, I am sorry to say, "flagwagging Teutonic Kiplingism."[7] The reaction began even before the atrocities: the indefensible invasion was atrocity enough. There was an explosion of verse, the first flames of a fire that was to burn for more than four years and add a glory to English literature. I suppose the most famous lines of 1914 are Rupert Brooke's:

> Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
> And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
> With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
> To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping...

Charles Carrington was to comment, "that indeed was how it seemed," though Brooke's words "have sometimes since seemed so hard to justify."[8] Equally strange is John Masefield's rather fine "August, 1914", which embodies a myth, very powerful at the time (it apparently inspired Edward Thomas to enlist), that Germany must be fought because she threatened the life of the English countryside (I suppose it was a consequence of the invasion scares which had been a feature of the pre-war years).

> How still this quiet cornfield is tonight!
> By an intenser glow the evening falls,
> Bringing, not darkness, but a deeper light;
> Among the stooks a partridge covey calls.

The poem turns into a plea for Englishmen to go "as unknown generations of dead men did":

For some idea but dimly understood
Of an English city never built by hands
Which love of England prompted and made good.[9]

Squires, labourers and poets were to spring to arms to defend the woods, meadows and very soil of England. It is perhaps philistine to remark that General von Schlieffen never expressed any wish to destroy English agricultural society: we might think better of him if he had. In fact, so far as I know the Germans in the First World War never planned to invade Britain, and would not have succeeded had they tried. So in retrospect, for many reasons, much of the verse of 1914 seems misguided.

This does not apply to Kipling. The poem which he eventually produced was not the spontaneous effusion of a non-political but gifted man, wakened, as Brooke so accurately put it, from sleep. (Thomas Hardy's "Men Who March Away" was just such an effusion, and not much better than doggerel.) Rather was Kipling the nation's recognised prophet. For no one's words did the English-speaking world listen to so eagerly as his. In preparing this paper I came across a charming illustration of what he then meant to the people. A bandsman in the Rifle Brigade, finding himself and his comrades mobbed by a cheering, singing, flower-throwing crowd as they marched through Felixstowe, and remembering how contemptuously they had been treated in Colchester, their base in peacetime (they had been barred from many pubs) "couldn't help thinking of [Kipling's] lines, *It's Tommy this and Tommy that, and Tommy get outside, but it's 'Thank you, Mr. Atkins,' when the troopship's on the tide."*[10] But Kipling was silent for the whole of August. He was waiting, I guess, until he had something precise to say. It was the conquest of Belgium which at length drove him into utterance.

We need reminding of what that conquest entailed. On 4 August 1914, in breach of international law, her own treaty obligations, common sense and common human decency, Germany sent her armies across the frontier into Belgium and laid siege to Liège. The policy of *Schrecklichkeit,* or frightfulness, was immediately activated. The people of Belgium were to be terrorised into offering no resistance, for the Schlieffen Plan did not permit of delays for any cause. Paris must be entered not more than six weeks after German mobilisation. The Germans persuaded themselves besides that any Belgian resistance, apart from that offered, to their astonishment, by the Belgian army, was illegal, and might be punished by the severest methods.

So hostages were taken to secure good civilian behaviour, and when that did not work, were shot: six at Warsage on the first day of the

invasion. Simultaneously the village of Battice was burned to the ground, "as an example".[11] On 5 August some Belgian priests were shot out of hand on the pretext that they had been organising sharpshooters. On 6 August Zeppelins bombed Liège, thus inaugurating a standard twentieth-century practice, as Barbara Tuchman points out. On 16 August Liège fell, after a defence which excited the world's admiration. On 19 August, at a place called Aerschot, 150 civilians were killed. On 20 August Brussels was occupied.

That day and the next, massacres occurred at Andenne (211 shot), Seille (50) and Tamines (384). The Germans indulged themselves in an orgy of burning and looting. On 23 August Dinant was sacked, and 644 men, women and children were lined up and shot in the public square: included was a baby three weeks old. The roads south and west were by now choked with refugees. Namur fell to the Germans, and there was another massacre at Visé: all those spared fled across the frontier into Holland, except for 700 boys who, in another innovation with a long future, were deported to help with the harvest in Germany. The French fought heroically at the battle of Charleroi, but were nevertheless forced to retreat. The Germans entered Louvain.

Two days later they began their sack of Louvain, which went on for nearly a week and was soon the most notorious of their crimes. The town was looted and burned, the inhabitants driven off or massacred, and the great university library, one of the greatest treasures of its kind in Europe, was utterly destroyed. All these incidents were faithfully reported by American newspapermen, and quickly found their way into the British press. The horrified condemnations of the neutral, perhaps even of the Allied, press, seem to have startled the German high command: the sack ended suddenly on Sunday, 30 August.

On Tuesday, 1 September, in *The Times*, Kipling spoke:

> For all we have and are,
> For all our children's fate,
> Stand up and take the war.
> The Hun is at the gate!
> Our world has passed away,
> In wantonness o'erthrown.
> There is nothing left to-day
> But steel and fire and stone!
>
> Though all we knew depart,
> The old Commandments stand:-
> "In courage keep your heart,
> In strength lift up your hand."

Once more we hear the word
That sickened earth of old:-
"No law except the Sword
Unsheathed and uncontrolled."
Once more it knits mankind,
Once more the nations go
To meet and break and bind
A crazed and driven foe...

"Poetry makes nothing happen," said Auden, and it is likely that by the time these verses appeared few readers of *The Times* needed Kipling to tell them what the war was about; but no doubt writing them helped him to clarify his own understanding,[12] and reading them may now clarify ours. The issue was the same as that of Hitler's war: alongside Dinant and Louvain we remember Oradour and Lidice.

Schrecklichkeit shattered irreparably the faith and hopes which the nineteenth century had bequeathed to the twentieth; we have paid heavily for their loss ever since; nevertheless, the Germans had to be resisted. The point is unaffected by the fact that rumour managed to exaggerate even the truth. To do the Germans justice, they seem to have refrained from rape and mere sadism: the stories about ravished, pregnant girls and children with hands chopped off seem to have started among the tens of thousands of refugees who got away to England, and to have been amplified by British civilians. These exaggerations eventually had a tragic effect, for not only did they come to blur the memories of what the invaders had actually done, their exposure as fraudulent made people very reluctant to believe what they heard twenty years later, when tales of new horrors began to come out of Germany. Kipling swallowed too many of the tall tales. But it was not false rumour which inspired him in August 1914.

The date of the poem has another, perhaps unplanned significance – I say 'perhaps' because Kipling could throw off finished verse with astonishing speed. On Sunday, 30 August, a special edition of *The Times* carried the celebrated "Amiens dispatch", which brought the first news to an appalled country of the retreat from Mons, the heavy losses of the BEF, and the prospect of total defeat which the Allied cause now faced. It was to a public reeling from the news that Kipling spoke:

Comfort, content, delight,
The ages' slow-bought gain,
They shrivelled in a night.
Only ourselves remain
To face the naked days

In silent fortitude,
Through perils and dismays
Renewed and re-renewed.
Though all we made depart,
The old Commandments stand:-
"In patience keep your heart,
In strength lift up your hand."

