

THE  
KIPLING JOURNAL



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE KIPLING SOCIETY, LONDON

VOLUME 74

SEPTEMBER 2000

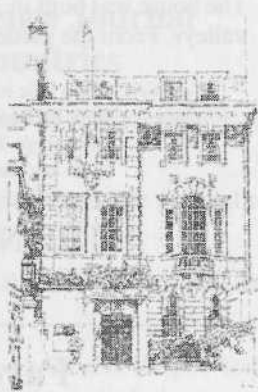
No 295

ISSN 0023-1738

# THE CLUB WITH A COMMONWEALTH DIMENSION

*Special Rates for Commonwealth  
Organisations, Society of Authors & others*

**T**he Royal Over-Seas League has a long history of welcoming members from around the world to its London clubhouse which is renowned for its restaurants, private garden, good food – at clubhouse prices – and friendly atmosphere. The club organises a busy cultural and social programme, has 73 quality bedrooms and seven conference and private dining rooms. The League also has reciprocal arrangements with over 50 other clubs around the world (17 in India) which members can use when they are travelling.



**T**he League holds annual competitions for Commonwealth artists and musicians and supports joint community projects in Commonwealth countries. The League has branches or honorary representatives in over 70 countries.

The subscription rates for 2000 range from £94.50 to £288. (including entrance fee). For those aged under 25 it is £62. Membership is open to citizens of Commonwealth countries and citizens of countries which have had constitutional links with the UK since 1910 such as Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan. For further details please contact the Membership Secretary.



## Royal Over-Seas League

Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street,  
London SW1A 1LR

Tel: 020 7408 0214. Fax: 020 7499 6738.



## BATEMAN'S

Rudyard Kipling's home from 1902 until his death in 1936. The rooms, including his study, are left as they were in his lifetime, and contain much that is of great interest.

The house was built in 1634 in one of the Weald's most beautiful valleys. From the garden there are fine views to 'Pook's Hill'.

*Location:* half a mile south of Burwash in East Sussex, on the A265.

*Open:* from the beginning of April until the end of October, on every day except Thursdays and Fridays, from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. (with last admissions at 5.30 p.m.)

## THE NATIONAL TRUST

### Faversham Books

*Antiquarian & Secondhand Books*

We buy and sell

Works of Rudyard Kipling and related critical volumes  
and we issue Lists:

write today and join our mailing list

*49 South Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 7LS, telephone (01795) 532873*



### FAR HORIZONS TRAVEL

*For all your travel requirements – to East or West or any point of the compass known or unknown to Kipling – contact Julian Wiltshire*

1, The New Centre, High Street, Gillingham,  
Dorset SP8 4AA

Telephone: (01747) 824369

## VERANDAH BOOKS



Rudyard Kipling  
 India – Fiction in English  
 India and the British  
 Central Asia and the Himalayas  
 Mountaineering



e-mail: mah@verandah.demon.co.uk

STONEGARTH, THE AVENUE, SHERBORNE, DORSET DT9 3AH TEL & FAX: 01935 815900

## Army Quarterly & Defence Journal has readers in 66 countries

**AQ informs and keeps you up to date** on a whole range of international defence issues

**AQ entertains;** you will always find something in the Journal to absorb you

**AQ has the most interesting features,** the best writers and the widest range of book reviews

**Annual subscription £52.** *New subscribers receive the previous two issues of the Journal with their first copy free of charge.*

*Write with your remittance to:*

*The Subscriptions Manager, 1 West Street,  
 Tavistock, Devon PL19 8LF. Tel: (01822) 613577*

## Antiquarian Books

*Free Monthly Catalogues including KIPLING material*

**K·BOOKS (A·B·A)**

*Waplington Hall, Allcithorpe, York YO4 4RS*

*TEL 01759 302142 · FAX 01759 305891*

## THE KIPLING SOCIETY

### PRESIDENT

Dr M.G. Brock, C.B.E.

### VICE-PRESIDENTS

Joseph R. Dunlap, D.L.S.

Norman Entract

Professor Enamul Karim, M.A., Ph.D.

Mrs Rosalind Kennedy

Mrs L.A.F. Lewis

J.H. McGivering, R.D.

Mrs Margaret Newsom

Professor Thomas Pinney, Ph.D.

Mrs Anne Shelford

### COUNCIL: ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C. (*Chairman*)

Norman Entract

Dr Linda Hall

P.G.S. Hall (*Deputy Chairman*)

Mrs Elizabeth Inglis

David Vermont

Commander Alastair Wilson

### COUNCIL: HONORARY OFFICE-BEARERS

Lt-Colonel R.C. Ayers, O.B.E. (*Membership Secretary*)

[his e-mail address is roger295@aol.com]

R.A. Bissolotti, F.C.A. (*Treasurer*)

Sharad D.J. Keskar M.A. (*Secretary*)

[his address is 6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS; telephone & Fax 0207 286 0194;

his e-mail address is sharadkeskar@hotmail.com]

Dr. J.D. Lewins (*Meetings Secretary*)

Sir Derek Oulton, G.C.B., Q.C. (*Legal Adviser*)

John Radcliffe (*Electronic Editor*)

[his e-mail address is: kipling@fastmedia.demon.co.uk]

John Slater (*Librarian*)

George Webb, C.M.G., O.B.E. (*Editor, Kipling Journal*)

*Honorary Auditor:* Professor G.M. Selim, M.Com., Ph.D., F.I.I.A.

### THE SOCIETY'S ADDRESS

*Postal:* 6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS.

*Web-site:* www.kipling.org.uk

### THE SOCIETY'S NORTH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE

David Alan Richards, 18 Forest Lane, Scarsdale,

New York, NY 10583, U.S.A.

Tel: (212) 906-2305. Fax: (212) 906-2021. e-mail: drichard@sidley.com

### AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

*Secretary:* Mrs Rosalind Kennedy,

Bliss Cottage, P.O. Box 321, Beechworth, Victoria, Australia 3747

## SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday 15 November 2000** at 5.30 for 6 p.m. at the Royal Over-Seas League, **Judith Flanders** on "The Macdonald Sisters"—Kipling's mother and aunts, the subject of a book she is writing.

**Wednesday 14 February 2001** at 5.30 for 6 p.m. in the Mountbatten Room at the Royal Over-Seas League, an **Entertainment:** a Russian cartoon film, *The Adventures of Mowgli*, narrated by Charlton Heston. (See letter to the Editor from Shamus Wade, March 2000, page 62.)

**Wednesday 11 April 2001** at 5.30 for 6 p.m. in the Rutland Room at the Royal Over-Seas League, **Jan Morris**, author of a brilliant trilogy on the British Empire (*Heaven's Command*, *Pax Britannica* and *Farewell the Trumpets*), on "Kipling's Empire".

**Wednesday to Friday, 5 to 7 September 2001** a 'Kipling Conference' at Magdalene College, Cambridge, organised by the Kipling Fellow, **Dr Jeffery Lewins**. One feature will be a lecture at 6 p.m. on 6 September by the poet **Craig Raine**, who has edited and introduced *A Choice of Kipling's Prose* (1986) and *Rudyard Kipling: Selected Poetry* (1992). Fuller details to follow. Meanwhile, see the note on page 30.

**Wednesday 12 September 2001** at 5.30 for 6 p.m. at the Athenaeum Club, 107 Pall Mall, London SW1, **Professor Sir Colin St John Wilson**, on "The question of Tradition".



A REVISED TAXONOMY [See explanatory note, pages 8-10]

# THE KIPLING JOURNAL

*published quarterly since 1927 by the Kipling Society  
(6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS)  
and sent free to all members worldwide*

Volume 74

SEPTEMBER 2000

Number 295

---

## CONTENTS

THE KIPLING SOCIETY: OFFICERS, ETC	4
SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	5
<i>Illustration: A revised taxonomy</i>	6
A note about the illustration on page 6	8-10
NEW MEMBERS	10
EDITORIAL (see also page 52)	11-13
ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 2000, including the Address by Austin Asche	14-30
THE WHIRLIGIG OF EMPIRE by E.M. Beekman	31-52
THE SEARCH FOR RUDYARD KIPLING by Morton S. Cohen	53-61
SHAPING BOYS INTO MEN by Carol Naylor	62-71
BOOK REVIEW by Hugh Brogan	72-73
KIPLING, JOYCE AND THE "BITCHED LINE" by David H. Stewart	74-79
THE SOCIETY'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT, 1999	80-82
THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL REPORT, 1999	83-84
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Country Pursuits ( <i>Mr F.A.     Underwood</i> ); Kipling and the Bacons ( <i>Professor T.J.     Connell</i> ); "The Manner of Men" ( <i>Mrs E.L. Breuilly</i> )	85-88

[see over]

A NOTE ON GIFT AID by R.A. Bissolotti	89
OBITUARY OF SIR JOSIAS CUNNINGHAM by Lisa Lewis	90
ABOUT THE <i>KIPLING JOURNAL</i>	91
ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY	92

---

*All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without prior permission in writing from the Kipling Society, London.*

---

## A NOTE ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 6

[I am indebted to an American member, Mr Philip Lyman of New York, for bringing to our attention this quaint picture, and a bibliographical query to which it may well give rise. – Ed.]

This appeared as a cartoon on page 96 of the *Punch* of 6 March 1869, with the caption 'Zoology' and the words, '*Railway Porter (to Old Lady travelling with a Menagerie of Pets): "Station Master says, Mum, as Cats is 'Dogs', and Rabbits is 'Dogs', and so's Parrots; but this 'ere 'Tortis'is a Insect, so there ain't no charge for it!"*'

The cartoon depicts all the animals named: – a cat (just visible in the lady's arms); a little hirsute dog at her feet; a basketful of attentive rabbits, a caged parrot on the floor; and the affronted tortoise in the porter's hands. The joke, a good one, wore well. More than a hundred years later, the porter's words still featured in an up-dated *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

In 1889 Kipling quoted them, very accurately, in San Francisco, as is recorded in *American Notes*, an unauthorised collection in book form first put together in 1891 in the U.S.A., to reprint the numerous reports Kipling had sent back to the *Pioneer* and *Civil and Military Gazette* during his first visit to America en route from India to London, in the summer of 1889.

It is often revealing to compare Kipling's eventual *authorised* version of those reports (as edited and published in book form in 1899 in *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches: Letters of Travel*) with his original texts (as first published in the *Pioneer* in India, or as pirated in the U.S.A. as *American Notes*). Some of Kipling's amendments (particularly his deletions) are instructive. In the preface to *From Sea to Sea*, Kipling does not indicate that he has made changes in his original texts, but merely explains that he has been "forced" to collate much of his journalistic work of the period 1887 to 1888, owing to "the

enterprise of various publishers who, not content with disinterring old newspaper work from the decent seclusion of the office files, have in several instances seen fit to embellish it with additions and interpolations."

In "At the Golden Gate", his first despatch after arriving in San Francisco by ship from Japan in May 1889, Kipling gave vent to some caustic and ill-tempered criticism of the U.S.A. and its inhabitants, as viewed in bulk on first encounter. He was still bitterly indignant about blatant American disregard of British copyright, as revealed to him in a Yokohama bookshop before he sailed to San Francisco. He had been shocked to find pirated editions of works by several writers, including himself. His anger simmered for a long time, and explained his unfriendly outburst when, sailing through the Golden Gate into San Francisco's enormous harbour, he "saw with great joy that the blockhouse which guarded the mouth of 'the finest harbour in the world, Sir,' could be silenced by two gunboats from Hong-Kong with safety, comfort and despatch." Later, perhaps realising that his tone did him no credit, he explained that his attitude might "sound blood-thirsty, but remember that I have come with a grievance upon me, the grievance of the pirated English books."

With that provocation fresh in his mind, he tended to display what reads today as rather rank anti-Americanism. In his first despatch from San Francisco, he deplored the debasement of the English language by the ugly accent, which made American speech "a horror". He cited Oliver Wendell Holmes, that "Yankee schoolmarms, the cider, and the salt codfish of the Eastern States are responsible for what he calls a nasal accent" – but at that point a textual variation occurs.

In the final version, as published in *From Sea to Sea*, Kipling's narrative goes on: "A Hindu is a Hindu, and a brother to the man who knows his vernacular; and a Frenchman is French because he speaks his own language; but the American has no language. . ."

By contrast, in the original version, as presented in *American Notes*, Kipling wrote: "I know better. They stole books from across the water without paying for 'em, and the snort of delight was fixed in their nostrils by a just Providence. That is why they talk a foreign tongue to-day." This version goes on: "'Cats is dogs, and rabbits is dogs, and so's parrots. But this 'ere tortoise is a insect, so there ain't no charge,' as the old porter said." It then goes on with the bit about the Hindoo [*sic*] and the Frenchman. But the whole intervening passage, from "I know better" to "the old porter said", was omitted from the final *From Sea to Sea* text.

This raises the question, Why did Kipling delete it? Could it be that the passage had been created and inserted by the American pirates and

was an example of the unauthorised "additions and interpolations" to which Kipling resentfully referred in his preface to *From Sea to Sea*? It seems improbable; indeed, on the face of it, one might not expect an American editor of 1891 to be accurately familiar with the caption of a very British *Punch* cartoon of 1869, and to include it gratuitously and rather enigmatically in a text aimed at American readers.

Mr Lyman wonders if we can clarify the matter, but warns against any facile assumption that the caption would have lacked significance for an American audience. He cites an article on "The Message of Anarchy" by Jethro Brown, published in the *Hibbert Journal* of July 1910 (and reprinted in 1912 as a small booklet by the Hillacre Bookhouse, Riverside, CT). It includes the following passage:

" 'Dogs,' exclaimed the railway porter immortalized in *Punch*, 'is dogs; cats is dogs; rabbits is dogs; but this 'ere tortoise is a hinsect.' Some readers will be tempted to challenge my definition of anarchy as no less arbitrary."

---

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following, as listed in early September by Roger Ayers, our Membership Secretary:-

Mrs A. Amsden (*Norwich, Norfolk*); Mr J. A. Barker (*London EC2*); Mr T. L. Berry (*Mentor, Ohio, U.S.A.*); Major D. A. Cavagnaro (*Oakland, California, U.S.A.*); Mr J. Ducker (*Reading, Berkshire*); Mr A. Ferrante (*Chelmsford, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*); Mr D. Grossart (*London SW7*); Dr R. J. Haythornthwaite (*Christchurch, New Zealand*); Mr J. Humphrey (*Blackpool, Lancashire*); Mrs E. Inglis (*Lewes, Sussex*); M J.-C. Monet (*Saint Pierre et Miquelon*); Mrs G. Sooke (*London NW8*); Mr K. Wadsworth (*Akron, Ohio, U.S.A.*); Mr J. Walker (*Ashford, Kent*); Ms S. Walsh (*Reading, Berkshire*).

## EDITORIAL

## OBITUARY: R.J.W. CRAIG, O.B.E., M.C, C.P.M.

Dick Craig's many friends will have been saddened by the news of his death on 25 July at the age of 78 – saddened but not surprised, since he had wrestled for several years with grave ill-health, to which a man of lesser courage and determination would have succumbed much sooner. Our sympathy goes to his two daughters, who survive him.