No easy hope or lies
Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will, and soul.
There is but one task for all –
One life for each to give.
What stands if Freedom fall?
Who dies if England live?

This was the prophet of "Recessional" speaking again; there are clear verbal echoes of the earlier poem in the new, and they are printed side by side in the *Definitive Edition of Rudyard Kipling's Verse.* George Webb objects to Kipling's use (here and elsewhere) of the word 'Hun', even though it was the Kaiser himself who, with characteristic folly, first used it of German troops; but apart from that, I think we can all agree that these were astonishingly apt words for that hour, moving even today, and even today showing not only why so many in 1914 believed in the justice of the Allied cause, but that it actually *was* just.

Its message need not be summarised: Kipling is his own interpreter. "Who dies if England live?"

Answer: hundreds of thousands of young men, among them the prophet's only son; but he never swerved from what he saw as the cruel truth. The 'sickening word' must be silenced again. This was the issue. In "The Outlaws", a poem of the same year, he elaborated his view of the Huns:

They traded with the careless earth,
And good return it gave:
They plotted by their neighbour's hearth
The means to make him slave.

When all was ready to their hand
They loosed their hidden sword,
And utterly laid waste a land
Their oath was pledged to guard.

Coldly they went about to raise
To life and make more dread
Abominations of old days,
That men believed were dead...

He never swerved from this attitude. He came perhaps nearest to what he thought was the root of the evil in that really unworthy poem, "A Death-Bed", when he picked up a tale that the Kaiser was dying of throat cancer, like his father before him. It begins:

"This is the State above the Law.
The State exists for the State alone."

And in October, 1918, as the Allies and Germany began to negotiate for an armistice, he published an urgent poem, "Justice", in which he urged the absolute necessity of punishing the enemy before concluding peace with him:

A People and their King
Through ancient sin grown strong,
Because they feared no reckoning
Would set no bound to wrong;
But now their hour is past,
And we who bore it find
Evil Incarnate held at last
To answer to mankind.

For agony and spoil
Of nations beat to dust.
For poisoned air and tortured soil
And cold, commanded lust,
And every secret woe
The shuddering waters saw –
Willed and fulfilled by high and low –
Let them relearn the Law:

...That neither schools nor priests
Nor Kings may build again
A people with the heart of beasts
Made wise concerning men.
Whereby our dead shall sleep
In honour, unbetrayed,
And we in faith and honour keep
That peace for which they paid.

But he did not by any means let the British off the hook. Everyone knows his "Epitaph of the War: Common Form":

> If any question why we died,
> Tell them, because our fathers lied.

This is, perhaps, too gnomic: at best it is a half-truth, blaming the Liberals' alleged unpreparedness, as if that were a sufficient explanation of the slaughter;[13] at worst, it has misled many as to his attitude to the war itself. I prefer a verse from "Natural Theology":

> Money spent on an Army or Fleet
> Is homicidal lunacy...
> My son has been killed in the Mons retreat.
> Why is the Lord afflicting me?
> Why are murder, pillage and arson
> And rape allowed by the Deity?
> I will write to the *Times*, deriding our parson,
> Because my God has afflicted me.
>
> CHORUS
>
> We had a kettle: we let it leak:
> Our not repairing it made it worse.
> We haven't had any tea for a week...
> The bottom is out of the Universe!
>
> ...As was the sowing so the reaping
> Is now and ever more shall be.
> Thou art delivered to thine own keeping.
> Only Thyself hath afflicted thee!

In "The Covenant" he rebuked the nation for the pride and folly which brought on the war (though it seems that he was also, yet again, blaming the Liberals particularly):

> We thought we ranked above the chance of ill.
> Others might fall, not we, for we were wise –
> Merchants in freedom. So, of our free-will
> We let our servants drug our strength with lies.
> The pleasure and the poison had its way
> On us as on the meanest, till we learned
> That he who lies will steal, who steals will slay.
> Neither God's judgment nor man's heart was turned...

But he was impressed and pleased by the response of this decadent nation to the challenge; he had no doubt where the real blame lay, and he saw a stark contrast between the combatants: "Immemorially trained to refer all thought and deed to certain standards of right and wrong which, [the English] held, lay equally on all men, they had to deal with an enemy for whom right and wrong do not exist except as the State decides."[14]

From first to last, you observe, the picture is utterly consistent; and I may add that until his death in 1936 Kipling never ceased to warn against the danger of a revival of German aggression, and to urge the importance of keeping faith with the dead.

What are we to make of all this? I think we should start by making certain concessions to Kipling's critics. All witnesses agree that Britain became hysterical with hatred of the Germans when the First World War broke out, and Kipling (whose genius had a hysterical side) caught the infection, as these poems show, and as is also shown by such stories as '"Swept and Garnished"' and "Mary Postgate" (not to mention the poem, "The Beginnings", which accompanies "Mary Postgate"). He believed the worst allegations about German atrocities in Belgium; he demonised the Kaiser relentlessly; he picked up the half-baked notion that German 'frightfulness' could be attributed to Heinrich von Treitschke, although Treitschke (admittedly, not a sympathetic figure) seems only to have purveyed notions common to all European countries, with a German colouring: "The moment that the state proclaims, 'Your state and the existence of your state are now at stake', selfishness disappears and party hatred is silenced..."[16]

Kipling's knowledge and understanding of Germany were so superficial that he did not perceive that the problem was not that its government was so strong, but that it was so badly organised that it could not control its generals or qualify their blinkered military outlook by political common sense. Thus on 1 August, 1914, at the very last hour, the Kaiser, visited by a sudden flash of wisdom, told Moltke that there was no need to go to war in the West; they should abandon the Schlieffen Plan and fight Russia alone. Moltke, shattered by the idea, absolutely refused to adopt it, although apparently he recognised, only six months later, that the assault on Belgium and France had been a mistake.[17]

The curse of Germany was militarism, the militarism of Prussia as it had developed since 1870; most of the country's mistakes and all of its crimes during the First World War can be laid at its door, and it was those crimes which created the atmosphere and attitude which made later, even greater crimes possible. The evidence that militarism was

the enemy was available to Kipling from the moment that Belgium was violated; but, obsessed with the Kaiser, he failed to understand it. Wilhelm II was not a competent ruler, but he was not the genius of pure evil that Kipling made him out to be. That description only applies to a later German ruler, the follower of Ludendorff.

On the other hand, Kipling did understand very well the case for British belligerence. So far as Britain and the British Empire were concerned, Germany was simply not to be trusted, and Britain could not in prudence stand by while her only ally, France, was destroyed; besides, invasion and occupation by Germany was no joke, and in the name of human solidarity it would have been shameful to grant the Prussians a free hand. These points were well understood in England in August and September, 1914, and on the whole they continued to be valid throughout the war. Siegfried Sassoon apparently believed that peace could have been made in 1917. If so, it would have been peace on Germany's terms, and we know, both from the work of Fritz Fischer and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, just how cruel those terms would have been. They would also have weighed most heavily on Britain's allies. Peace in 1917 was not, as it happened, at all likely; Kipling would not have been alone in thinking that it could not have been honourable. Yet nobody, reading *The Irish Guards,* can doubt that he knew exactly what was the price of war.