He was a memorable personality, and had led a varied life, with early years, at home and school and university, in Ireland; then gallant active service in the Indian Army in North Africa and Italy (with a colourful diversion to Greece in 1944); followed after the war by appointments with the Malayan Police (where he attained high rank as Head of Special Branch); and finally with the Foreign Office – including postings to the Middle East and India. His career is much more fully described in a good obituary in *The Times* of 10 August.

He was a very supportive member of the Kipling Society, and served on our Council. Actually, Kipling's *prose* did not greatly interest him: but he was devoted to the romantic or evocative *verse*, from which, when in the company of kindred spirits, he was apt to quote – or sometimes misquote – extensively. His only criticism of the *Kipling Journal* was that we published too little of the verse. So I will now placate his shade by printing his favourite passage from "The Roman Centurion's Song" – including two lines with which I once heard him congratulate a colleague, on being selected for a senior appointment abroad:-

You'll take the old Aurelian road through shore-descending pines  
Where, blue as any peacock's neck, the Tyrrhene Ocean shines.  
You'll go where laurel crowns are won, but will you e'er forget  
The scent of hawthorn in the sun, or bracken in the wet?

And his funeral service included a reading of "The Fairies' Siege", a poem enlarged from *Kim*, which begins:

I have been given my charge to keep –  
Well have I kept the same!  
Playing with strife for the most of my life,  
But this is a different game.  
I'll not fight against swords unseen,  
Or spears that I cannot view –  
Hand him the keys of the place on your knees –  
'Tis the Dreamer whose dreams come true!

## THE SECRETARY OF THE KIPLING SOCIETY

To everyone's regret, not least his own, Michael Smith has had to resign from the key position which he has filled assiduously and with marked success since 1996. The reason is the serious illness of a close relative, which has laid time-consuming responsibilities on Michael, making it impossible for him to go on sustaining the Secretary's workload, which has increased as the Society has thrived under his expansive management.

Our Council – also the wider membership represented at our last A.G.M. – of course accepted his resignation with understanding and sympathy. But they knew what they were losing – a Secretary with energy, imagination and contagious zeal, which contributed both to enhancing the Society's internal efficiency and to fostering its external relationships – with The Grange at Rottingdean, the Lake Rudyard Trust, the H.M.S. *Kipling* Survivors' Association, the Sir J.J. School of Applied Art in Bombay, and, nearer home, the National Trust and Bateman's – connections that raise our profile, and encourage people to join us. His five years in office have seen good progress in overhauling the Society – for example in the switch to electronics under the aegis of John Radcliffe, the cataloguing of the Library by John Slater; and the creation by John Morgan of a monumental Index for the *Journal*. In these and other areas Michael has enthusiastically encouraged the process of reform, which has been a major factor in keeping the Society vigorously alive. A less enterprising approach might have let us drift into complacent petrification – a sure prelude to institutional collapse.

So we owe him a lot, and our thanks will be given tangible expression with a presentation at our next scheduled meeting in London on 15 November. We plan to give him a case or two of wine, of a quality commensurate with his discerning palate. (It would have been agreeable to track down some of that superlative champagne so lyrically praised by Kipling in "The Bull that Thought" (*Debits and Credits*) – a "velvety, perfumed liquor, between fawn and topaz, neither too sweet nor too dry . . . composed of the whispers of angels' wings, the breath of Eden and the foam and pulse of Youth renewed." But alas, there is no Monsieur Voiron to procure it for us.)

We need to hear from all who would like to contribute to the gift. Donations should have an upper limit of £5, and cheques (payable to the Kipling Society) should be sent to our Treasurer, Rudolph Bissolotti, F.C.A., at 303, Beatty House, Dolphin Square, London SW1V 3PH), to reach him by early November if possible, please.

Meanwhile, as members may have seen in the list of Officers on page 4, we have succeeded in acquiring a new Secretary, Sharad Keskar, who only last year was appointed Meetings Secretary (and who has

now been replaced as such by Jeffery Lewins). He was born in Bombay in 1932; was educated at Bishop Westcott School and the Military Academy at Dehra Dun; and was commissioned into the Indian cavalry, serving with 7 Cavalry and Hudson's Horse. After ten years soldiering he left the Army to take up business appointments in public relations and sales promotion in Lucknow and Bombay.

From 1966 he freelanced – writing, editing, book-reviewing and portrait-painting. In 1970 he came to Britain to write and paint, and here he met and married his wife, Jane, and attended a teacher-training college, gaining a B.Ed. honours degree, with a distinction in English. He taught in London primary schools from 1976, becoming a Deputy Head in 1984. In 1990 he took his M.A. at King's College, London; but left teaching in 1992 to concentrate on writing and painting. He has published two short stories based on Hindu myths; and has just completed a novel, the first part of a proposed trilogy.

And where – one may ask him – does Kipling fit in? Sharad's answer is that he has had a "lifelong love-affair" with Kipling, beginning with a shared nanny in the nursery of an English childhood friend; and encouraged by a Bombay headmaster (his father), who "adored everything Kipling wrote".

So, readily but modestly, he has accepted the invitation to become Secretary to our Society. We thank him, and wish him every success.

#### THE EDITOR OF THE *KIPLING JOURNAL*

This is the eighty-third issue of the *Journal* that I have edited, and I am sorry to say that it is intended to be my last. Many members know that I suffer from Parkinson's, a progressively degenerative condition, and will understand that I now find editing the *Journal* extremely laborious. It is no coincidence that this issue is running very late.

I have greatly appreciated, for over twenty years, the unremitting encouragement of the Society, in letting me edit its magazine without interference. It has been a deeply interesting and enjoyable experience, from which I have learned a lot. I still find it surprising that the genius of Kipling, sixty-four years after his death, should retain the power to stimulate such a flow of publishable comment and enquiry. There is always more material in hand than I have space for. For that, a grateful tribute is due to the impressive and valuable productivity of our readers, without whose cornucopia of articles and letters, the *Journal* would quickly run dry.

The search is on for a successor, ideally to replace me at once, in good time to sort out the December number, for which a substantial amount of useful material is already waiting to be edited.

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 2000

The Kipling Society's Annual Luncheon, on 3 May 2000, was once again very successfully held at the Royal Over-Seas League, London. The occasion was, as always, much enjoyed by members and their guests. The large attendance included the following:-

Mr P. Armstrong; The Hon Austin Asche; Dr Valerie Asche; Lt-Colonel R.C. Ayers; Mrs L.A. Ayers; Mr R.E. Ayrton; Mr R.A. Bissolotti; Mr B.J. Bolt; Mrs G.J. Bolt; Mrs M.R.K. Brade; Mr N. Brade; Mrs E.H. Brock; Dr M.G. Brock; Mrs B. Caseley-Dickson; Mr B. Casey; Field-Marshal Sir John Chapple; Lady Chapple; Mr D.A. Clare; Mrs J. Clayton; Mr S. J. Clayton; Mr B. Coffey; Sir Colin Cole; Lady Critchett; Ms C. Croly; Sir Josias Cunningham; Mr M. Egan; Sir George Engle; Lady Engle; Mr N. Entract; Mr R.R. Feilden; Mr K.M.L. Frazer; M Pierre Gauchet; Dr F.M. Hall; Mrs V. Hall; Mr P.G.S. Hall; Miss A.G. Harcombe; Miss J.C. Hett; Mrs E. Inglis; Mr E.E. James; Mrs K.M. James; Mr D.G.S. Jameson; Mr B.G. Kappler; Mrs J. Keskar; Mr S.D.J. Keskar; Mrs C.A. Key; Mr W.H.B. Key; Ms Hilary LaFontaine; Dr J.F. Lewins; Mrs J.M. Lewins; Mrs L.A.F. Lewis; Mr P.H.T. Lewis; Miss Barbara Luke; Lt-Colonel C.H.T. MacFetridge; Mr J. McGuirk; Mr E. Maggs; Mr D.J. Montefiore; Mr J.L. Morgan; Mrs M. Morgan; Mr R.F. Newell; Mrs S. Newell; Mr F.E. Noah; Mr J. Osborne; Mrs J. Osborne; Mr P.A. Osmond; Mr G.C.G. Philo; Mrs A. Plowden; Mr G.F.C. Plowden; Brigadier R.B.C. Plowden; Mrs R.P. Plowden; Mr J. Radcliffe; M Max Rives; Mme M. Rives; Mrs F. Robinson; Mr O.H. Robinson; Mr J.F. Slater; Mrs A.J. Smith; Mr J.W.M. Smith; Mrs R. Stuart-Smith; Mr D.N. Vermont; Mrs F.M. Wade; Mr S. Wade; Mr G.L. Wallace; Mr G.H. Webb; Mrs J. Webb; and Mr S. Winder.

Apologies for absence had been received from Canon Alan Coldwells; Mrs P. Commin; Sir Ian Critchett; Sir Geoffrey Ellerton; Mr J.H. McGivering; Mr E.H. Marsh; and Dr Gillian Sheehan.

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chairman, Sir George Engle, welcomed all who were present, with particular reference to His Honour Mr Austin Asche and his wife, from Australia; also Mr Brian Kappler from Canada; M and Mme Rives, M Pierre Gauchet and Mrs Caseley Dickson, all from France; Mr Robert Newell (Director-General of the Royal Over-Seas League) and Mrs Newell; Mr Simon Winder of Penguin Books (publishers of a new and meticulously edited edition of *The Jungle Books*); Mr Edward Maggs (scion of the antiquarian booksellers, Maggs Brothers, and an authority on books relating to Kipling); Mr Michael Egan, our printer, without whose generous financial moderation we could not have continued to

produce a *Journal* of such size and quality without raising subscription rates; Mr John McGuirk, Librarian of City University, and his assistant, Mr Brian Casey, who had both been most helpful in devising and applying appropriate procedures for access to our Library; and finally Sir Josias Cunningham from Northern Ireland.

#### GRACE

Mr Sharad Keskar (shortly to become Secretary of the Society) prefaced his Grace with "The Appeal": "If I have given you delight / By aught that I have done, / Let me lie quiet in that night / Which shall be yours anon. . ."). Kipling had hoped it would be for "the books I leave behind" that he would be remembered by posterity. Indeed the great seam of his writings was still being worked over, and the address at our delightfully friendly Annual Luncheons always offered new leads, which it was a privilege to be vouchsafed. They gave added weight to a Grace in which "we thank God for food and fellowship."

#### TOASTS

Later, when the coffee was served, the Chairman proposed the Loyal Toast, and then called on the Guest of Honour to propose the customary toast to Kipling's memory. [See his text, starting on the next page.]

#### EDITOR'S INTERPOLATED NOTE ON THE GUEST OF HONOUR

The Honourable Austin Asche, A.C., Q.C., a distinguished Australian member of the Kipling Society, and his wife, Dr Valerie Asche, were very welcome guests. He had contributed excellent items to the *Journal* – notably, in December 1996, a valuable article ("Sticks and Stones") about Kipling, Rufus Isaacs and the Marconi Scandal; and in September 1999 ("The Strange Case of 'The Brushwood Boy' ") an entertaining study of one of Kipling's controversial stories, viewed in comparison with another story, "William the Conqueror".

He was educated at Melbourne Grammar School and Melbourne University, and then practised as a barrister in Queensland and Victoria – taking Silk in 1972. His legal career took him to high judicial office, as Acting Chief Judge of the Family Court of Australia, and then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. Next came a non-judicial appointment, as Administrator of the Northern Territory;

he served as such, with great zest, till he retired. However, this brief outline of his career hardly does justice to his energy and versatility, which led him to accept, and render outstanding service in, the Chancellorship of two universities, the Presidency of another, and the chairmanship of many committees concerned with legal and educational matters; also, as a Freemason, the post of Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria. He had also written or delivered scholarly papers on a range of bookish subjects, reflecting an uncommonly wide interest in English and Australian literature and culture. Kipling, to be sure, was among his favourite topics, but the value of his judgments on Kipling was (as always) enhanced by the breadth of his overall literary and historical perspective.

**THE ANNOTATED TEXT OF AUSTIN ASCHE'S  
ADDRESS, ON "KIPLING AND THE BALLAD"**

THE LONG TRAIL, AND THOSE WHO FOLLOWED IT

About forty years ago I purchased, second-hand, a book which has always given me much delight. It is *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Inclusive Edition, 1885-1918*. It was published in 1919, and since Kipling continued to write verse after that, it is of course incomplete. Even the claim to be "inclusive" for the period mentioned is a little shaky. That excellent publication, the *Kipling Journal*, is constantly discovering bits and pieces composed throughout his career, which, for him, were "forgot as soon as done".<sup>1</sup>

Kipling was enormously prolific, and never took the view that everything he wrote should be preserved. Even "Recessional" was retrieved from the waste-paper basket.<sup>2</sup>

I want to draw your attention to those dates, 1885-1918, because they cover, almost exclusively, a period when a particular manifestation of the old English ballad form became extremely popular. The acknowledged master of this special sort of ballad was Rudyard Kipling; and because of his success the form was much used, over-used and frequently abused, by others.

Then, as suddenly as it had come, it vanished. R.I.P., 1918. It was partly because of the Great War, but there were other reasons. The ballad itself remains, indeed flourishes, but in very different guises. Not the Kipling version, though that is no matter for regret: every age has to find its own voice.

The ballad was just one of many forms explored by Kipling who, as befits a great poet, chose from a mighty and discursive armoury. And

let me be quite positive about this: Kipling *is* a great poet, whose powerful voice reverberates about the English-speaking world. To the Devil, I say, with his mealy-mouthed detractors! I was delighted to find recently, in the *Spectator*, Paul Johnson referring to "the four transcendental geniuses of the English canon – Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens and Kipling."<sup>3</sup> May I respectfully and enthusiastically concur.

The term "ballad" has a very wide meaning, and we could argue interminably about just where the boundaries are. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes it as "a short narrative folk-song". In its origins we think of "Robin Hood", or what Coleridge refers to as "the grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens".<sup>4</sup> The folk ballads cover battles, adventures, love and hate, and much in between. They range from the high tragedy of "Chevy Chase" to the much more mundane complaint of the thrifty housewife discouraging her husband from buying a new cloak.

"King Stephen was a worthy peer,  
His breeches cost him half a crown.  
He thought them sixpence all too dear,  
Whereat he called the tailor lown.  
He was a wight of high renown,  
And thou art but of low degree;  
It's pride that keeps the country down;  
Man, take thine old cloke about thee."

Now, I am not suggesting that Kipling did anything special if he did no more than many nineteenth-century poets, and imitated the style and spirit of the folk-ballads to tell some tale of olden days. Kipling did do this to good effect, in "The Last Rhyme of True Thomas"; but if you want that sort of thing you will find it better done by Keats in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", or Coleridge with "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", or, turning to one who made a speciality of it, Sir Walter Scott with "Marmion" or "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" and many others. William Morris churned them out wholesale; W.S. Gilbert used them to humorous effect in "The Bab Ballads"; and Edward Lear imported whimsy and fantasy in "The Jumblies" and "The Owl and the Pussycat". Most Victorian poets had a go at ballads. Why?

It is generally agreed that the great ballad revival started in 1765 with the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The romantic poets seized on it as a way of escape from the formal didactic classical style of Pope, Dryden and Gray; and as entry into simple and ordinary language, away from what Wordsworth called "gaudy and inane phraseology"<sup>5</sup>. Equally important was the fact that the old ballads

had the energy, virility and excitement to match an age of 'expansion'.

There was, however, a significant difference. The folk ballads sprung naturally from the people, from old stories gradually transmitted into verse and song for ease of recollection. The new "literary" versions were artificial, in the sense that they came from educated writers deliberately creating something in ballad form. Their poems were imposed from above, not a natural growth from below. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch poses a useful test. If, says he, you bound up some old ballads and some "literary" ones haphazardly in a book labelled *Ballads*, the ordinary reader would immediately tell the one from the other.<sup>6</sup> This is not to decry the new forms, but merely to recognise that the process of derivation has produced a variant from the source.

Taking Scott as a prime example, there is one aspect of the traditional ballad which those who adopted it obviously felt had to be retained. The ballad almost invariably speaks of time past. Thus Scott sings of the old Scottish Borderers; Keats places his "Knight-at-Arms" in some mystical medieval time; and so on.

Kipling took the process one stage further: he made the ballad contemporary. He was not alone in this, but I suggest that what he did he did better than anyone else; he brought the ballad back to the common reader. And he did so with enormous popular success.

What Kipling saw was that you could just as effectively put the ballad in the present, and create modern legends. So the "Barrack-Room Ballads" were born; and the public found them greatly to their liking. Kipling realised that there was as much colour and excitement and drama in the exploits of the British soldier in India as there was in the tales of the Round Table. Even if these latter-day exploits were not always heroic, they were always vivid. Here were the new folk-songs, simply told, which people could remember, enjoy and recite, just as in the old days. And if you seek proof as to how successfully some of these have become embedded in folk-memory, consider "Gunga Din". I would suggest that these days he is as well known as Robin Hood. Indeed, because of the unforgettable last line, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din", his name is probably used more frequently in casual conversation than Robin's.

If one were to pick from Kipling's verse a prime example of a ballad which is as classical in style as any ballad can be, and fully in the traditional mode, it would have to be "The Ballad of East and West". But Kipling is telling of a contemporary event. He conveys the same sort of legendary heroic narrative that one finds in "Chevy Chase". As in "Chevy Chase", the setting is tribal warfare, for the soldiers in the small isolated British garrison in Fort Bukloh are as much a tribe, and as much governed by fierce loyalty, as the followers of Percy and

Douglas; and so, likewise, are the followers of Kamal the border thief. In both poems the underlying theme is the respect which two strong men develop for each other – though, sadly, in "Chevy Chase" the respect blooms only in death. The same theme, though on a less heroic plane, is in the first meeting between Robin Hood and Little John, who form their strong friendship after fighting each other on the bridge.

"East and West" is brilliant; full of fire and excitement. The verse gallops with the horses:

He's up and away to Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,  
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the tongue of  
Jagai,  
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,  
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol  
crack.

This is inspiring stuff, and much more than Angus Wilson's description of it as "magnificent boyish bravura"<sup>7</sup>, though I have no quarrel with his choice of the adjective "magnificent". The poem is a supreme example of how Kipling has converted the ballad from a legend of long ago to a legend of the present. In effect he says to us, "Great and dramatic things happened then; but great and dramatic things are happening now, and I will tell you of them."

The drama of the ballad was not always of honour and chivalry. There were fierce old ballads which descended into the dark. In "Edward, Edward", the son ends by saying:

"The curse of Hell from me shall ye hear, Mother, Mother,  
The curse of Hell from me shall ye hear."<sup>8</sup>

Kipling's equally powerful message from Hell is "Danny Deever". There are no heroes here, no great deeds, but here again is the English tribe in India, exacting its own tribal vengeance.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,  
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' – you must look 'im in the face;  
Nine 'undred of 'is county and the Regiment's disgrace,  
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

Quiller-Couch, writing in 1927, declared that, "If any writer today alive can be called a ballad-writer of genius, it is the author of 'Danny Deever' and 'East and West'".<sup>9</sup>

"Danny Deever", with its terrible refrain, is the greatest of the dark

poems, but you will find at least two by Kipling, equally grim and black, in "The Ballad of the King's Mercy" (1889) and "The Ballad of the King's Jest" (1890), set in Afghanistan in the relatively recent past. In the first, a proud man, publicly degraded by the King, tries to kill him but is caught; and the King gives orders that he be stoned to the point of death, but not quite to death, until he blesses the King; and only then will he be put out of his misery by the King's "mercy".

In the second a man, trying to curry favour with the King by warning him of an impending Russian invasion, instead irritates him, and the order is given that he be confined to the branches of a tree, and the tree be ringed with bayonets below him. After seven days, maddened by hunger, thirst and lack of sleep, the man falls to his death on the bayonets. Angus Wilson calls these "two powerful neglected poems", and if you read them I think you will agree with him.<sup>10</sup> This is the vein of ruthless, inexorable judgment that you will also find in "Sea Constables" [*Debits and Credits*] and "Mary Postgate" [*A Diversity of Creatures*].

The contemporary ballad, as developed by Kipling, suited the Victorians because they lived in an age of expansion. Those old maps, with much of the world coloured red to denote the British Empire, were still being revised from time to time to include more red spots;<sup>11</sup> and those whom Shakespeare described as "gentlemen in England, now a-bed," were just as thrilled in the nineteenth century to read of their countrymen's exploits overseas, as those of the fifteenth who Henry V believed would "think themselves accurs'd they were not here; / And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks / That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day."

But because the exploits of Empire were overseas, the contemporary ballad, heroic or tragic, was more appropriately set there than in the safe and secure confines of the British Isles. For Kipling, inevitably, the stage was India.

There were two other reasons why this form of poetry was popular in the period I have mentioned; and I use the word 'popular' in the sense both of being well liked, and of appealing to the populace at large.

The first of these is that, as Kipling himself freely admits, his ballads sprang from the music-hall tradition. There is no doubt of his enthusiasm. Look at that wonderful tale, "The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat" [*A Diversity of Creatures*]. Read the passage where Vidal (or 'Dal') Benzaguen, star of the music-halls, sends the audience crazy with a song which "devastated the habitable earth for the next six months."

In conversation with the narrator (clearly Kipling himself) 'Dal asks wistfully about an earlier singer: "Did you love Nellie Farren when you

were young?" And he replies: "Did we love her? . . . 'If the earth and the sky and the sea' – There were three million of us, 'Dal, and we worshipped her." He is speaking from the heart in these passages.

He delighted in the music-halls, particularly Gatti's<sup>12</sup>, and in his autobiography he wrote that "the smoke, the roar, and the good-fellowship of relaxed humanity at Gatti's 'set' the scheme for a certain sort of song."<sup>13</sup>

It is easy to see the connection. His ballads, particularly the shorter ones, "swing"; they have a natural rhythm, and many have a refrain. An obvious example is "Mandalay". While he did not write them for that purpose, it is not surprising that so many were subsequently set to music. And they had the great virtue of the ballad: they were clear, direct and understandable.

It is rather peculiar, isn't it, that literary snobs reject anything that speaks with plainness and clarity, despite the long, honourable and splendid line of English poets from Chaucer to Wordsworth to Betjeman who convey their message in simple language. That is not to denigrate the more complex poetry of such as Donne or T.S. Eliot. Both types have their place, and both have their weaknesses. Plainness can degenerate into doggerel; and complexity can become the last resort of educated idiots. The true poet rises above this, and proves himself. And Kipling was a true poet.

Let me quote one summation by J.S. Bratton, a writer who has made a study of the Victorian popular ballad. "Kipling's ballads have the universality of application which arises out of truth to the specific situation in the best of folk-art, and they were accepted by the whole range of popular audiences of his time."<sup>14</sup>

I am convinced, however, that there is another and rather interesting reason why Kipling's poetry, and particularly the straightforward ballad form, became immensely popular. This was the demise, or rather rout, of the Aesthetes.

The Aesthetic Movement had flourished in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Pale young men and women proclaimed "Art for Art's sake", and spoke of burning with a "hard gem-like flame". If we accept the view of George du Maurier in a celebrated *Punch* cartoon (and admittedly he was parodying the movement), they were given to asking acquaintances, "Are you *intense!*"

Their High Priests were Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde. Art was exclusive: only a true artist could judge a work of art – certainly not ordinary people, who were "Philistines". Obviously, this was the antithesis of Kipling's standpoint: Kipling wrote for the common people, whereas Wilde declared, loftily and publicly: "I have no knowledge of the views of ordinary individuals."<sup>15</sup>

Not surprisingly, ordinary individuals tended to resent this. Gilbert and Sullivan led the attack in 1881, with that wonderful musical satire, *Patience*, where Bunthorne advises:

Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle  
in the high aesthetic band,  
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily  
in your medieval hand.

The Aesthetes could have survived a little ridicule. What they could not survive was the ignominious downfall and imprisonment of Oscar Wilde, which, as William Gaunt remarked, "caused a wholesale literary and social fumigation".<sup>16</sup> No doubt there was also substance in the comment made by some (adopting the words of Lord Macaulay), that the British public was "going through one of its periodical fits of morality." At any rate, it helped Kipling. He undoubtedly benefited by the reaction from cloistered refinement to active, tough realism. Much later, with his usual gift for the telling phrase, though perhaps a little unkindly, he referred to "the suburban Toilet-Club school favoured by the late Mr. Oscar Wilde".<sup>17</sup>

Ironically, Wilde himself, while in prison, and perhaps as some sort of penance, produced "The Ballad of Reading Gaol", obviously meant for perusal and recitation by the public he affected to despise.

While it is difficult to draw the line, I would distinguish the contemporary ballads, mostly set in India, from the great love-poems to England. These are often in ballad form, but are usually set in the past, and are planned not so much to tell a story (though they do) as to convey the enchantment of England. Thus, "Sir Richard's Song":

"I followed my Duke ere I was a lover,  
To take from England fief and fee;  
But now this game is the other way over –  
But now England has taken me!"

and in similar vein, in "The Roman Centurion's Song", the agonised cry of the soldier ordered home from Britain, "Command me not to go!" And the glorious songs and stories in *Puck of Pook's Hill*:

She is not any common earth,  
Water or Wood or Air,  
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,  
Where you and I will fare.

And so many others. How lucky you are to have this heritage.

These are of a known and beloved land. Contemporary ballads suit best the excitement and adventure of a *new* land. (India of course was old, but not to Englishmen.) These are songs of expansion and discovery. And during this period, 1885 to 1918, there were other lands, with peoples developing, feeling their way, and building their own traditions. The ballad suited them, and where Kipling led they followed, but in their own style.

I speak primarily of my own wide brown land. We were discovering ourselves; ceasing to be European; finding pride in a country so different that it took several generations for the 'cornstalks', the 'currency' lads and lasses, the native-born, to shake off the nostalgia for the mother-land.

"The love of field and coppice,  
Of green and shaded lanes,  
Of ordered woods and gardens,  
Is running in your veins."

That is how our poet Dorothea Mackellar addresses an English friend. But she goes on:

"I know but cannot share it,  
My love is otherwise,"

and then she moves into the verse that every Australian child knows:

"I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding rains."

It was of this country that our national poet, A.B. ('Banjo') Paterson, wrote. And he did so with the ballad. Like Kipling, he adopted a form easily and universally recognised, to build a tradition in a new land. His debt to Kipling is obvious and acknowledged.

It is summed up by Douglas Stewart, a later poet, who says: "The bush balladists were in fact developing, with help from Bret Harte and Kipling, a new form, a new *genre* of verse to meet the new situation in which Australians found themselves."<sup>18</sup>

Kipling and Paterson were close contemporaries, (Kipling 1865-1936; Paterson 1864-1941). They met in South Africa, when Paterson was reporting for the Australian press the exploits of Australian troops

in the Boer War. Paterson described Kipling as "perhaps the greatest master of local colour in our time."<sup>19</sup>

Like Kipling, Paterson adopted the ballad form for contemporary events – but of course Australian events, not Indian. Hence his emphasis on outback and bush; droughts and pubs; shearers, squatters and horsemen. Himself a truly great horseman, he was amazed by Kipling's powers of description. He singled out these lines from "The Ballad of East and West", where the Colonel's son, riding a "raw rough dun", labours in pursuit of Kamal, who is mounted on the Colonel's splendid mare which he has stolen:

The dun, he leaned against the bit, and slugged his head above,  
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays  
with a glove.

Paterson commented, "Work like that takes one's breath away, for the man knows next to nothing about horses."<sup>20</sup>

Paterson's ballads suit the time and country of Australia, as Kipling's did of India. Of course the atmosphere was different. We were not governing a huge teeming population. We were discovering, and to some extent taming (though we will never entirely tame it) a vast empty outback, with "droughts and flooding rains". The horse was still king, and Paterson's "The Man from Snowy River" was the legend because of his horsemanship.

"He hails from Snowy River, up by Kosciusko's side,  
Where the hills are twice as steep and twice as rough;  
Where a horse's hoofs strike firelight from the flint-stones  
every stride,  
The man that holds his own is good enough. . ."

Paterson brought home to us our bush heritage, with lines like these about "Clancy of the Overflow":

And the bush has friends to meet him, and their kindly voices  
greet him  
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars;  
And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,  
And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.

The 'great game' in those days in Australia was not on the international stage between Britain and Russia, but in the more prosaic struggles between squatters and drovers. The drover had the right to

pass through the squatter's land on the main stock route, but not to diverge from it and "plunder the squatter's grass". But travelling sheep have to be fed, and the drover was up to all sorts of tricks to get his sheep to stray, while the squatter was equally determined to keep them on the track. Hence the tale of "Saltbush Bill", who meets an English squatter, and they indulge in a fight that takes all day, mainly because Bill makes it last that long, so his sheep can stray everywhere while the fight is in progress. Finally Bill allows the Englishman to knock him out:

And the tale went home to the Public Schools  
of the pluck of the English swell –  
How the drover fought for his very life,  
but blood in the end must tell. . .  
. . . [But] Saltbush Bill, on the Overland,  
will many a time recite  
How the best day's work that he ever did  
was the day that he lost the fight.

The same conditions of a new people in a new country, exploring and forming their own legends, applied to Canada, and particularly the Yukon: the balladeer there was Robert W. Service. "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" is Kipling translated to the Yukon, though the lingo is that of the local miner, not the soldier of the Queen. Like Paterson, Service instils the love of the new country:

It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,  
It's the forests where silence has lease;  
It's the beauty that fills me with wonder,  
It's the stillness that fills me with peace.<sup>21</sup>

The debt to Kipling is everywhere, and freely admitted:

"I'm dreaming tonight in the fireglow,  
alone in my study tower,  
My books battalioned around me,  
my Kipling flat on my knee."<sup>22</sup>

It is not surprising to find the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* referring to Service as "the Canadian Kipling". One can find echoes of Kipling everywhere in these poets. Here is just one example. You will remember that the Mowgli stories contain references to "The Law" – by which Kipling means an accepted custom or dogma unchallenged

and unchallengeable. One poem, in *The Second Jungle Book*, begins:

Now this is the Law of the Jungle –  
as old and as true as the sky;  
And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper,  
but the Wolf that shall break it must die. .<sup>23</sup>

Paterson uses the word "law" in the same sense:

Now this is the law of the Overland  
that all in the West obey:  
A man must cover with travelling sheep  
a six-mile stage a day.<sup>24</sup>

So does Service:

This is the law of the Yukon,  
and ever she makes it plain;  
Send not your foolish or feeble,  
send me your strong and your sane.<sup>25</sup>

Turning to the U.S.A., we find Bret Harte, about the same period, singing of the new land of California – new at least to the 'forty-niners' who flocked there, many of whom later came to Australia in the gold rushes of the 1850s. But Harte is a weaker case, since he wrote few poems compared with the output of Paterson and Service, and his contribution to myth-making is in his stories.