The aspect of Kipling discussed in this paper is not that which has guaranteed his hold on posterity. There is much more to be said of his writings on the war: his reportage, his verse, his stories; even an examination of such relatively minor work as *Sea Warfare* reveals a human warmth (not to mention a certain charm, and delicacy of observation) which sets it, as literature, above most of the verse I have quoted today. And there is much still for us to discover about that other work. For example, that amazing passage in "Mary Postgate" where the dead boy's possessions are listed as she burns them may perhaps be read as Kipling's prophylactic against grief; or a rehearsal, for it was written six months before he lost his own boy. And his account of the battle of Loos, in the second volume of *The Irish Guards,* though as carefully restrained in tone as all the rest of that remarkable work, does contain some of the few critical comments on the high command, its tactics and strategy, that he ever allowed himself. It cannot be a coincidence that it was at Loos that John Kipling died.

But this paper has had another concern: to rescue Kipling's reputation from ignorant libel, and to contribute, in however small a way, to a better understanding of that great historical tragedy which was not only his, not only his country's, but the world's – and which

we still, after all this time, instinctively call the Great War.

NOTES

1. Brian Bond, "A victory worse than defeat? British interpretations of the First World War." 17 November 1997, Liddell Hart Centre, King's College, London.

2. For instance, Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War;* Brian Bond, *The Pursuit of Victory*, and the lecture already quoted; Ian Beckett, "The Military Historian and the Popular Image of the Western Front, 1914-1918", in a recent issue of *The Historian*.

3. It is typical of David Haig's numerous small falsifications that he suggests, at one point, that Roberts was dying when Kipling asked for his help. In fact, Roberts seemed perfectly hale until, a few weeks later, he went to France, where he caught an infection that proved fatal. Contrary to Haig's assertion, Kipling did not pester a dying man.

4. *Kipling Journal,* Vol.71, no 284 (December 1997) p 11.

5. Lyn MacDonald, *1914* (London: Penguin, 1989) p 43.

6. Bernard Shaw, *What I Really Wrote About The War* (London: Constable, 1931) pp 159-60.

7. See Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns ofAugust* (New York: Dell, 1963) p 349.

8. Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Macmillan, 1955) p 423.

9. See Dominic Hibberd and John Onions, *Poetry of the Great War* (London: Macmillan, 1986) pp 40-42. It is perhaps worth remarking that the last stanza seems to owe something to Kipling's poem, "Puck's Song":

> And silence broods like spirit on the brae,
> A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight runs
> Over the grasses of the ancient way
> Rutted this morning by the passing guns.

10. Macdonald, *1914*, pp 50-51.

11. I take all these particulars (to be found in many other places) from Tuchman, pp 198-359, *passim.*

12. It is interesting that, according to Carrington, Kipling's friend, the journalist Perceval Landon, offered some amendments to the draft, which Kipling accepted. It was Landon who carried the completed poem to *The Times.* (Carrington, p 428)

13. In the discussion which followed this paper, Dr Michael Brock suggested that since Kipling more or less abandoned the pro-conscription campaign in the twelve months before the war broke out, in favour of his involvement in the Ulster agitation, this epitaph may be intended to inculpate himself, along with the rest of his generation, for not seeing that the European crisis was becoming acute.

14. Rudyard Kipling, Preface to André Chevrillon, *Britain and the War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917) p xiv.

15. Both these stories were collected in *A Diversity of Creatures.*

16. See James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (London: Longmans, second edition, 1992) pp 217-19 for this quotation, and an illuminating sketch of the influence of Treitschke and Nietzsche.

17. Tuchman, pp 97-100.

THE HUNTER HUNTED.
[With acknowledgments to Mr. J. C. DOLLMAN.]

This cartoon was in *Punch* on 16 September 1914, when its meaning would have been clear. A German in jackboots and *pickelhaube,* (the Kaiser?), intent on one direction, is stalked by a Russian bear coming from the other. Early in the Great War there were widespread hopes in the West – never fulfilled – that the huge Russian Army on the Eastern Front was unstoppable.

SOCIETY NOTICES

FROM THE SECRETARY

[See also the Announcements on page 5.]

BURWASH WAR MEMORIAL

The Secretary has been approached by Sir Frank Sanderson of Burwash, who wished to enlist our support in an application for a grant towards the restoration of the War Memorial on the main road outside the church of St Bartholomew. The Memorial is carved with the names of local people who gave their lives in both World Wars; and includes that of Lieut. John Kipling. Above it is a lantern which is lit (uniquely in England, as I understand it) on the anniversary of the death of each of those on the Roll of Honour. Any grant that is made will need to be augmented by public subscription.

THE SOCIETY'S MEDALLION

A copy of the medallion (see Notices, December 1997) was safely delivered to the Dean of the Sir J.J. Institute of Applied Art in Mumbai (Bombay) through the good offices of Mr Mervyn Peatfield of Rottingdean. I have had a delighted response from Professor Rajadhyaksha: "This medallion will surely remain to inspire all who visit Rudyard Kipling's birthplace in years to come."

A second copy now enhances the exhibit about HMS *Kipling* in our Kipling Room at The Grange, Rottingdean, because one of the original bronzes was presented to the destroyer. Although there are references to that presentation in wartime issues of the *Journal*, no mention is made of the artist who created it so superbly. If any member has information, I should be grateful to learn of it.

MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE: THE KIPLING FELLOWSHIP

The Kipling Fellowship was endowed by Carrie Kipling in 1937, though it was not till after her death in 1939 that arrangements were completed. Rudyard Kipling himself had been elected to an Honorary Fellowship of the College in 1932. Initially the Kipling Fellowship was held by

classicists, but later Fellows have been from other disciplines. Now one of our most supportive members, Dr Jeffery Lewins, has been appointed Kipling Fellow: the Society congratulates him on that distinction.

THE PATER AND THE JUNGLE BOOK GAME

A number of members responded to the advertisements in recent issues, for the biography of Lockwood Kipling by Dr Ankers, and for the game offered by Studio Ann Carlton. The Society's funds have consequently benefited by £150. Anyone still interested in buying either item should contact the Secretary.

JOHN CHARLES DOLLMAN, R.W.S. (1851-1934)

An e-mail which arrived recently asked if Kipling knew Dollman, who had a house in London and a cottage in Ditchling, Sussex. Dollman, a member of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, was quite a notable artist and is thought by the enquirer to have done some work based on Kipling stories. Any information would be welcome. [Yes, Dollman's entry in *Who Was Who,* listing his principal paintings, includes one entitled "Mowgli". Incidentally another well known painting by Dollman, entitled "The Hunter", inspired the *Punch* cartoon we reproduce on page 34. – *Ed.]*

SOME PLEAS FOR HELP

As we constantly need to update our membership lists and check subscription payments, Council have agreed in principle to appoint a Membership Secretary. Is anyone willing to be considered for this vital function? If so, please let me know, urgently. There would be close liaison with me as Secretary, by mail, but access to a word processor or computer is almost essential.

We must keep our membership total at the present level at least, and enlarge it if possible. To this end, Council also plan to appoint a Publicity Officer, with a seat on Council, to promote what we offer. Would anyone like to come forward, or to suggest a candidate? Some knowledge of PR techniques would help, but is not a prerequisite.

Increasing our numbers is obviously the key to ensuring our future and retaining our strong position in the literary community. Present members are urged to send to the Secretary the names of potential new members. Thank you, in advance, for any help you can give.

THE SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

We congratulate the Australian Branch on attaining, in vigorous form, the sixtieth anniversary of their foundation in 1938. Here is a report from Mrs Rosalind Kennedy, who is their Secretary and Vice-President (and is also a Vice-President of the Kipling Society, London).

"The sixtieth anniversary meeting of the Society was held in Melbourne on Sunday 22 March 1998, when representatives of various literary societies, special invited guests and members gathered to celebrate the milestone.

The Hon. Austin Asche, A.C., Q.C., presented a paper, "The Strange Case of the Brushwood Boy", which stirred the imagination and interest of all listeners. Questions from the audience revealed a deep familiarity with "The Brushwood Boy" *[The Day's Work]* and with the era of its setting.

In a warm social atmosphere an afternoon tea – featuring 'Mr Kipling Cakes' – concluded the special occasion.

Mr Leo Hawkins (Vice-President) and Mrs Jeannette Hawkins arranged a dinner on Monday 23 March at the Melbourne Club. The President, Dr P.J. Naish, extended a warm welcome to the forty people in attendance, noting that several had travelled great distances to share the occasion; and introduced Emeritus Professor John Legge to propose the traditional toast. Mrs Dorothy Mendes, an original member of the Melbourne Branch, recounted early meetings of the Society, and mentioned personal family links with Rudyard Kipling and his parents. Vivid descriptions of India – particularly of Simla, her birthplace – evoked for many a nostalgia for the Empire of the Queen. Mrs Mendes gracefully 'blew out' the candles on the impressive anniversary cake, and cut the first slice for distribution."

Mrs Kennedy's report also included a welcome to two new members of the Australian Branch: Ms Pam St Hill and Mr David Larkworthy (both of Melbourne).

Note by Editor: The *Kipling Journal* for July 1938 noted with pleasure the foundation of "a strong branch at Melbourne", under the Presidency of Dr A.S. Joske, a keen Kipling collector. Its diamond jubilee is a most auspicious occasion and we wish it all prosperity for the future.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[I am glad to receive letters intended for publication. However, since more are sometimes received than can in practice be printed, I must be selective, and also 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". My address is given on the penultimate page of this issue. – *Ed.]*

BEERBOHM'S CARTOONS

From Mr B. C. Diamond, Flat 2, 80 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 5LS

Dear Sir,

Our readers may know that Max Beerbohm (1872-1956) was a fierce and persistent critic of Kipling, caricaturing him both in prose and in cartoon. See, e.g., the biographies of Kipling by Charles Carrington (1955, pages 340-1), Lord Birkenhead (1978, pages 92-3 etc), Philip Mason (1975, page 277); and the *Kipling Journal* (September 1988, page 43). Carrington wrote that he knew of at least nine caricatures. J.G. Riewald's book, *Beerbohm's Literary Caricatures*, which I referred to in my letter in the *Journal* of March 1989, page 47, includes six of Kipling.

The latest work of this genre is *Max Beerbohm's Caricatures* by N. John Hall (Yale, 1997); this large-format volume has nine caricatures of or including Kipling, some shown in colour; of which four are not in Riewald, namely plates 46, 50, 167 and 213. These four date from 1908 to 1922 (a fresco in Beerbohm's villa at Rapallo), and all show Kipling in company with other literary or political figures. The depiction of Kipling remains much the same – forehead, chin, eyebrows – in all nine, except perhaps in the fragment of his head drawn more lightly in the fresco.

Yours sincerely
BRYAN DIAMOND

THE KAISER'S ILLNESS

From Mrs Sara H.T. Johnson, 19 Country Farm Road, Forestdale, Massachusetts 02644, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

With apologies, a rather belated response to the letter concerning

"A Death-Bed", from the Hon. Austin Asche, A C, Q.C., in the March 1997 issue at page 54. My sources are Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II* (University of North Carolina Press, 1989 & 1996, 2 volumes) and Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought* (Jonathan Cape, 1992).

Austin Asche is quite correct in believing that Kaiser Wilhelm II never suffered from cancer: he died of heart disease in June 1941, aged 83. (Ironically, German relatives travelling to Doorn, Holland, for his funeral were delayed several hours by an R.A.F. bombing raid.) The Kaiser did, however, and with better reason, share Kipling's lifelong dread of cancer. Prince Frederick III, his father and heir to Wilhelm I, died of throat cancer in June 1888, having reigned for only 99 days; his mother, Kaiserin Victoria, eldest child of Queen Victoria, died of spine cancer in August 1901.

"A Death-Bed" (1918) is an explicit Kipling curse or 'hex', wishing upon the Kaiser his father's cruel death: *"It will follow the regular course of- throats."* Kipling first responded to German 'frightfulness' and Ernst Lissauer's "Hymn of Hate" ("Gott strafe England") with "'Swept and Garnished'"and "Mary Postgate" [collected in *A Diversity of Creatures]* and a poem, "The Beginnings" ("When the English began to hate."). "A Death Bed" is a far more vicious and personal hymn of hate ("This is a type that is better dead.") – a powerful evocation of hubris and nemesis, in which Kipling assigns to Wilhelm II sole guilt for the war and its casualties. Bombastic declarations of the Kaiser are dramatically juxtaposed with images of lingering, agonising death, the perpetrator of world suffering condemned by Kipling to hideous punishment for sins against humanity: "This dies hard."

The bitter animosity of Kipling's curse in this poem is surpassed only once, in "The Prophet and the Country" *[Debits and Credits]:* wishing plague upon an entire nation, America, for Woodrow Wilson's hubris during and after the war. Was Kipling really as incapable of "real, personal hate for the rest of my days" as he claimed in *Something of Myself?-*

Yours sincerely

SARA H.T. JOHNSON

KIPLING AND SLEEP

From Mrs John Bowlby, Wyldes Close Corner, Hampstead Way, London NW11 7JB

Dear Editor,

In response to Mrs Leeper's letter (March 1998, page 51), I imagined that Kipling was a lifelong insomniac. I don't know in which year he

wrote "The Dawn Wind" [1911 – *Ed.],* but to me the first verse perfectly describes the experience of insomnia:

At two o'clock in the morning, if you open your window and listen,
You will hear the feet of the Wind that is going to call the sun.
And the trees in the shadow rustle and the trees in the moonlight glisten,
And though it is deep, dark night, you feel that the night is done.

The second line, composed with only one exception of one-syllable words, echoes the rhythm of footsteps.