So my point is that in the period mentioned, the influence of Kipling was far beyond India and England, and extended to great lands opening up to hard, tough peoples, mostly of British descent, who fought hard and made mistakes, and suffered and died in appalling conditions, forcing their 'heart and nerve and sinew, to serve their turn long after they were gone'.

The soldier in India, the miner in California and the Yukon, and the squatter and drover in Australia, were strangers in strange lands, and as they grew to know these lands they sang songs humorous or desolate, and built their legends and made their ballads. And the pattern for their songsters and rhymers was set for them by the little man who knew the universal daemon that drove them. For the greatest of them all was Kipling.

But if the contemporary ballad flourished in this period, 1885 to 1918, why did it die? The novelty, the expansion, the excitement of discovery was being replaced by consolidation, and in the case of India,

change-over. The legions were not leaving yet, but their day was limited.

Perhaps too, the contemporary ballad as represented by Kipling and his school was written out. After all, who could follow Kipling or Paterson or Service in this line? Later poets devoted themselves to the changed conditions. The ballad itself did not die, but it reverted to the music-halls, whence it had sprung – as evidenced by the continuing popularity of 'country and western'. I find much of this *genre* pleasing, but it is generally more ephemeral, and depends not so much on the words themselves, but rather on a combination of words, singer and instrumentalist. It is *different*.

Kipling did not devote himself exclusively to the ballad form. I have mentioned the love-poems to his country; but there was also the influence of Browning's 'dramatic monologues' in splendid poems such as "McAndrew's Hymn". There are verses on contemporary politics, the great hate-poem "Gehazi", and the wonderful songs for children in *Just So Stories*. And much more, much more.

I cannot refrain from mentioning one marvellous poem because, although it can be described as a ballad, it transcends the ballad tradition, and links it to a more profound approach which Kipling employs in just such poems as "McAndrew's Hymn", "The 'Mary Gloster'" and "A St. Helena Lullaby". He moves inward to the mind, not outward to the facts, and grapples with the vagaries of human endeavour. The poem is "The Song of Diego Valdez", written in 1902, after Kipling had become a great and eminent figure.

But is Diego Valdez, now "High Admiral of Spain", the great sea captain that all except Diego himself suppose? Are triumph and disaster the "great impostors" that Kipling in another poem calls them? Diego reflects on the thin line between them.

The tempest flung me seaward,  
And pinned and made me hold  
The course I might not alter –  
And men esteemed me bold!  
The calms embayed my quarry,  
The fog-wreath sealed his eyes;  
The dawn-wind brought my topsails –  
And men esteemed me wise!

To all but himself he is a success. But success has cabined and confined him into something he does not much wish to be. He looks back with longing, to the adventurous but carefree days of his youth:

But I remember comrades –  
Old playmates on new seas –  
Whenas we traded orpiment  
Among the savages . . .  
A thousand leagues to south'ard  
And thirty years removed –  
They knew not noble Valdez,  
But me they knew and loved . . .

You can almost hear the gears shifting here. What seems to be a ballad, and one of past events at that, becomes a contemporary, or more properly universal, reflection for those who follow the elusive goal of ambition. Perhaps Kipling is saying farewell to the ballad and moving on.

If he is, we must still remain deeply grateful that he first tarried so long in that land where the lives of ordinary people facing the challenges and crises of their time turn into exploits of heroes, adventurers and black villains, with their deeds and misdeeds recorded as something above the banal record of everyday life, and given the glow of excitement and legend to be remembered by those who come after. Or does the ballad really show us something more truthful and real in the human comedy, the life behind the curtain? If the poet transforms these things for us, should he not be honoured?

"If I have given you delight," said Kipling, in "The Appeal".

Yes, Sir, you have! And so, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I propose the traditional toast, "*to the unfading genius of Rudyard Kipling*".

#### VOTE OF THANKS BY DR MICHAEL BROCK

The Chairman called upon the Society's President, Dr Michael Brock, to propose a vote of thanks, which he did, as follows:

"We are greatly in our speaker's debt for the many insights he has just given us. For me personally, it is a particular pleasure to know that the *Inclusive Edition, 1885-1918* of the verse played a large part in his journey into Kipling, because that edition was published by an uncle of mine, who was then the chairman of Hodder & Stoughton.

Kipling's resuscitation of the ballad illustrates, perhaps as vividly as anything else, the nature of his genius. As a verse form, the ballad had been popular throughout the nineteenth century, but when Kipling burst

on to the scene, it had become stereotyped and stale. There was a clutter of classical and medieval images and allusions. Mr Gladstone may have been justified in spending all that time in studying Homer; and Tennyson managed to give Ulysses some fine lines; but the Victorians were not in the least like Homeric warriors. It was implausible for a young man to declare, however melodiously, that he feared his loved one's frown more than any foe in shining armour.

Kipling broke through these constraints. He used some of his predecessors' rhythms – for instance his debt to Browning's "Asolando" has been particularly noted – but he brought the ballad into the contemporary world. He knew that adventure, and the urge to celebrate adventure in a readily memorable way, had not vanished with the coming of the railway and the ocean liner.

So we have been hearing about a central feature of his 'unfading genius'; and for that we are all deeply grateful."

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES TO AUSTIN ASCHE'S ADDRESS

1. From the great speech by Ulysses in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Act 3, Scene iii, about "alms for oblivion".
2. Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978), pp 184-5.
3. The *Spectator*, 1 April 2000, p 44.
4. "Melancholy – An Ode."
5. Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.
6. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, *Studies in Literature* (Cambridge U.P., 1927).
7. Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977), p 104.
8. This poem can be found in *The Albatross Book of Living Verse* (London: Collins) p 25.
9. Quiller-Couch, *ibid*.
10. Angus Wilson, *ibid*, p 105.

11. Jan Morris, writing of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897), says that "in every continent, men of British stock and nationality were still extending the limits of the Pax Britannica" [*Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire*, London: Faber, 1968, p 40].
12. See for instance Angus Wilson (*ibid.*, p 140) : "[as a young man in Villiers Street, London] his evenings were spent at Gatti's music-hall across the way." See also Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling* (Penguin, 1970), p 419.
13. *Something of Myself* (London: Macmillan, 1937), p 81.
14. J.S. Bratton, *The Victorian Popular Ballad* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp 95-96.
15. This was the reply Wilde gave under cross-examination by Sir Edward Carson during the celebrated libel trial: Carson had asked him whether "Dorian Gray" might lead an ordinary individual to believe it might have a certain "tendency".
16. William Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1945), p 155.
17. *Something of Myself*, p 219.
18. Douglas Stewart, *A Man of Sydney* (Nelson, 1977), p 15.
19. "Song of the Pen" in *Complete Works of A.B. Paterson*, (Sydney: Lansdowne Press, 1983), p 177.
20. *Ibid.*, p 507.
21. "The Spell of the Yukon".
22. "The Nostomaniac".
23. "The Law of the Jungle".
24. "Saltbush Bill".
25. "The Law of the Yukon".

At 6 pm on 6 September 2001, during a Kipling Conference from 5 to 7 September at Magdalene College, Cambridge the Eileen Stammers-Smith Memorial Lecture (named after a member who has left the Society a most generous bequest) will be given by the poet and critic Craig Raine (see page 5). Admission free for Society members, but those who plan to come should tell the Kipling Fellow, Dr Jeffery Lewins, particularly if they would like to attend the Conference Dinner in Hall after the lecture. He can specify Dinner and Conference prices. His postal address is Magdalene College, Cambridge CB3 0AG; his e-mail [jdl@eng.cam.ac.uk](mailto:jdl@eng.cam.ac.uk); and telephone (01223) 332100 or fax 363637. He has recently become our Meetings Secretary.

## THE WHIRLIGIG OF EMPIRE

### KIPLING'S "THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING"

by E.M. BEEKMAN

[Dr Beekman is Professor of Germanic Languages at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His first degree, in 1963, was in English and Comparative Literature, at the University of California at Berkeley; and he later took a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, at Harvard.

He has developed an authoritative speciality in Dutch colonial literature, and in the 1980s he played a leading part in editing the *Library of the Indies*, for the University of Massachusetts Press. This is a multi-volume collection of fiction from the colonial Dutch East Indies, translated into English, introduced and annotated.

Kipling's "The Man who would be King" (collected in *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories*) is an exceptionally powerful and condensed piece of writing – steeped in 'atmosphere' so strong as to be almost tangible, particularly in the two notable scenes that are set in the narrator's newspaper office. Many would call it Kipling's masterpiece. Some would rank it among the most gripping short stories in the English language.

Dr Beekman here provides us with a valuable study of its inherent symbolism, and especially of the relationship between Kipling's fictional Kafiristan and the true story of Sarawak and its first 'White Rajah'. The parallels, based on subtle but significant distinctions between 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' in their impact on indigenous native peoples, are well argued; and Dr Beekman writes with conviction. He is not short of relevant credentials, for writing objectively about the British Empire in Asia. These include the authorship in 1996 of an important book [see endnote 5, on page 49] about the colonial and post-colonial literature of the Dutch East Indies. From that somewhat unusual stance, he has reflected, in depth and in detail, on the political implications of "The Man who would be King"; and his resultant analysis adds a further compelling layer to our appreciation of Kipling's magnificent, though tragic, narrative. – *Ed.*]

The amazing fact about "The Man who would be King" (published in 1888) is that it was written by someone only twenty-two years old.<sup>1</sup> Granted that Kipling had been writing seriously for at least six years, and that he had been in the newspaper business since he was not quite seventeen,<sup>2</sup> yet neither fact explains the mastery of what Paul Fussell has judged to be "the finest" of Kipling's "short fictions", and which I would say is, with *Kim*, the best of his colonial fiction.<sup>3</sup> One indication of the story's excellence is that it satisfies on several levels.

Its most immediate distinction is that it is a fine tale. It is a story told "through the mouths of one, two, or more people" – as Kipling once

told Gobind, an old story-teller in India – and it deals with "Life and Death, and men and women, and Love and Fate according to the measure of my ability." "Even so," mocks the blind Hindu, "that is the work of the bazar story-teller."<sup>4</sup>

A good point that some modern critics forget: most of Kipling's Indian fiction – roughly the work published between 1885 and 1901 – shows the influence of native oral story-telling, a feature distinctive of colonial literature.<sup>5</sup>

In order to maintain the impression of 'orality' in a printed fiction, Kipling often uses the device of a 'frame' – of having a narrator report something he heard from someone else. It accomplishes several things. Kipling was most comfortable when actually telling his stories to a live audience, particularly to children. Also he had acted in his youth and as a young man, and knew the tricks essential to a successful performance. He carried this over into his written work, performing his "own experiments in the weights, colours, perfumes and attributes of words in relation to other words, either as read aloud so that they may hold the ear, or, scattered over the page, draw the eye. There is no line of my verse or prose which has not been mouthed till the tongue has made all smooth . . ."<sup>6</sup>

The unnamed narrator of "The Man who would be King" is a journalist on a small newspaper in India, ideally placed to hear all sorts of gossip and tall tales. The frame has, therefore, another benefit: it is 'objectified discourse'; it lends more credence to even the most unlikely story because there is no personal, subjective identification that is vulnerable to critical interrogation. One simply relates what one was told, and tells it with another one's voice.

The frame device also emphasises the actions of the characters, rather than an author's interpretation of such actions. In this way, action comes to speak louder than words, and it permits the audience to judge the characters by what they do. Finally, a fiction, presented in this manner, has a truth all its own, to which an audience will want to submit. Gobind put this law of the imagination succinctly: "A tale that is told is a true tale as long as the telling lasts."

How accurate this is, and how well Kipling succeeded, is demonstrated by the popular as well as critical success of John Huston's 1975 screen adaptation of "The Man who would be King."<sup>7</sup> The film necessarily emphasises the plot, and sacrifices the allusive and elliptical qualities of the original fiction; but the success of the visual re-telling, augmented with embellishments required to produce a full-length film, testifies to the excellence of Kipling's plotting, characterisation and narrative suspense.

There is, therefore, no denying that "The Man who would be King"

satisfies the first requirement of fiction: it entertains. Kipling became a huge success because he was a good "bazar story-teller", who told "of battles and kings, horses, devils, elephants, and angels," nor did he "omit to tell . . . of love and such-like."<sup>8</sup> Yet his literary reputation would not have survived if this were all. As he himself admitted, he "worked the material in three or four overlaid tints and textures . . . like working lacquer and mother o' pearl, a natural combination, into the same scheme as niello and grisaille, and trying not to let the joints show."<sup>9</sup>

In the case of "The Man who would be King", one of the "overlaid textures", according to Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, is "a study of kingship"<sup>10</sup> – a notion with which Paul Fussell concurs, and which is acceptable as far as it goes. But Fussell is too ingenious when he suggests that the undeniable presence of Masonic material turns the story into a Masonic morality tale, because this inflates a minor tint into a major ironic texture.

On the other hand, he is correct in stating that Kipling's "natural talent" was for themes "symbolically conceived"<sup>11</sup> or, as Kipling himself stated more deprecatingly, "loading up" a text with "allegories and allusions"<sup>12</sup> One would hope that such an effort will be more than an exercise in esoteric humour; and "The Man who would be King" does not disappoint.

The story is most profoundly a parable of the rise and fall of colonial empires. As I have shown elsewhere<sup>13</sup> in terms of colonial literature in general and Dutch colonial literature in particular, European colonialism begins with what comes close to legend: the time of the captains, the adventurers, the marauders, the "breakers of the law" in Burke's phrase, and those who, as Hannah Arendt so aptly put it, became the "tragic and quixotic fools of imperialism".<sup>14</sup>

Peachey Carnehan and Daniel Dravot are such "fools";<sup>15</sup> they create the legend and pay for it with their lives. Imperialism promoted such legends to further its own cause, but it had no use for the men who created them, because they were the very antithesis of imperialism's intentions and practices. The old captains and adventurers were individualists, perhaps dreamers, 'overreachers' who had stepped out of society and "were enterprising beyond the permitted limits of civilization".<sup>16</sup>

Such men were of a pre-bourgeois world, and if Arendt is correct in saying that imperialism was not the "last stage of capitalism" but rather the "first stage in the political rule of the bourgeoisie"<sup>17</sup>, these individualists would always be anathema to imperialism because they would always refuse to be company men. They are Kipling's favourites.

After the captains come "adventurers" of a different kind: like Henry the Seventh's "Merchant Adventurers" – businessmen who took a risk, gambled with their luck and wits, hoping to score a commercial success. Those colonial merchants still bore some resemblance to the captains, for instance a character such as Joseph Conrad's Tom Lingard (featured in *Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands* and *The Rescue*). The son of a poor British fisherman, Lingard escaped to the Dutch East Indies and transformed himself into the "Rajah Laut", a man of power and substance, living on the coast of eastern Borneo.

At this stage as well, up to the end of the 18th century, colonialism had little in common with imperialism. It was still a case of individuals who, more often than not, trespassed on the law, would not be hampered by trade restrictions, and did not feel the need to administer empires.

Imperialism did. "Expansion as a permanent and supreme aim of politics is the central political idea of imperialism." Expansion as such "is not really political at all, but has its origin in the realm of business speculation."<sup>18</sup> It is, in other words, the political programme of the Industrial Revolution's need to systematically expand markets for its ever increasing burden of goods. Since this was an economic programme, imperialism needed to maintain the *status quo*, and to hide the fact that government and business had merged.

The captains and the merchant adventurers were used for ideological propaganda, in order to promote what was essentially cynical exploitation; and this was bound to fail, for legends "are not ideologies; they do not aim at universal explanation, but are always concerned with concrete facts"<sup>19</sup> – which introduced the final stage of this process.

Reality revealed the lie of supremacy. The rapid demise of the Colonial Powers, from early in the Second World War, showed that they were fallible, their hegemony a bluff. Suddenly the overlords showed who they really were: vulnerable strangers in a strange land. They were not invincible gods, but mortals, who bled and died. Political and economic overreaching quickly turned into disaster.

Kipling did not live long enough to experience the final collapse that came in the middle of the 20th century; but he did seem to have intuited that the old captains were granted a second life. The erstwhile outlaws returned as writers – another version of bourgeois society's misfits.

The former world of action became an "interior world" where, as Conrad noted in *A Personal Record*, a man's "thought and his emotions go seeking for the experience of imagined adventures, [where] there are no policemen, no law, no pressure of circumstances or dread of opinion to keep him within bounds."

It is a noble endeavour, because "all ambitions are lawful except

those which climb upwards on the miseries or credulities of mankind. All intellectual and artistic ambitions are permissible, up to and even beyond the limit of prudent sanity."<sup>20</sup>

This ironic resurrection of the legendary marauders is also present in "The Man who would be King". It is embodied by the narrator, the journalist who gives us the story of Peachey Carnehan and Daniel Dravot, for without him their legendary deeds would have been lost to silence. Note that he considers himself one of them. When he first meets Peachey on the train, the narrator admits that he was "a wanderer and a vagabond like myself"<sup>21</sup> – a fellow-'loafer', someone who "sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off [184]. They are all outsiders, unfit imperialists, but they are not trash. All three, as Peachey proudly writes below the signed contract, are "Gentlemen at Large" [197].

"The Man who would be King" condenses this downward spiral from romance to expansionism into a few pages that have an allusive intensity great enough to accommodate several hundred years of history. The most effort is lavished on establishing the myth of Dravot and Carnehan, the foundation legend of colonialism. Such an enterprise does not allow them to be common in any sense of the word; they have to be head and shoulders above the ordinary.

Kipling establishes this both literally and figuratively. Both men are introduced as being physically large [184, 186]; they "were too big for the [newspaper's] office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room, and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table" [193]. Physical supremacy was once a fundamental requirement of kingship, when "conquest alone, *fortune des armes*, determined the destinies of men."<sup>22</sup> Saul, for instance, Israel's first king, towers over his subjects [1 Samuel 10:23, also 9:2]. Biblical allusions are plentiful in Kipling's work, including this story.<sup>23</sup> Such allusions insinuate legitimacy for this venture; and Kipling (who seems to have known the Bible by heart) purposely invokes such Old Testament kings as Saul and David, because they were extraordinary individuals of humble beginnings who were chosen by the people to be their champions. Saul was discovered by Samuel when the "choice young man" was chasing a group of donkeys that belonged to his father [1 Samuel 9: 1-25]. He came from "the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin"; while David herded sheep [1 Samuel 16: 11].

Hence Dravot and Carnehan are of their ilk because, as is stated in the Bible's first book about these Old Testament kings (1 Samuel), God "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory" [2:8]. Not only does this form the basis for the

Masonic law as expressed in the story's 'motto'<sup>24</sup> below the title, but it also confers upon the two 'loafers' a nobility older than that of British and European aristocracy. It is a lineage superior to that of any of the bloodless monarchs the journalist has to deal with professionally, monarchs who require little more than an obituary notice.

Dravot and Peachey Carnehan are real, and larger than imperial life. Legendary figures need extraordinary surroundings, and these are provided by India. Although the two men consider it too small for their ambitions [193], Kipling takes pains to suggest the enormity of that boast. As other true colonial writers have done as well, he details what a prodigy India was, as compared with mundane Europe. The reality of life in India is extraordinary, if not surrealistic, because the common is constantly juxtaposed with the marvellous. Such disjuncture erases boundaries and makes the legendary feasible.

India is a place where you will be "touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid" [187]. It is a place where it is "all in the day's work" to consort with "Princes and Politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver," and the next moment to lie "upon the ground", eat from "a plate made of leaves," drink "the running water", and sleep with your servant under the same rug [187-8]. It is a place where death is either common, casual and sudden [190], or strange and extraordinary, as instanced by the rajah who took his father's widow and "filled her up with red pepper and slipped her to death as she hung from a beam" [187]. In such a place anything is possible, even that two of the most "dissolute ruffians that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road" [190] become kings of Kafiristan.

This is the landscape of colonial literature, and the destination of the original adventurers. But it is no longer suitable for adventure, because the 'colony' has become an 'empire' – that is to say normalised, bureaucratised, and regulated. "The country isn't half worked out, because they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all of their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that, without all the Government saying, 'Leave it alone, and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own" [194].

That "other place" is Kafiristan, an imaginary realm that sounds so much like the other 'lands' (which is what *stan* means in the Turkic languages) – Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and so on – that it should really exist. But it doesn't, of course, and Kipling gives a sly hint to that effect because *kafir* is Arabic for *infidel*, and all the other countries mentioned are Muslim.

It is a strange and wonderful thing, to say that you feel claustrophobic on the Indian subcontinent. But Dravot and Peachey Carnehan measure up to such extraordinary contexts. These practitioners of Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance are kin to Old Testament kings, men of many parts [193], and most importantly, excellent soldiers. They had been up in Afghanistan before, with General Roberts [195], a commander who was a legend in his own right.<sup>25</sup>

Kipling had read Ralph Waldo Emerson since he was twelve; had adopted Emerson's practice of heading prose texts with some lines of original verse; expressed his admiration of the American sage throughout his life;<sup>26</sup> and kept a photograph of Emerson beside his desk.<sup>27</sup>

Dravot and Carnehan are fine examples of Emerson's self-sufficient individualist. In a famous essay, Emerson admonishes that "whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist,"<sup>28</sup> and legislated that "the great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science; and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted in falling back on naked valour and disencumbering it of all aids."<sup>29</sup> The story of Kipling's two veteran adventurers seems to enact fundamental aspirations from Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance":

Let a Stoic open the resources of man, and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment that he acts for himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more, but thank and revere him – and that teacher shall restore his life to splendor and make his name dear to all history.<sup>30</sup>

Men who "acted for themselves" were admired by Kipling; but he was less sanguine than Emerson about their rewards. We will return to that later.

Kipling did not create such critiques of imperialism only in prose. His poetry is often scathing as well – for instance, among many others, "The Song of the Dead", or "The Explorer". The explorer tells how he went against the grain, obeying "an everlasting whisper" that urged him to "go and look behind the Ranges – / Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!"

So, "worn out of patience", he went, and endured untold hardships.

But he succeeded, discovering and exploring a newly found land. The achievement reminds him of Saul, who "went to look for donkeys, and by God he found a kingdom!" – (so did Dravot and Carnehan with their whirligigs and rifles, their camels and mules, in "The Man who would be King"). But in one respect the explorer, in the poem, has no illusions: "Well I know who'll take the credit – all the clever chaps that followed / . . . They'll go back and do the talking. *They'll* be called the Pioneers!"<sup>31</sup>

This British Saul endured great hardships for reasons other than gold – a difference commensurate with the contrast between the old 'captains' and the imperial 'parlour soldiers' who, to use Emerson's phrase, "shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born"<sup>32</sup> – "Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre? / Have I kept one single nugget – (barring samples)? No, not I!"

Burke's "breakers of the law in India . . . had little in common with the exporters of British money or the administrators of the Indian peoples." The reason, as Hannah Arendt puts it, is that "imperialism is not empire-building, and expansion is not conquest."<sup>33</sup> But one may well ask if such legendary figures are merely ancient prodigies that properly belong to a foundation myth.

Kipling hints that the potential still existed in the late 19th century. For when Dravot and Carnehan come to consult books and maps in the newspaper office, Dravot proclaims that Kafiristan is "the only [...] place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-whack" [194]; and later, when he overreaches and initiates the process of empire-building, Dravot boasts that "we shall be Emperors – Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us" [216].

The verb that Kipling punningly contrives as a synonym for conquest comes from "Sarawak", a region in north-west Borneo, while the "suckling" is Sir James Brooke (1803-1868). Brooke was a perfect example of what Kipling had in mind; he should also have been an object-lesson to Dravot.

James Brooke had been born in India, where his father was a judge in the service of the East India Company. After a British education, he became in 1819 an officer in one of the regiments of the Company, and he was seriously wounded in 1825 in the First Burma War. When his father died, he inherited a considerable sum of money, which he used to buy and fit out a 140-ton schooner, the *Royalist*. In 1838 he sailed to Borneo, in order to "relieve and disenchain millions" (as his biographer Mundy puts it), and to rectify (in Brooke's own words) the crime and misery, oppression and death, [which] have ever followed in the track of those enterprising men who first traversed the ocean, either for the purpose of mercantile adventure or of establishing settlements in

unknown or distant climes.<sup>34</sup> Note here already a resemblance to Kipling's fiction; the "enterprising men" are Dravot and Peachey Carnehan, while the last phrase can be said to summarise the poem, "The Explorer".

The details of what transpired next need not be recounted here; suffice it to say that Brooke helped the Rajah Muda Hassim to put down a revolt of Malays and Iban Dayaks. In subsequent years, his military prowess and skill prevailed against Dayak pirates, earning him the title of "rajah of Sarawak", which was accompanied by considerable powers granted in perpetuity. In 1847 Queen Victoria knighted him – something Dravot is sure will happen to himself as well [217] – but, as 'the Explorer' knew, lesser men tried to discredit Brooke at home. He fought them successfully in England and in Singapore, while he constantly proved himself in combat against the Ibans, Malays and Chinese. He never married, was said to be impotent as a result of his Burma War injury, and yet established a dynasty of Brookes by installing his nephew Charles as his heir. The Brookes ruled Sarawak for over a century.

Brooke inspired Kipling, Conrad and Britain's Victorian society. He was the model for Lord (or *Tuan*) Jim in Patusan – the White Rajah was addressed in Sarawak as *Tuan Besar* or "Great Lord" – while it is known that Conrad had read James Brooke's journals, and used them in his fictions.<sup>15</sup>

The interest stems from something that no theory can effectively discuss: the romance of colonialism. This romance was not a fiction but real, and Brooke's "unequalled and extraordinary career"<sup>36</sup> represents that reality during the first half of the 19th century when, in fact, such adventure was already an antique indulgence. "Intrepid Brooke" embodied much of the characteristics of the legendary romance that have been mentioned. He was called "a great philanthropist" with "noble and chivalrous resolve". In 1846 he was "de facto sovereign of the whole coast of Borneo Proper, from point Api to Malludu, 700 miles in extent."<sup>37</sup>

Presented by himself and his admirers as a paragon of virtue, Brooke did not disdain some very real romantic indulgences. His campaigns against the pirates of Borneo's coast make him wonder if he is "fond of war?" "And I answer – 'Certainly' – for what man is not? And indeed, what else makes among my countrymen so many sailors and soldiers?" Besides, he asks, how else can one vanquish this foe? Does the home office "really imagine that piracy is to be suppressed by argument or preaching? Do they propose to appeal to the tender feelings of these head-takers? Is it by mild morality, moral maxims, Harvey's Meditations, mesmeric influence, a problem of Euclid, or Aristotle's

logic that they would overcome the difficulty and gain the desirable object of opening these waters to the peaceful trader?"<sup>38</sup> Only "courage and audacity" impress these native peoples<sup>39</sup> – and these opinions were shared by Dravot and Carnehan, and by the Old Testament kings.

This "White Rajah of Sarawak" is yet another incarnation of Emerson's self-reliant man. In 1839, at the beginning of his adventure, Brooke holds counsel with himself, and discovers "a fixed determination to gird up my loins and endeavour to effect an object and to perform a service which may eventually be useful to mankind and creditable to myself; whilst, at the same time, I must constantly bear in mind that every step I take must inevitably be fraught with difficulties and dangers. Yet I shrink not from this self-imposed task; for the life, hour by hour, is one of constant excitement . . . each day's work, as a portion of the whole, secured beyond all accident; and as place succeeds place, and we perfect the knowledge of each, we feel how much we are doing, and how much there is to be done."<sup>40</sup> (Dravot would have put it more colourfully, but it expresses his sentiments quite correctly.)

Brooke did not permit false modesty to hinder his designs; he was quite sure that "I must become the chief of the Dayaks, and by my influence, prevent mischief on a large scale,"<sup>41</sup> and he was "fully sensible of the fame of the man who should open a path through Borneo for the civilisation of Europe to enter by."<sup>42</sup>

Brooke and Dravot meant what they said and, in accordance with Emerson, acted on their convictions. This was not empty rhetoric. And the rewards were real as well. Brooke did not get Dravot's crown of red gold, but he did become an absolute ruler<sup>43</sup> who issued his own "Code of Laws"<sup>44</sup>, and who gained the admiration and respect of an exotic people.

The latter is illustrated by an exemplary anecdote. A large crocodile, "fifteen feet four inches in length", had been captured alive. A debate ensued among the Dayaks, about what to do with the animal. Since it was itself "a rajah among animals" it should be treated with deference, and be praised and flattered. However, the opposite party contended that this would be bad policy, because if they indulged the animal while in the presence of such a great rajah as Brooke, "the crocodile community at large would become vain and unmanageable", and every beast would diligently pursue "his man, for the sake of obtaining the like fame".

After considering the matter, Brooke decided that the beast should be "instantly killed without honours". This was done without fail; its "head was severed from the trunk, and the body left exposed as a warning to all crocodiles that may inhabit these waters."<sup>45</sup>

The instruments of conquest were simple: superior firepower and tactics, accompanied by gifts of gaudy trifles. It amounts to an emblem of colonialism from the very beginning, repeated in Kipling's fine image of rifles hidden under whirligigs and mud dolls [200].

Brooke's weapons were rather primitive: swivel-guns "loaded with grape and canister, blunderbusses, muskets, pistols, and cutlasses."<sup>46</sup> These are weapons for comparatively close combat. But Dravot and Carnehan, some three decades later, realise their dream with superior, long-distance firepower. Theirs is already a heroism at a greater, more modern remove. Kipling's detailed prose makes this very clear.