Yours sincerely,
URSULA BOWLBY

HUGO'S "CARYATID FRENCH"

From Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C., 32 Wood Lane, Highgate, London N6 5UB

Dear Sir,

At page 60 in the March 1998 *Journal,* Mr Frazer asks why Kipling, writing "My Sunday at Home" *(The Day's Work),* applied the term "caryatid" to Victor Hugo's French. This epithet is indeed puzzling. Could he have meant to write "charismatic" – using that word in the sense that it possessed a century ago?

A 'textual critic' might suggest that "caryatid" was a printer's error for "charismatic", arguing that if one regards *ch* and *c,* and *i* and *y,* as representing the same sounds, and therefore as equivalents, then the first seven letters of *caryatid* occur in the same order in *charismatic;* and that the two words are similarly accented.

However, I doubt that there was such a corruption of what Kipling wrote in manuscript, since he would have detected and corrected it. A more likely explanation is that he, for once, got two rather similar-sounding words mixed up.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites no adjectival use of "caryatid" other than Tennyson's "caryatid figures" – the adjective being "caryatidal", "caryatidean" or "caryatidic" – an additional reason for doubting Kipling's deliberate use of the noun adjectivally.

On the other hand, "charisma" did not acquire its modern meaning until 1922, when it was used by the German sociologist Max Weber to mean "a certain quality of an individual personality by which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, super-human or at least specifically exceptional powers and qualities".

Before that, it was used to mean a gift or talent specially vouchsafed by God, such as the gift of prophecy, of healing, or of eloquent speech.

In his *Life of Victor Hugo,* published some seven years before "My Sunday at Home" was written, Frank Marzials says that Hugo was arraigned by Zola and others of the "naturalist" school "for artificiality, for preferring an epic grandeur to the actual proportions of life" – exactly the qualities that the narrator in "My Sunday at Home" must have thought were needed to describe worthily the epic vomiting of "the largest navvy I have ever seen in my life".

Yours sincerely
GEORGE ENGLE

COCKBILLING THE YARDS

From Professor T.J. Connell, 32 Southwood Gardens, Hinckley Wood, Esher, Surrey KT10 ODE

Dear Sir,

I have noticed a reference in "The Bonds of Discipline" *(Traffics and Discoveries)* to the curious naval practice of "cockbilling the yards" (which was done in that story by the crew of HMS *Archimandrite* as part of their elaborate charade, including a faked public execution, to bamboozle the French spy).

Cockbilling the yards appears in some detail in chapter 30 of Captain Frederick Marryat's novel, *Peter Simple* (1834). Marryat served nearly twenty-five years at sea; his narrative powers are first-rate. I suspect he would have appealed to Kipling, and I wonder if the account in "The Bonds of Discipline" is based on the episode in *Peter Simple.* Kipling has Pyecroft speaking as follows:

> "I noticed the wardroom as a class, you might say, was manoeuvrin' *en masse,* an' then come the order to cockbill the yards. We hadn't any yards except a couple o' signallin' sticks, but we cockbilled 'em. I hadn't seen that sight, not since thirteen years in the West Indies, when a post-captain died o' yellow jack. It means a sign o' mournin', the yards bein' canted opposite ways, to look drunk an' disorderly. They do."

Oddly enough, Marryat's episode occurs in the West Indies, and it is the ship's captain who dies, though not of yellow fever. The procedure

for a ship to go into mourning for its captain is described in detail. Here is a brief extract:

> The barge received the coffin [and] was shoved off by the bowmen... the other boats followed, and... the minute-guns boomed... while the yards were topped to starboard and to port, the ropes were slackened and hung in bights, so as to give the idea of distress and neglect. At the same time, a dozen or more of the men... dropped over the sides of the ship in different parts, and with their cans of paint and brushes in a few minutes effaced the whole of the broad white riband which marked the beautiful run of the frigate, and left her all black and in deep mourning...

If *Peter Simple* was Kipling's source, this provides a good instance of the way in which he could work points of detail into his writing.

Yours aye (or perhaps in this context aye aye)

TIM CONNELL

KIPLING AS RADIO AMATEUR?

I

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

Dear Sir,

Regarding the item about Kipling as a radio amateur in the March 1998 *Journal*, the postcard reproduced at page 24 has to be a forgery, if for one reason only.

Apart from the incongruity of the handwriting (except for the signature), the dates and the address, it is the Americanised spelling of "favor" which gives the game away. It recalls the episode in 1889 in a Yokohama bookshop, when Kipling came face to face with American piracy of a dozen well-known authors' books, as well as of his own; and saw how they had 'improved' the spelling...

"When Thackeray is made to talk about 'travelers' and 'theaters' it is time for England to declare war." See page 152 of *Kipling's Japan* (edited by Cortazzi & Webb, published by Athlone, London, 1988).

Yours truly

MERYL MACDONALD BENDLE

II

From Mr J.H. McGivering, 32 Cheltenham Place, Brighton BN1 4AB

Dear Sir,

Regarding the postcard signed 'Rudyard Kipling', at page 24 of the *Journal* of March 1998, I wrote to the City Library at Newcastle upon Tyne, to ask if there was any record of a Rudyard Kipling resident at 21 Mason Street in 1925. I have received a very helpful reply from Patricia Sheldon, Assistant Librarian, Local Studies, who writes as follows:-

"Mason Street was in Byker, a suburb to the east of the City centre. In common with other streets in that area it consisted of small late-nineteenth-century houses fronting directly on to the pavement and sloping steeply towards the River Tyne. Byker's population consisted mainly of shipyard and pottery workers, and few from the area were therefore eligible for inclusion in Directories.

Electoral registers (or "voters lists") show that 21 Mason Street had three registered voters among its inhabitants, these being Herbert and Jessie Hope and Rudyard Kipling. Herbert and Rudyard were eligible by reasons of residency and occupation, Jessie because of her husband's occupation. All three were also listed in 1924 and 1926.

If would appear that unless the famous Kipling was known to have lived and worked in Newcastle for at least three years (and I think we would have known before now if he had!) your postcard has been written by a hitherto obscure namesake. I hope this conclusion is not too disappointing for you. You are welcome to quote any of this information in the *Kipling Journal* if you (or the editor) see fit to do so."

The writer continues: "I would be grateful for a copy of any article about this postcard, or about any links Kipling might have had with Newcastle. I have found a note in a retired colleague's handwriting which states that (according to the Kipling Society) Kipling visited Armstrong's Newcastle shipyards in February 1915, but no confirmation of this was found in local newspapers."

Yours sincerely
JOHN MCGIVERING

[To take the last point first, Carrington's synopsis of Mrs Kipling's diary gives an entry for February 1915 (not precisely dated): "Rud to Newcastle." As to Kipling's namesake, this is a revelation, and we are much obliged to John McGivering and the Newcastle Library for so convincingly solving the puzzle. It would be interesting to discover a date of birth and/or baptism for this other Rudyard Kipling. – *Ed.]*

"OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS"

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

Dear Sir,

I enjoyed the careful analysis of "Our Lady of the Snows" by James Mitchell at pages 12-22 of the March 1998 issue. I can add one gloss, that might convey the sense in which this poem was received at the time – or, more strictly, ten years after.