Dravot's conquest starts with him dropping a man (one of a running group of twenty) "at two hundred yards from the rock where [Dravot] was sitting"; and he and Carnehan continue "picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley" [206]. When they continue their conquest, Carnehan wounds one of a group of men "half a mile [away] across the snow" [208]; and later "drops a bullet" near to a Chief who is "eighteen hundred yards away", to remind him of their seemingly magical powers [209], at which "all the people falls flat on their faces". A little later again, after occupying the village of Er-Heb, Carnehan impresses the inhabitants of another, hostile village by firing "four rounds at it from a thousand yards" [210].

As long as they keep their distance, literally and figuratively, the two men do well. Closeness, i.e. familiarity, proves fatal.

The weapon that could perform such lethal feats was the Martini-Henry rifle, which improved upon Snider's conversion of the basic Enfield rifle. It was a breech-loader, with a rifled barrel, and could use Boxer's superior cartridges. A lever under the butt facilitated reloading, and allowed for rapid-firing, and the effective range was greater than that of any comparable firearm at the time. The Martini-Henry became the British Army's standard issue in 1871.<sup>47</sup>

The other familiar element from colonial history that Kipling includes in his foundation legend is military tactics: teaching native fighting men discipline and orderly conduct under fire. As Carnehan puts it: taking "twenty good men and show[ing] them how to click off a rifle, and form fours, and advance in line . . ." [208]. (The first item refers to sighting-drills; the second to close-order drills; and the last to battle formations.)

Every colonial entrepreneur, big or small, had to obtain a fighting-force of indigenous peoples. (James Brooke used the Iban; the British Empire used Gurkhas from Nepal.) These were usually irregular troops commanded, when in need, by a small cadre of native non-commissioned officers and a handful of European officers. Note that in very short order Dravot and Carnehan turn local archers into "the

Army", with which they proceed to acquire their "nation", valley by valley.

Up to this point, everything has worked. The dream of adventure has been turned into real conquest with the aid of personal courage, superior arms, and the playing off of rival factions against one another. Dravot has successfully established his right to royalty on the right of conquest – the reward of *fortune des armes*. The local population have acquiesced in his assertions since they consider the Englishmen gods.

This too is part of the foundation myth. Dravot and Carnehan are considered to be sons of Alexander the Great who, if anyone, was the epitome of the adventurer in royal purple. It is also feasible in context, for Alexander was claimed as the founding father of any number of Asian dynasties, as far as Sumatra; and the Greeks who followed in his train settled all over the Indian subcontinent.

Ascribing divinity to European adventurers and discoverers is also part of the historical record. The Aztecs believed Cortés was the god Quetzalcoatl; and the Hawaiians were convinced that Captain Cook was their native deity Lono.

Kipling's 'loafers' have fulfilled the basic requirements of kingship – particularly control of magical and supernatural powers. The first is expressed by the 'Craft' of Freemasonry; the supernatural by rifles that kill from a great distance. A king must be blessed with luck, and Dravot has plenty of it, culminating in the carved "Master's Mark" of the Freemasons on the underside of Imbra's stone. And up to that lucky discovery Dravot has exhibited all other requisites of kingship: courage, physical strength, sound judgment, and self-control. His achievements are crowned with gold, the metal traditionally equated with royalty and the sun. Then his luck changes.

Dravot overreaches himself when he is no longer satisfied with "making a Nation" [216], and his dreams of adventure become schemes of expansion, in accordance with the historical development of colonialism, which also overreached itself during the 19th century with its demand for oversea empires. Dravot's 'empire' speech [216-7] precipitates all the horror that comes after. Note the fundamental trope of amplification. His 'subjects' increase from ten to two million. While twenty men constituted his 'Army' in the beginning, he now dreams of a force of "two hundred and fifty thousand fighting men".

Another magic twenty, the Martini-Henry rifles they brought with them from India, must now be a minimum of "twenty thousand", and if he had those, "we'd be an empire" [216]. Once he was content to conquer the next valley or the next village, but now he is ready to "cut in on Russia's right flank". Nor will this be enough: Dravot's new goal is the entire earth. Simple Old Testament law is no longer adequate for

such a huge imperial enterprise. Dravot needs a bureaucracy: clever men that can be his "Deputies", because in a "hugeous great state" he "can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do . . ."

This would have been inconceivable to the original adventurers. Dravot is no longer Emerson's self-reliant man, but an imperial administrator, who feels superior to the "suckling", Rajah Brooke. This is of course ironic, and part of Kipling's sustained criticism. Brooke was far greater than this would-be imperialist. He cherished his independence and did not boast when he said that he had "never mixed with the great, to be exalted or depressed by them".

Dravot's astonishing request for an imperial administration would have been scorned by Brooke, a man quite Dravot's equal in terms of courage and prowess. Independent spirits during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fiercely criticised, if not hated, the imperial bureaucracies they encountered in the Dutch East Indies, India or Africa. They would all agree with Brooke, who said that he "would much rather live in poverty, thrice deeply steeped, retired and neglected, than become an official machine to work in a mill without zeal and without interest."<sup>48</sup>

Kipling's text has other ways of intimating his critique of imperialism. In his 'empire' speech, Dravot speaks no longer derisively of the natives, because he has transformed them into Englishmen [216]. This also parallels the different attitudes of colonialism and imperialism.<sup>49</sup> Early colonialism let the indigenous people be. The European usurpers considered themselves superior, to be sure, but they did not alter the identity of the peoples they encountered; they did not tamper with an alien subject; they wanted to possess riches, not souls. Imperialism, on the other hand, cynically avowed equality. There is a reason for Dravot's proclamation that what were once a "stinkin' lot of heathens" [196] are now domesticated Englishmen. As British subjects they can be legally exploited, while, as alien and exotic strangers they simply remain men whom Dravot happens to reign over, by the grace of fate's favour.

Turning the people of Kafiristan into *ersatz* Englishmen also permits Dravot to think of breaking the sexual taboo. Again, within the imperial context, he can equivocate – not admitting to sexual desire, but insisting that acquiring a proper wife is a correct political move: "The marriage of the king is a matter of State" [220]. That is why Kipling so skilfully preceded the would-be wedding with the 'empire' speech. The decline into imperialism is preceded by the failure of kingship.

The common denominator of this failure is the contempt that derives from the familiarity of shared humanity. This too is part of the original

colonial legend, though based on historical fact. One might recall Alexander the Great, brought low by excessive drinking and by indulging in the voluptuousness of "Asian" court life, which made his Macedonian troops think he had gone soft. Or Quetzalcoatl, who was driven out of Tula because of drinking and sex.

The three great Israelite kings succumbed to human weaknesses as well. Saul was jealous of David; David surrendered to his desire for Bathsheba; Solomon indulged in luxury. True kings are not permitted the indulgences of ordinary people, while supposed gods should not betray themselves to be human. It is Kipling's variation on the basic story that tells of the failure of kings to be divine. Hence Dravot and Carnehan's "Contract" [196-7] was a Biblical covenant, but it was also inhuman.

Once again, Kipling gives a perfectly plausible and realistic reason for this symbolic device. Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that alcohol and sex are the soldier's greatest enemies; so it makes perfectly good sense to forswear these two major distractions from duty.

When the girl draws blood on Dravot's neck, she has condemned the overlords to death, and Kipling has intimated the last act of colonial history. He died before the final curtain came down, but his intimations of its failure can be found throughout his work. In terms of this story, the fictional details correspond symbolically to what happened three quarters of a century later.

Dravot ignored reality when he presumed to be a divine king. His supremacy was as if by magic, but this is a precarious position: the merest trifle can expose that divinity to be a fraud. What undermined Captain Cook's divinity was that his men ate so much that they nearly stripped Kealakekua Bay. Here it is merely a bite in Dravot's neck and a trickle of blood to indicate vulnerability. No longer immune to reality, the bogus British gods are wounded by it and must die, like anyone else.

The price paid for being human and for having lived a lie is revolt, the death of an empire, and cruel retribution. And Kipling once again uses the right details to intimate the larger historical context. The advantages of European supremacy are turned against the masters. Without a moment's hesitation, the "Army" fires at the men who had turned them into a disciplined fighting force. The erstwhile rulers do not go down without a fight, but they now have inferior weapons, only "matchlocks", and these are not "half as good as the Kabul breechloaders" in the hands of the rebels.

Another major contribution of imperialism was technological progress, symbolised in this tale by the rope-bridges which Dravot

repairs and improves. Like the rifles, a rope-bridge turns into an instrument of death and retribution. The rest of the loyal forces (personified by Billy Fish) are killed; and the remainder of European rule (Peachey Carnehan) is tortured and expelled. Kafirstan returns to its former existence. The same thing happened during and after the Second World War.

"The Man who would be King" is a remarkably accurate parable of European expansionism in Asia. It even distinguishes between colonialism and imperialism – as one should, for the first had little influence on the second.<sup>50</sup> But this text is also a fiction, a poetic creation that aspires to legend. Kipling included symbolic patterns of images that allude to the 'denotative' demise that is inevitable, but which also have a 'connotative' resonance which makes us admire the craftsman.

There are such linked ancillary symbols as the colour red, gold, fire and the sun. Red and gold are associated, and combine in the person of Dravot the king, who "put half his beard into his mouth, all red like the gold of his crown" [217]; but these two items are also connected to the sun, and this introduces the symbolism of weather. One may notice how the story proceeds from extreme heat to extreme cold, and how Kipling uses this simple opposition to institute a symbolic warning. Carnehan interrupts Dravot's 'empire' speech to point at "fat, black clouds" that are bringing snow [217]. Snow means winter, and the prospect of a long cold winter inspires Dravot's desire for a wife.

There are other symbolic patterns like that – mention has been made of Masonry, Biblical kingship, the newspaper business – but the central motif that is present at every level of the story, and which is a fundamental aspect of Kipling's entire literary production, is *vertiginousness*, a literal as well as figurative disorientation that symbolises disorder and chaos. Its physical manifestations in this tale are the whirligigs Dravot and Carnehan brought along to sell as toys to the Amir of Afghanistan [198-9].

Called a pinwheel in the U.S.A., the whirligig is an old toy, described by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as having "four arms like miniature windmill-sails, which whirl round when it is moved through the air." The earliest printed mention dates from 1440.

A "whirligig" was not only the name for a toy but, in the 19th century, for an instrument of torture in the British Army. Soldiers convicted of minor crimes could be locked in a circular wooden cage that looked like a drum fashioned from wooden staves, and which was then set in motion. It would whirl around so fast that it made the person inside extremely sick.

The word's figurative meanings include being subject to hazard, being a plaything or sport – as in the phrase "a whirligig of fate" (or "of

chance") – while it could also mean a fantastical idea.

It is fitting that whirligigs are mostly associated with Dravot. When he acts the mad priest, he waves these "charms that are never still" [198], while twirling among tethered pack-animals. From the moment they set out for Kafiristan, Dravot is described in motion, "pirouetting" [199], dancing [204], "tumbling out of the sky" [206], or just plain "swinging his arms and stamping his feet" [222]. He turns into a human pinwheel when it is said that he "waved his arms like a whirligig" [207]; and Kipling multiplies the meaning of this central trope when he equates the "arms" or vanes of the toy with weapons.<sup>51</sup>

Hence the toy is also an instrument of death; and once this has been established it is, symbolically, only logical that Dravot, the human whirligig, also dies like one, amidst the "dizzy dancing ropes" of the bridge he had repaired, falling for what seems like an eternity, "turning round and round and round" [207, 204]. This is right, because Dravot toyed with kingship, toyed with empires, toyed with being a god. But Gods do not allow to be so trifled with, nor do nations: and the toy becomes a man falling to his death.

The theme of circular motion was introduced earlier by the narrator, when he used the metaphor of the wheel to refer to the passage of time: "The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again" [201]. This is the Buddhist wheel representing the Round of Existence, the Wheel of Life, that figures so prominently in *Kim*.<sup>52</sup>

Kipling, as befits a 'colonial' author, felt a close affinity to the symbols of his native country; and he chose the swastika as the visual motto for his books, because it was an auspicious emblem common to the Buddhist and Hindu religions. This token of good luck (the Sanskrit term translates as "good fortune" or "that's luck") before the Nazis defiled it, looks very much like a whirligig inside a circle, and was once a universal symbol, found all over the globe, except for black Africa.

Another link to this story is that the swastika was most commonly thought of as the aniconic representation of the sun and, in Hindu legend, of Agni, the god of fire. Many other symbolic meanings have been suggested for the swastika – the wheel of life, the fire wheel, Buddha's heart, the symbol of Christ, Zeus, Helios, the four cardinal points of the world, while it is also an important Masonic emblem – but the common denominator is good luck and circular motion. Yet in "The Man who would be King" good luck turns into its opposite, and the wheel of fortune spins out of control. Almost everything in what ostensibly seems such an *insouciant* yarn turns into its deadly opposite.

It is a story of obsessively reeling repetitions that finally turn into contradictions. This culminates in Peachey Carnehan's truly frightening image of vertiginous nature, when *terra firma* is no longer

solid, but moves up and down [224], when the mountains dance, like the dizzying ropes of the bridge [227], and Peachey is trapped in a landscape that "never keep[s] still" [204]. When the universe whirls out of control one has chaos; and chaos is what Kipling dreaded the most.

The better part of Kipling's work deals with this metaphysical vertigo: the fear of being a helpless victim in a world that has spun out of control. Two examples from completely different texts must suffice. Kim's major struggle is against chaos, for he is caught up in a whirlwind of identities as exemplified by Lurgan's shop.<sup>53</sup> Just before the ending of that magical novel, Kim suffers the world as vertigo: "his soul was out of gear with its surroundings, a cogwheel unconnected with any machinery". Experiencing the world as chaos immediately translates into an identity crisis (one of several in the novel): "I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?" Finally, "Mother Earth"<sup>54</sup> steadies and renews him – a solace poor Peachey is not allowed.

Carnehan would have felt closer to Dowse, the lighthouse keeper in the story "The Disturber of Traffic".<sup>55</sup> All alone in the Flores Straits in southern Indonesia, this perverse man goes mad from the linear regularity of the tides! He calls his madness "feeling streaky": "He said there was long streaks of white running inside [his head]; like wallpaper that hadn't been properly pasted up."

One day, Dowse decides that the few ships that go by are responsible for the "streaks", and he resolves to make markers that indicate non-existent wrecks. It works, and the few ships that do come near his lighthouse veer away on to another course. But the word gets round about uncharted wrecks, and the disturber of sea traffic is finally captured and replaced.

It is a fine story, told tongue-in-cheek; but that does not hide the fact that it tells of a man *in extremis*, who can only prevent his total disintegration by arguing that the whole world is mad.

It is also an example of the author's extraordinary craft, because the story manages to convince us that straightness can gyrate into swirling confusion to such a frightening degree that only a whirlpool can bring comfort as a still point of repose!<sup>56</sup>

Kipling even manages to dissipate a lighthouse, turning an image of safety and deliverance into something tenuous and hazardous.<sup>57</sup> He was thoroughly convinced of the fundamental loneliness of life, and of the constant threat of mental disintegration. Chaos included for him *angst*, madness and suicide.<sup>58</sup>

Kipling was not sanguine about man's chances of deliverance. This is particularly clear in "The Man who would be King". The only instance of cessation, when the dizzying whirl of folly and death is stopped, is the beggar who was once Peachey Carnehan. The careening

proliferation of circles has finally been stilled in this tortured man – "bent into a circle", barely able to move [201-2]. The wheel of fortune has reduced the tough veteran to a shuffling, twisted wreck.