The Nobel Prize for Literature came in 1907, and an Honorary Doctorate from Cambridge in 1908 (an occasion when the Kiplings stayed in Magdalene and visited the Pepys Library). The University Public Orator, Professor J.E. Sandys, gave an address, in Latin of course, part of which I have translated as follows:

> "But today let us at least praise one line of his, a line full of dignity, in which our daughter Canada, mistress of her snows, addresses her mother across the mighty ocean: 'Daughter am I in my Mother's House, but mistress in my own.' I bring before you the poet laureate of our Navy, our soldiers, and the whole British Empire: Rudyard Kipling."

Yours sincerely
JEFFERY LEWINS

[The address, and Kipling's response, have been published in the 2nd edition of a Magdalene College pamphlet edited by Dr Lewins. – *Ed.]*

POINTS FROM OTHER LETTERS

PROFESSOR PINNEY AT CAMBRIDGE

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

Dr Lewins has written to say that, thanks to the prior notification of the event in the *Journal* (December 1997, pages 51-2), Professor Thomas Pinney's lecture at Magdalene College, Cambridge, on 18 March 1998, on "The Kipling that Nobody Will Ever Read", and the dinner afterwards in his honour were well attended. He had an audience of

about 65, many of them members of the Society; and he "spoke excellently, and revealed much unknown material, including an exciting find of a theatre script of *The Jungle Book* by Kipling himself."

Dr Lewins hopes to be able to publish Professor Pinney's address, in the form of a Magdalene College Occasional Paper; if so, members will be informed through the *Journal.*

"A SONG OF THE ENGLISH"

From Howes Bookshop, Trinity Hall, Braybrooke Terrace, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1HQ

Howes Bookshop have sent me their Antiquarian Catalogue 277 of 1998, including one Kipling item. This is of some interest, both for its high price and for a letter which it contains, from Kipling to his friend Lord Milner.

The book, priced at £1,250, is a luxurious quarto edition of the series of poems called "A Song of the English", published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1909, with 30 tipped-in plates in colour printed on japan parchment, and numerous black-and-white illustrations, all by W. Heath Robinson. It is a presentation copy to Milner, and on the front free endpaper there are inscribed in a calligraphic hand the first and last stanzas of Kipling's poem "The Pro-Consuls" (dedicated to Milner), the two verses together making a complete sonnet.

The letter, on one page of Bateman's-headed paper dated 9 December 1909, includes the following remarks: "I think gift-books of the large boxed variety, which are supposed to lie about on tables, are wholly abominable so I apologize for sending you this one... but the drawings are not bad." [For samples of these, see pages 52 & 53. – *Ed.]*

VERISIMILITUDE OF THE SOLDIERS THREE

From Mr D. Irvine, 81 Folly Park, Clapham, Bedford MK41 6AH

Mr Irvine, who served in the Second World War with the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (originally the 43rd & 52nd Regiments of Foot) has been prompted by an item about John Masters and Kipling's 'Soldiers Three' (December 1997, page 60) to write in emphatic terms about the "immortality" of those nineteenth-century

soldier types, whose verisimilitude "was plain, to anyone who served with British Regulars in 1939-45".

He vividly recalls one old sweat, an unmistakable "spiritual comrade of Ortheris, Learoyd and Mulvaney", who had served with the 52nd, the 2nd Battalion, on the Frontier, and who would regale his friends with Kiplingesque tales of campaigning against the Fakir of Ipi; many of his stories had the authentic flavour. Like Mulvaney, he had a melancholy side, and was apt, in thoughtful moments, to declaim, "Roll on the day / When the good Lord shall say, / *'Eaven an' Earth, I Close-order, march!"*

KIPLING AND THE HOUSMANS

From Mr Geoffrey Plowden, 22 Prince Edward Mansions, London W2 4WA

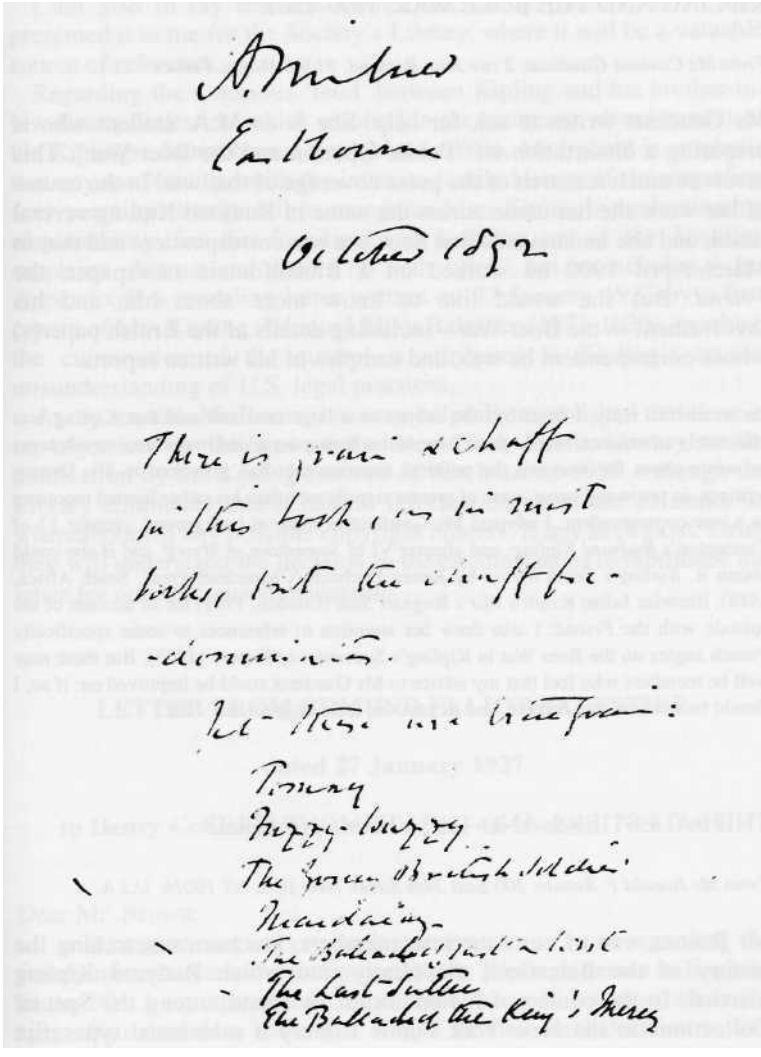
Mr Plowden has sent me a photocopy of part of the February 1998 *Newsletter* of the Housman Society. (It is attractively produced: any enquiries about it and the Society it represents should be directed to its Editor, Stephen de Winton, at 57 Barfield, Sutton-at-Hone, Dartford DA4 9EJ.)

The Kipling-related item in it is an extract from a letter written by A.E. Housman's brother, George Herbert Housman, to his step-mother. He was serving in the British Army in Burma, in the ranks. In a letter written from Thayetmyo, Upper Burma, on 19 July 1892, he said:

> The book that Alfred sent me has been the delight of myself and comrades ever since I got it. It was "Rudyard Kipling's barrack room ballads". There never was a man, and I should think never will be again, who understands "Tommy Atkins" in the rough, as he does. Probably you would find it difficult to understand his inimitable mixture of soldiers' slang and Hindustanee, and it is also, of course, essentially a man's book.