The hoop of hammered gold that was Peachey's crown is now no more than a twisted circle of pain. And Dravot the king has been reduced to his severed, shrunken head in a horse-hair bag. Dravot's viceroy is now a beggar – the derisive term they both used for the people of Kafiristan. Even the image of the human whirligig has been brutally stilled: crucified between two pine trees, Peachey Carnehan could no longer move, only scream.

Incoherent cries of pain, as well as the babble of madness, are perhaps for a writer the ultimate expression of the centrifugal force of chaos. Carnehan is afraid that his speech will careen out of control, that his "words will go all to pieces" [203], before his tale is told. He manages to fulfil his duty, aided by what is the only solace in this otherwise hostile and violent universe. "Keep looking at me," he urges the newspaperman, and as long as there is this personal contact, Peachey is safe from derangement. But that too finally happens, and Peachey dies alone in an insane asylum.

In the final analysis, "The Man who would be King" is not as innocent an entertainment as one would like. It is one more expression of Kipling's fundamental pessimism, perfectly captured by a character in the appropriately titled novel, *The Light that Failed*: "We are all islands shouting to each other across a sea of misunderstanding." This applies to individuals as well as to nations.

## NOTES

1. Kipling was born on 30 December 1865. One of the six paper-bound volumes of his stories published in 1888 (the Indian Railway edition) was *The Phantom Rickshaw*, which included "The Man who would be King". It appeared before the end of that year; so Kipling was still only 22.
2. In November 1882 he became assistant editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore.
3. Paul Fussell, "Irony, Freemasonry and Humane Ethics in Kipling's 'The Man who would be King'", *Journal of English Literary History*, volume 25 (1958), pp 216-33. The quote is on p 217. Praise can also be found in J.I.M. Stewart, *Rudyard Kipling: A Study in Literature and Political Ideas*, 1940 (reprint edn, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1970) pp 6-8.
4. For citing original texts I have used the Mandalay edition of Kipling's Works in 26 volumes (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co, 1925). The quotes about story-telling are from the "Preface" to *Life's Handicap*, in the volume *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories* in that edition. There, the "Preface" has no pagination.
5. See E.M. Beekman, *Troubled Pleasures: Dutch Colonial Literature from the East Indies, 1600-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) pp 269-70.
6. Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Thomas Pinney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp 43-4.
7. A discussion of the filming (including some good stories) can be found in John Huston, *An Open Book* (New York: Knopf, 1980), pp 43-4.
8. From the "Preface" to *Life's Handicap*; it has no pagination.
9. *Something of Myself*, ed. Pinney, p 111.
10. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Fiction* (New York: RS. Crofts, 1948) p 63.
11. Fussell, p 216.
12. *Something of Myself*, p 111.
13. See note 5. Particularly chapter 4.
14. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). Reprint edn., New York World Publishing Co (1958), p 189.
15. Fussell calls them "clowns" (p 220), but that is wrong.
16. Arendt, *Origins*, p 189.
17. Arendt, p 138.

18. Arendt, p 125.
19. Arendt, p 208.
20. Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record: Some Reminiscences* (London: Nelson, 1912), pp 19-20.
21. For references, I am using the Mandalay edition (see note 4), in the volume entitled *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Stories*, pp 183-229. Subsequent references to that text are indicated by page numbers in square brackets.
22. Arendt, *Origins*, p 164.
23. Peachey Carnehan says his tale is "true as gospel" [202]. Dravot said, "Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply" – this being from Genesis 1:28. "They were a poor lot, and we blooded 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new Kingdom [208], Peachey said to the Chief, " 'Occupy till I come', which was scriptural." [209]. "The Bible says that Kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new raw Kingdom to work over" [210]. Dravot says, "Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country?" [219]. Billy Fish says, "How can daughters of men marry Gods or Devils? It's not proper," and Peachey says he "remembered something like that in the Bible" [220]. Peachey is crucified, and somewhat resurrected [227]. The "Son of Man", in the verse of the hymn that Peachey sings before he dies [229], is Christ.
24. "Brother to a Prince and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy" [183].
25. General Sir Frederick Roberts, V.C., later Field-Marshal Earl Roberts of Kandahar, Pretoria and Waterford (1832-1914), commanded the British troops who marched on Kabul in 1878-9; took the city; and dismantled the ancestral fortress of the Afghan kings. In 1880, he led 18,000 men over 313 miles of very difficult terrain from Kabul to effect the relief of Kandahar, in 22 days. He only lost 4 men and 20 pack-animals; and this feat made him a hero. He was raised to the peerage as a Baron in 1892. As Commander-in-Chief in India he created a new Indian Army, with the merger of the old Presidency armies, and he endeared himself to his troops by trying to improve their conditions. C.E. Carrington states that with the possible exception of W. G. Grace, Roberts was "the most popular figure in the British Empire". (Carrington, *The British Overseas*, Cambridge University Press, 1950, pp 922-925.)
26. C. E. Carrington, *The Life of Rudyard Kipling* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co. 1955), p 70.
27. Carrington's Life of Kipling, p 190.
28. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1985), p 261.
29. Emerson, p 163.
30. Emerson, p 275.

31. *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*, Inclusive Edition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928), pp 117-121. The poem dates from 1898.

32. Emerson, *Essays*, p 275.

33. Arendt, *Origins*, p 130.

34. Rodney Mundy, *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes, down to the Occupation of Labuan: From the Journals of James Brooke, Esq., Rajah of Sarawak, and Governor of Labuan. Together with a Narrative of the Operations of H.M.S. Iris*, 2 vols. (London, John Murray, 1848), 1: p 12.

35. Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Eastern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p 141.

36. Mundy, *Narrative*, 2: p 99.

37. All these superlatives from Mundy, 2: pp 219, 108, 94, 266. See also Colin N. Crisswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke, Monarch of All He Surveyed* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), esp. pp 3-16.

38. Mundy, *Narrative*, 2 : pp 84-5.

39. Mundy, 1: p 26.

40. Mundy, 1: p 15.

41. Mundy, 2: p 6.

42. Mundy, 2: p 7.

43. Mundy, 2: pp 77-84.

44. Mundy, 1: pp 277-8.

45. Mundy, 2: pp 70-73.

46. Mundy, 1: p 52.

47. The original Enfield rifle had been introduced to the British forces in 1855. An American, Jacob Snider, converted this basic musket to a breech-loader that had a superior firing-mechanism, and could use Boxer's superior cartridges. (Boxer's ammunition had its own means of detonation – a percussion-cap in the centre of its base.) This rifle had been adopted by the British in 1867: twenty years later, Dravot refers derisively to "Sniders" [216].

48. Mundy, *Narrative*, pp 216-7.

49. See also Arendt, pp 124-134.

50. Arendt, p 188.

51. "Then he sends a message to the Chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his *arms* behind. The Chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his *arms* about, same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that Chief was, and strokes my eyebrows". [Italics added]

52. There is, for instance, the wonderful passage in chapter XII, when the Lama unrolls a painting of the Wheel of Life, and teaches Kim the heavens and the hells. This passage includes the Chaucerian insight, that "by the roadside trundled the very Wheel itself, eating, drinking, trading, marrying, and quarrelling — all warmly alive". The volume

entitled *Kim* in the afore-mentioned Mandalay edition, pp 275-6.

53. *Kim*, chapter IX, Mandalay edition, pp 205-6.

54. *Kim*, pp 367-8.

55. The story is in the collection *Many Inventions*, first published in 1893. In the Mandalay edition, it is in the volume *The Day's Work*, second part, p 10.

56. "He said the only comfort he got was at slack water. There the streaks in his head went round and round like a sampan in a tide-rip; but that was heaven, he said, to the other kind of streaks – the straight ones that looked like arrows on a wind-chart, but much more regular, and that was the trouble of it."

57. "The pencils of the Light marched staggeringly across tilted floors of white cloud. From the balcony round the light-room the white walls of the lighthouse ran down into swirling, smoking space." Note once again how Kipling creates convergence-zones of images. The "streaks" are like arrows: the lightbeams of the lighthouse are pencils. The "arms" of a whirligig are linear as well, as are the "spokes" in the Wheel of Life.

One final instance of this strange theme of linearity rotating into confusion. After he has been seriously ill, Kim says to the 'Maharanee' that all he remembers is "that the days and nights passed like bars of white and black, opening and shutting" [p 359] – in other words whirling. These stroboscopic images (*strobos* meant *whirling* in ancient Greek) are, I think, central to Kipling's art and interpretation of life.

58. Two studies of Kipling's art are particularly receptive to the strangeness of the man and his art. The best one is: Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling : His Life and Works* (New York: Viking, 1978). The other: Philip Mason, *Kipling: The Glass, the Shadow and the Fire* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

---

### A NOTE ON OUR CONTENTS

This issue of the *Journal* contains a lot of 'administrative' matter — e.g. the Society's Annual Report and Accounts; a note on Gift Aid; another on next year's Cambridge Conference; reports on a new Secretary and an old Editor; even a couple of obituaries. With all that, and a backlog of more 'literary' articles to fit in. I risk appearing to ignore some important developments. For John Morgan has been packaging his monumental *Journal Index*; John Slater has been systematically cataloguing the Library; while John Radcliffe continues to refine and expand the web-site which is transforming the Society. I hope our next issue will be able to pay the three Johns more of the attention they deserve. – *Ed.*

# THE SEARCH FOR RUDYARD KIPLING

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN 1965

by MORTON S. COHEN

[Dr Cohen is a distinguished academic whose numerous publications include an illuminating biography of Rider Haggard (1960), and an admirably edited collection of Kipling letters, *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard: the Record of a Friendship* (1965).

In November 1965 – that year being the centennial of Kipling's birth – Dr Cohen, who was on the staff of the English Faculty at Syracuse University, New York State, U.S.A., addressed a luncheon meeting of the University's Library Associates, with a paper entitled "The Search for Rudyard Kipling" (recorded in issue No 25 of the *Courier*). The occasion was one of several events staged by the university to mark that centennial. (Another was a fine exhibition of "Kipling manuscripts, books, letters, photographs, prints, and other memorabilia selected from its collection, and augmented by a huge number of choice items . . . from private libraries".)

Dr Cohen, born in Canada in 1921, but resident since boyhood in the U.S.A., and a frequent visitor to Britain, has described himself as "an adopted New Yorker for whom London is a second home". Recently, through mutual friends, he made the acquaintance in London of John Slater, our Honorary Librarian, and kindly gave him, for the Society's Library, a copy of the text of his 1965 talk.

John Slater recognised that this was not only very readable, but also a revealing evocation of a time, the 1950s, when any aspiring biographer of Kipling who hoped for access to his letters and papers, had to take careful account of his formidable daughter, Elsie Bambridge. She was stubbornly loyal to her father's memory, to his strong desire for personal privacy, and to his unaccommodating view that intrusive biography was no more than 'Higher Cannibalism'.

She was instinctively averse to granting interviews, or answering questions about her father, or permitting access to his private papers. Yet (as Charles Carrington discovered at that time, though Lord Birkenhead conspicuously did not) she was capable of responding very graciously and helpfully if she was approached with suitable tact.

Dr Cohen here outlines the negotiations that cleared the way for his valuable book about Kipling's friendship with Haggard. A crucial part was played by Kipling's (and Haggard's) literary agents, the prestigious firm of A.P. Watt. But it is certain that the happy ending to the negotiations was also attributable to Dr Cohen's own blend of single-minded scholarship, patience and diplomacy which, though he modestly does not claim it, can be inferred between the lines of this charming story.

Dr Cohen has no objection to the placing of his text in the *Kipling Journal*, and we are pleased to re-publish it, with grateful acknowledgment to him, to Syracuse University Library Associates, and to the editor of the *Courier*. – Ed.]

It is appropriate, to be sure, in Kipling's centennial year, for his works to enjoy new attention. And yet, while much is being published these days about Kipling's writings, the man himself still remains distant and out of reach. We have only one biography of note, and that is the official one [by Charles Carrington (1955) – *Ed.*] We have a single collection of Kipling letters, but that is small [*Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard*, ed. Cohen, 1965, see below]. The key to seeing Kipling the man more clearly lies, of course, in the bulk of his unpublished letters and private papers. But these, we know, are not likely to appear in print for many years. Because original Kipling material is not, as a rule, available for publication, I should like to share with you the story of some rather unusual events that brought me the opportunity of editing the first volume of Kipling letters.

My search for Kipling actually began as part of my search for Rider Haggard, back in 1954. I had just taken my qualifying examination for a Ph.D. at Columbia University, and I was setting out to do research for my dissertation. I had grown interested in Rider Haggard; Columbia had purchased a quantity of Haggard papers when they came up for sale at Sotheby's; and I was well launched on the first critical biography of the storyteller. I was fortunate to receive a Fulbright fellowship, and I devoted the spring of 1954 to preparing for my year abroad. Before leaving for England, I wrote many letters, trying to pave my way to the Haggard papers, and trying to locate all the people who remembered Haggard. The Kipling family was high on my list because I had ample evidence that Kipling and Haggard had been friends; in fact, I already suspected that they consulted each other about their work. In an autobiography that Haggard completed in 1911, fourteen years before he died, he wrote that "among my pleasantest recollections during the last few years are those of my visits to the Kiplings, and one that they paid me here, during which we discussed everything in heaven above and earth beneath." "Kipling and I do not fidget each other," Haggard continued. "Only last year he informed me that he could work as well when I was sitting in the room as [when] he was alone, whereas generally the presence of another person while he was writing would drive him almost mad."

In Kipling's autobiography, *Something of Myself*, written in 1935, the year before he died, I read this:

"When I first met Rider Haggard, I took to him at once, he being of the stamp adored by children and trusted by men at sight; and he could tell tales, mainly against himself, that broke up the [Savile Club] tables." And further on, "Haggard's comings were always a joy to us. . . . Never was a better tale teller, or, to my mind, a man with a

more convincing imagination. We found by accident that each could work at ease in the other's company. So he would visit me, and I him, with work in hand; and between us we could even hatch out tales together, a most exacting test of sympathy."

Another clue I had to convince me that this was a friendship worth looking into was a description of two lots in the Sotheby sale I have already mentioned. Lot 19 reads: "Kipling, R., A series of 12 [autograph letters, signed] and 6 [autograph notes, signed] on letter-cards, 30 pp. 8vo. 1895-1922, to Rider Haggard. An interesting series, advising Haggard in his work, and speaking of his own plans; it mentions his "Recessional", describes his acquisition of [his home] Bateman's at Burwash, etc."

Lot 20 reads thus:

"Kipling, R. A fine series of 7 A.L.Ss., 11 pp, 8vo, 1904-1916, to Rider Haggard, relating to his books, and making suggestions for plots. Mentions titles of ... [many] stories."

I had, of course, urged the Columbia bidder to get those letters at any cost, but he had not got them: no one had. They were withdrawn before the sale took place.

Among the letters I wrote before I left New York in May 1954 were one each to Rider Haggard's two surviving daughters, telling them that I hoped to write a biography of their father, and asking for their help. Their replies were guarded but not hostile. They said they would see me when I arrived in England.