Mr Plowden comments: "The interesting thing to me in this is that it was A.E. Housman who selected the volume to send to his brother. I think the great scholar-poet could see the merit in Kipling."

[For a critical comment on *Barrack-Room Ballads & Other Verses*, see. opposite, a reduced photocopy of what the austerely intellectual Lord Milner (A. Milner. Eastbourne, October 1892) wrote on the flyleaf of his own copy of the 4th edition, now in my possession. – *Ed.]*



GRAIN AND CHAFF (see foot of page opposite). Milner wrote: "There is grain & chaff in this book, as in most books, but the chaff predominates. Yet these are true grain: Tommy, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, The Young British Soldier, Mandalay, The Ballad of East & West, The Last Suttee, The Ballad of the King's Mercy." Running out of space, he added, left, on the inside front cover: "The Ballad of the Clampherdown, The Ballad of the Bolivar, The English Flag."

KIPLING AND THE BOER WAR, 1899-1902

From Ms Corinne Gaudinat, 2 rue Jean Rostand, 91300 Massy, France

Ms Gaudinat writes to ask for help. She is an M.A. student who is preparing a dissertation on "Public Opinion and the Boer War". This involves much research of the press coverage of that war. In the course of her work she has come across the name of Rudyard Kipling several times, and she understands that he was a war correspondent and that in March/April 1900 he worked on a Bloemfontein newspaper, the *Friend*. But she would like to know more about him and his involvement in the Boer War – including details of the British paper(s) whose correspondent he was, and samples of his written reports.

[In an interim reply, Ï described the subject as a large one; and said that Kipling was effectively a freelance, whose great fame at that time gave added importance to whatever he wrote about the war and the political situation that had provoked it. His literary writings, in prose and verse, were of greater significance than his rather limited reporting as a war correspondent. I advised Ms Gaudinat to read, as background, chapter 13 of Carrington's *Rudyard Kipling*, and chapter VI of *Something of Myself*, and if she could obtain it, *Kipling's South Africa* by Renee Durbach (Chameleon Press, South Africa, 1988); likewise Julian Ralph's *War's Brighter Side* (London, 1901) for an account of the episode with the *Friend*. I also drew her attention to references to some specifically French angles on the Boer War in Kipling's *Souvenirs of France* (1933). But there may well be members who feel that my advice to Ms Gaudinat could be improved on: if so, I should be interested to receive, and to pass on, their suggestions. – *Ed.]*

THE BALESTIERS, AND THE VERMONT FEUD

From Mr Ronald F. Rosner, 300 East 34th Street, New York, NY 10016, U.S.A.

Mr Rosner, one of our American members, has been researching the history of the Balestiers, the family into which Rudyard Kipling married. In the course of his enquiries, he found among the Special Collections in the New York Public Library a substantial typescript document which is both useful and interesting. This is *The Balestiers of Beechwood* by Gordon Ireland, compiled in 1948. It amounts to some 80 pages of A4 paper, and is a very detailed history of the family, running back through seven generations to the 18th century; its approach is highly methodical, combining genealogical tabulation and cross-referencing with passages of anecdote; this renders the whole document very readable.

I am glad to say that Mr Rosner has kindly photocopied it, and presented it to me for the Society's Library, where it will be a valuable source of reference.

Regarding the notorious 'feud' between Kipling and his brother-in-law Beatty Balestier, which resulted in the traumatic abandonment of the Kiplings' dream home, Naulakha, in 1896, Mr Ireland is emphatic that anyone "familiar with the intimate family history of the preceding four years can hardly fail to recognize Mrs. Kipling's predominating responsibility for the founding and building up of the hostility, suspicion, distrust and dislike on both sides"; but he includes as his Appendix B a revealing letter written on 27 January 1927 by a first cousin of Mrs Kipling, Edmund Elliot Balestier (1871-1939), in which the culmination of the quarrel is attributed to Kipling's crucial misunderstanding of U.S. legal practices.

At my request, Mr Rosner has very helpfully established that there is no objection on the part of the New York Public Library to the publication by the *Kipling Journal* of this letter of 1927 – though the Library comments that it has no information about the existence or whereabouts of any possible copyright holders. If any such exist, I trust they will understand the decision in the circumstances to reproduce the letter for our specialised readership.

LETTER FROM EDMUND ELLIOT BALESTIER

dated 27 January 1927

to Henry Collins Brown, of Hasting-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Mr. Brown:

I will be glad to give you such information as I can regarding the family misunderstanding that preceded the Kiplings' return to England in the 90s. I say "preceded" rather than "caused" because, while the silly affair doubtless had some weight in their final decision to live permanently in England, it was by no means the sole reason for doing so. As a matter of fact the "Naulahka" *[sic]* was never intended to be a permanent home. It was built merely as a summer place in which to spend a few months of the year. Mrs. Kipling (my cousin, by the way, not sister) never cared much for country life and the educational and social welfare of the children would have kept them in England the greater part of the time anyway.

One idea, that seems to be general, I should like to correct. The Balestiers are not a Vermont family. (Not that I shouldn't have been proud to claim the state if I had the right.) We were all born and brought up in New York City and you will find the name in the earliest city directories. My grandfather bought the place in the late 60s as a summer residence and not until he retired from active practice in New York (he was a lawyer) a few years before his death in 1888 did he live there all the year round. The children and grandchildren merely visited there a few weeks at a time in the summer. After my grandfather's death half the estate was sold to my cousin Beatty (Mrs. Kipling's brother) my grandmother retaining the old house and half the land as a summer home. When Kipling married his sister, Beatty gave them a five acre site for a house, as a wedding present.

As to the row itself, the basic cause of it – as is too often the case – was the usual type of irresponsible, small town gossip; the contributing and precipitating cause Beatty's hot temper and tendency to "fly off the handle" without due thought or consideration, and the only reason the incident assumed proportions greater than a simple family spat, quickly made up and forgotten, was Kipling's total misunderstanding of American – and especially rural American – legal processes.

It happened this way: Someone told Beatty that someone had told him that Rudyard was going around town saying that he (Beatty) was a financial dud and he (Rudyard) had been "holding him up by the slack of his breeches" for a long time. Whereupon, without stopping to think that this was not only untrue but manifestly absurd on the face of it and that even if it had been true Rudyard was the last person in the world to say so, Beatty immediately "blew-up and slopped over" and unfortunately happened to meet Kipling immediately afterwards on the road home, proceeded to lay him out verbally without giving him a chance to find out what it was all about, ending with various lurid threats as to what would happen if he did not immediately and forthwith publicly withdraw the statements and apologize.

What happened thereafter wouldn't have happened had I or any other male member of the family been there, or had Kipling consulted any friend of the family; as it was he drove on to town pretty mad himself and proceeded to lay charges of violent threats against his brother-in-law, with results that you know, and that in fact amazed and dismayed Rudyard far more than they did Beatty. As a matter of fact he had no intention at all of stirring up the tempest in a teapot that he did. He had pictured in his mind some dignified county magistrate summonsing Beatty to his library, explaining the matter with perhaps a short lecture on the folly of losing one's temper before investigating the cause, and perhaps a mild wigging on the evils of indulging in wild threats against

the person of relatives and the peace of the community, and there would be an end. He hadn't the remotest idea that he was starting the wheels of the criminal law buzzing nor that he was stirring up a hornets' nest of hungry reporters.

The whole thing was one of those unfortunate misunderstandings in which both sides are in part to blame without either side having any real animus, but from which grows considerable feeling and unpleasantness. As far as its being the actual cause of Kipling's selling the Brattleboro place is concerned and not returning there at all it had no such effect. It is possible it hastened the move and possibly contributed to it but that is all.

If there is any other information I can give you I'd be very glad to hear from you, but frankly, I would be very much pleased if you decided this ancient squabble wasn't worth reviving.

Very truly yours,
Elliot Balestier
Fiction Dept. LIBERTY

THE CURSE OF ART

From a member (anonymous)

Though not strictly a 'letter', I have received a message on my 'answer-phone' which amounts to the same thing. A member, who did not leave a name or address, spoke with reference to Mr Michael Smith's letter (December 1997, page 56) about the elusive Kipling quotation, "The Curse of all Art is that the devotee or disciple is always more certain than the Priest." My caller drew my attention to the fact that this quotation was used by Charles Carrington for the epigraph at the beginning of his biography, *Rudyard Kipling*, and was there attributed to Kipling. However, Carrington was not more specific: he did not cite the book (or letter, or speech) in which the quotation originated. Surprisingly, that remains to be established. – *Ed.*

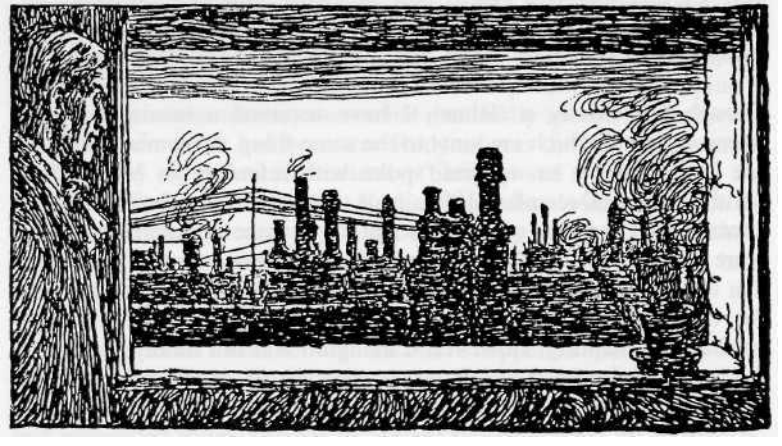
ARUNDELL HOUSE, TISBURY, WILTSHIRE

From Dr R.H. Webb. 92 Norwich Street. Cambridge CB2 1NE

Dr Webb has sent us page 28 of the periodical *The Week* dated 4 April

1998. Headed "Properties with a difference", it lists, with illustrations, some "houses where famous people lived" which are for sale. These include Arundell House, Tisbury: "A Victorian house which Rudyard Kipling rented for many years and where he wrote large parts of *The Jungle Book* and *Kim.* 6 beds, 5 bath, 3 receps, study, 2 cloakrooms, kitchen, utility room, office, cellars, 1-bed cottage, outbuildings, garden. £450,000. Strutt & Parker 01722-328741."

[We last took note of Arundell House at pages 45-6 in March 1992, when we reported its sale in November 1991, at a price of probably about £180,000. The agents on that occasion had similarly done their best to maximise the Kipling connection, saying that he had worked there on both *The Jungle Book* and *Kim.* The fact is that Kipling did not rent the house "for many years" but did so, briefly, while visiting Britain in 1894. At that time he was writing parts of *The Second Jungle Book;* but his work on *Kim* was some years later, when he and his father collaborated on it, not at Arundell House, but at The Gables in Tisbury. – *Ed.]*



"THE MAN-STIFLED TOWN"

An illustration by Heath Robinson for the publication in book form of "A Song of the English" (see page 45). This drawing accompanies the verses that begin:

> We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town;
> We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down...

"AUCKLAND"

Another illustration by Heath Robinson, demonstrating his mastery of powerfully romantic line, for "A Song of the English". This drawing accompanies the verse entitled "Auckland":

> Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart –
> On us, on us the unswerving season smiles,
> Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart
> To seek the Happy Isles!

Actually, though the picture evokes aspects of New Zealand, the scene is more suggestive of Milford Sound in the South Island than of anywhere near Auckland in the North.

THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

The Society's Research Library contains some 1300 items – books by Kipling, books and articles relating to his life and works, collections of press cuttings, photographs, relevant memorabilia, and a complete run of the *Kipling Journal*. It is located at City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V OHB, where, by kind permission, it is housed in the University Library. Members of the University's Graduate Centre for Journalism are allowed access to it.

So, of course, are members of the Kipling Society, if they obtain a Reader's Ticket from the Honorary Librarian, Mrs Trixie Schreiber, at 16 High Green, Norwich NR1 4AP [tel. 01603 701630, or (at her London address) 0171 708 0647], who is glad to answer enquiries about the Library by post or telephone. If Mrs Schreiber is away, enquiries should be channelled through the Society's Secretary – see page 4 for the address and telephone number.

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REPORT BY MRS SCHREIBER FOR THE JUNE 1998 ISSUE

Our Library has recently been moved to a new location on the 8th floor of City University's main building, where, thanks to the University Librarian's hospitality, it has been possible to add two fine matching bookcases to the existing ones, and to discard the last of the odd cupboards that had been in use since the move from the Royal Commonwealth Society.

We now have nine numbered bookcases along one wall of a large reading-room, which we share with the University's students. Our collection is displayed to best advantage; moreover, the additional space will allow new books relating to Kipling, of which there is a continuing flow, to be collected for the foreseeable future.

The special event on 16 September (see Announcements, page 5) is to celebrate the Library's extension. Members and their friends will have the opportunity to browse in our collection, to hear Professor Connell on "The future of the Book", and to meet each other over light refreshments. Northampton Square lies between St John's Street and Goswell Road. Nearest tube stations are Angel (Northern Line) and Farringdon (Circle and Metropolitan). Allow 10-15 minutes to walk from either. A map is available from our Secretary if required. On arrival at the main entrance of the University, ask at Reception for further directions.

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. (The entire run since 1927 is now being comprehensively indexed.) Scores of libraries and English Faculties, in a dozen countries, receive the *Journal* 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 or bibliographical 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 vehement and 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. Moreover, 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 all receive the quarterly *Kipling Journal* (subject of a descriptive note on the previous page).

As an essentially non-profit-making literary 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 (No. 278885) in Britain. Its overall activities are controlled by its Council, though routine management is in the hands of the Secretary and the other honorary officials. 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 a formal Annual Luncheon with a distinguished 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, 2 Brownleaf Road, Brighton, Sussex BN2 6LB, England (or, for those living in North America, to the address at the foot of page 4). (The Secretary's Internet web specification is: http://www.kipling.org.uk)

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

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