I also wrote to Mrs. George Bambridge, Kipling's daughter and only surviving offspring, explaining my intention and expressing the hope that she too would permit me to call on her at her convenience. I might say that at this early time, the auguries were not good. People in Kipling circles were astonished at my temerity and told me that Mrs. Bambridge was absolutely unapproachable. But I was then a naïve graduate student with a mission. I wrote directly to Mrs. Bambridge, confident that she would reply. She did not.

When I arrived in England, I saw the Haggard family. We got on well enough. They made available what they had in the way of papers, which, after the Sotheby sale, was not really very much, and they agreed that Mrs. Bambridge must have papers relating to Haggard's friendship with Kipling, because they believed that she had bought some of the Kipling letters that had come onto the market. The Haggard sisters went on to say that they did not think it would do me any good

if they gave me a letter introducing me to Mrs Bambridge; they had done that a year earlier for someone writing a critical study of Kipling's works, and he never got to see her. Mrs. Bambridge simply did not encourage anyone to write about her father. And understandably too, they thought, for had not Kipling himself asked, in "The Appeal", that nothing be written about him?

If I have given you delight  
By aught that I have done,  
Let me lie quiet in that night  
Which shall be yours anon:  
And for the little, little span  
The dead are borne in mind,  
Seek not to question other than  
The books I leave behind.

The visit with Haggard's daughters made me doubt seriously, for the first time, that I would ever get to see any Kipling papers. But as I worked away on the Haggard biography all that year, the Kipling problem kept haunting me. I became acquainted with the editor of the *Kipling Journal*, the quarterly published by the Kipling Society [the late Roger Lancelyn Green]. I asked him to put me in touch with Mrs. Bambridge, and he wrote to her about me. I also came to know an eminent Englishman of letters who had written some penetrating Kipling criticism, and he sent Mrs. Bambridge a letter on my behalf. Neither got replies.

Finally, I managed to get a letter of introduction to Professor C.E. Carrington, who was then writing the official Kipling biography. I went to see the distinguished historian in his chambers at Chatham House in St. James's Square. He was cordial, took me on a tour of Chatham House, let me sit in the chair Benjamin Franklin sat in when he visited there, and he even said, "Yes, indeed, if you're doing a biography of Rider Haggard, you ought to have a look at the papers in Wimpole Hall: they are quite revealing." But when I asked Professor Carrington how I might get to see the papers, he shook his head and said, "I don't know: the Kipling papers are simply not available to the public."

A few days later I read in *The Times* that Mrs. Bambridge was suing the United States Government. It appeared that during the war, she had permitted us to build an army hospital on her land near the entrance to Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire; and now she wanted the building removed. But our Army made no sign of leaving, and so she was taking to the courts. Hardly a happy omen for me.

The months passed; autumn gave way to winter, winter to spring.

Soon my year would be over, and I had not got to see Mrs. Bambridge or the Kipling papers.

But in March 1955, something happened that changed all. I had written early in the year to Messrs. A.P. Watt & Son, who had been both Kipling's and Haggard's literary agents, and asked them whether I might have a look at their Rider Haggard files. A secretary had answered by letter and said that Mr. R.P. Watt (the grandson of the great A.P. Watt) dealt with the Haggard account, that he was abroad, and would not be back until the spring. In March, I received a letter from Mr. Watt, asking me to call on him. I went round to Norfolk Street, off the Strand, and found the old building that houses A.P. Watt & Son. The atmosphere in the offices was heavy with must, the clerks wore high starched collars and belonged to another age: one got the impression that electric lights were a fairly recent innovation there.

Mr. Watt himself was pleasant, but he did not talk about Haggard. "You know, I worked with you American chaps in the war, and, taken altogether, you're not a bad lot." On and on we talked, about the difference between English English and American English, about the advantages of driving on the left hand side of the road, and so on.

Then, out of the blue, he said to me, "*Why* do you want to write a book about Rider Haggard?" I mumbled something about Ph.D. requirements, wishing to try my hand at a biography, and I pointed out that no critical biography had yet been written on Haggard. "How much money do you think you'll make on it?" he asked. "Probably not a cent," I said. "In fact, I'll consider myself lucky if I get it published at all."

Then he wanted to know what I had done about getting it published, and I told him that since it was still to be written, I had not thought to do anything. "Would you want us," he asked, "to place it for you after you get it done?"

I was bowled over. I thought of all the great Victorians who battled to have A.P. Watt as their agent. I looked at the books on the shelves before me, books by Churchill, Maugham, Graham Greene. And when I recovered my composure, I told Mr. Watt that I would consider it the greatest compliment imaginable if he would deal with the manuscript after I had written it. "Very well, then," he said, "I think we can arrange for you to have a look at some of the files."

I spent some days working in those offices, and when I was finished, I thought I would push my luck just a little further. I went round to see Mr. Watt again, and told him about my difficulty in getting to see Mrs. Bambridge, and how important I considered those Kipling papers to be. Did he have any suggestion to make? He pondered the problem a minute, and then he asked me to write another letter to Mrs.

Bambridge, and to send it to him; he would send it on to her with a covering letter. I had finally found the magic key, for within a week after I wrote that letter, I received a reply from Mrs. Bambridge, written in her own hand:

Wimpole Hall  
Cambridgeshire  
April 3rd / 55

Dear Mr. Cohen,

I shall be pleased to see you, and discuss the biography of Sir H. Rider Haggard, on which you are engaged.

I suggest that you come down here, either on Friday, April 15th or Wednesday, April 25th, if either of those two dates suits you. Unless you come by car, I suggest that you take the train leaving Kings Cross Station at 11.53 a.m. and arriving at Royston Station at 1.3 p.m.

I will send to meet you at Royston Station and bring you out here for lunch, after which we can discuss your work, and I will do my best to answer your questions.

There are several trains back to London in the afternoon from Royston.

Yours sincerely  
Elsie Bambridge

Needless to say, I was on the 11.53 from King's Cross Station on Friday, April 15th. When I arrived, I was met by a tall, tweedy, secretary-chauffeur. She drove me, in a shiny car, through the Cambridgeshire countryside, past the American Army hospital, through the gates of Wimpole Hall, up a long avenue of trees and into a forecourt at the far end of which stood a magnificent house, which Nikolaus Pevsner calls "without doubt the most spectacular country mansion in Cambridgeshire". The footman showed me into the entrance hall, and then a lady came out of a side, panelled door: she was small, beautifully tailored, and attractive. It was Mrs. Bambridge.

She welcomed me genially, and showed me into a sitting room, where a blazing fire helped thaw the frost.

"Won't you have a glass of sherry before lunch?" she asked. And as we drank, we talked of many things. Had I been to Vermont recently? "You know, Mr. Cohen, I was born in that house in Vermont." "And haven't we had a ghastly winter?" "And isn't it splendid that you're writing a book about Uncle Rider! I've felt for such a long time that someone should write a book about him. Why, you know, he was the

only person who could come and go at our home without an invitation. And no other living soul was allowed into my father's study while he worked there. You do know, don't you, that my father got the idea for *The Jungle Books* from one of Uncle Rider's stories; and my father helped him with his books too."

On and on she went, and I kept quiet, happily trying to juggle notebook, pencil and sherry glass as she talked on about one of her all-time favourites, Rider Haggard: "Why, do you know, when we were children and Uncle Rider was staying the night, we wouldn't go to bed until he came along and told us another story about the Zulus. Oh, how we loved the Zulus!"

We went in to lunch, the three of us, Mrs. Bambridge, her secretary, and I, and the stories continued to pour forth: that Lady Haggard was one of the first women to buy and ride a bicycle; that the Kiplings spent a whole summer in the Haggards' hobby house on the Norfolk coast; that, when the Kiplings first moved into Bateman's in Sussex, Haggard came down regularly to give them good practical farming advice. "In fact," Mrs. Bambridge went on, "Haggard was the only literary man my father really liked – and that was because neither of them really considered himself a literary man."

After lunch Mrs. Bambridge took me for a walk through her park, beautifully landscaped by Capability Brown. We walked and we talked more, but I was keenly aware of the passing time – and the fact that we had not yet got round to the subject of the papers. I mentioned the word *letters* gingerly and under my breath, but Mrs. Bambridge chose to ignore it. I felt that by all the rules of hospitality my stay was running out, and I said something about a 3.50 train back to London. "Oh, but you must stay for tea," she said; "there's a fast train back to London at 5.35." And so I stayed for a lovely tea. But still no word about papers or letters.

At about a quarter to five, when the tea things were being cleared, Mrs. Bambridge finally got round to the subject. "Of course, both my father and Rider Haggard were busy people, and they travelled a lot. Naturally, they wrote many letters to each other. But you know, of course," she said, "my father burned all incoming post when he had finished with it, and I'm afraid I have only one letter from Rider Haggard to my father."

"But what about your father's letters to Rider Haggard: did he keep copies of those?"

"Well, no, not exactly. But I've been able to acquire some of the letters my father wrote, and I have typewritten copies of others. As a matter of fact, there are quite a few papers connected with Rider

Haggard, and when you wrote to say you were coming, we sorted them out." She turned to her secretary and asked her to bring them in.

A minute or two later, the secretary returned with an armful of notebooks, files and envelopes. I could not believe my eyes, and what with the 5.35 train to catch, and these papers sitting before me, I was clearly in the worst dilemma I had ever faced. "Whatever shall I do?" I blurted out: "I can't possibly read these now, can I?" Mrs. Bambridge agreed. Would she permit me to return? I asked. Perhaps I could stay at a nearby inn, and come up to the Hall at designated hours and read the papers.

She thought. "If you took them away with you to London," she said, "you could probably have them photographed, couldn't you?" "Yes," I said, "I certainly could." She turned to her secretary, and asked her to fetch a green leather case from the study. And when I left Wimpole Hall at 5.15, I was clutching what was probably the first lot of Kipling papers ever to leave that house. Naturally I had them all microfilmed, and then sent them back by bonded messenger.

One must remember that I was writing a book about Haggard, not Kipling, and although I had this cache of Kipling material, I could use only bits and pieces of it in the Haggard biography. To be exact, only 26 of the 327 pages of the book deal with Haggard's friendship with Kipling. No letter appears completely, and I could not even allow myself the luxury of reproducing verbatim any of the plot outlines for Haggard's books that, I discovered, Kipling and Haggard had concocted together.

Nevertheless, I was grateful when, after Mrs. Bambridge read the typescript of the Haggard book, she asked me to delete only a single word, and that word was mine, not Haggard's or her father's. Mr. Watt placed the book with an English publisher, and the biography appeared in 1960.

But even after the book was published, there remained the tantalising question of the microfilmed material that I had not used, and that was tucked away in New York, in a file drawer next to the kitchen stove in my Greenwich Village apartment. What was to become of that?

Well, the answer became apparent one day in London, over lunch with my editor. "Where are all those Kipling letters you quoted from?" she asked. So I told her all about them, and about my microfilm copies. She was noticeably pleased, and ordered another bottle of Chablis. Would I consider doing an edition of those letters? she asked. "Yes," I said, "I would, but Mrs. Bambridge has never allowed any of her father's letters to be edited for publication."

Would I try, then, to win Mrs. Bambridge over to the idea? "Yes," I said, I would try. But I knew that it would be difficult to do a book on

a single block of Kipling letters when their opposite numbers, the letters from Haggard, had gone up in flames long years ago. I also knew, however, that Rider Haggard's unpublished diaries still existed, and that they contained numerous accounts of visits with Kipling. By combining the Kipling letters and the appropriate extracts from the Haggard diaries, spanning the thirty-five years that the friendship endured, I could perhaps produce a book with form and substance.

Would Mrs. Bambridge permit me to publish her father's letters to Rider Haggard? I did not know. But this time I knew how to find out. My literary agent was now A.P. Watt & Son; and A.P. Watt & Son could, I knew from experience, perform miracles.

Here is a letter from Mr. Watt, dated May 13, 1960:

Dear Mr. Cohen,

Thank you for your letter of May 7th. Subject to Mrs. George Bambridge seeing and approving the final draft of your book *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard: The Record of a Friendship*, you have her permission. Miss Haggard is at present in Jugoslavia and cannot be reached, but as I understand the situation she gave you permission so far as her father's estate was concerned when you were last over here . . .

The book was published in London five weeks ago, and of all the comments I have received about it, the one, I know, that I shall always value most, brings this story to a close:

Wimpole Hall  
Cambridgeshire  
October 1st, 65

Dear Mr. Cohen,

Many thanks for the R.K.- Rider Haggard book, which I have read again with much pleasure, and think quite excellent. I do hope that you are pleased with it...

Yours sincerely,  
Elsie Bambridge

## SHAPING BOYS INTO MEN

### 'IMPERIAL MANLINESS' IN KIPLING'S *STALKY & CO.*

by CAROL NAYLOR

[This is the text of an interesting talk delivered in 1997 by Mrs Naylor, as a graduate research student at Deakin University, Geelong, Australia, to a meeting of the Australian Branch of the Kipling Society at Soroptimist House, South Yarra, Melbourne. Her research had included a study of the 'construction of masculinities' in British boys' school stories of the late nineteenth century, and this had predictably involved a close scrutiny of one of the best-known books in that *genre*, Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* (1899). She concludes, very positively, that *Stalky & Co.* "is still a work of value" – not merely for its perennial readability as a product of Kipling's "magic and skill as a storyteller", but also for its continuing relevance to some important considerations about the education of the young.

Though Kipling would have found Mrs Naylor's occasional use of the modern terminology of literary criticism puzzling, he would not have quarrelled with her main premise, that it was a recognisable function of Britain's 'public schools' (which of course, despite their misleading name, were and are *private*, fee-charging institutions) to produce young men capable of defending and governing the far-flung Empire. Kipling himself described the 'Stalky' stories as "tracts", and if he were alive today could hardly complain at finding their message evaluated (or even 'critiqued') for their 'construction of imperialist masculinities'.

Mrs Naylor's clear and persuasive analysis impressed her audience; as did an imaginative assortment of photographs (notably of Kipling's school at Westward Ho!, and of the 'Stalky' trio in later life) which she projected as transparencies to accompany her talk. Her text deserves to be more widely available, and I am now (at last) gladly making it so, though it will be (for reasons of space) without her pictures, which I merely specify (in bold print between square brackets) at the points in her narrative where she displayed them. – *Ed.*]

I would like, with the aid of some photographs, to explore the background to *Stalky & Co.*, and to show how Kipling's own schooldays had a bearing on the book.

*Stalky & Co.* is Kipling's collection of tales about a trio of boisterous schoolboys and their escapades at a nineteenth-century English public school. I argue that in this didactic story for children, Kipling creates a myth about boyhood, public schools and empire. The model put forward in *Stalky*, of the exemplary imperial schoolboy, was adapted by Baden-Powell a few years later to promote an ideal of 'frontier

manliness'. The characteristics of 'survivalism', action, and cunning or guile (what Kipling termed 'stalkiness') were harnessed especially by the Boy Scouts among British youth movements at that time, in an effort to bring together national preoccupations with manliness and empire.

Kipling draws on his own experience at the U.S.C. (the United Services College at Westward Ho!, North Devon), to promulgate a myth of the public school as ideal training-ground for the 'Great Game' of imperial mission, at a time when grave concerns were being raised about Britain's imperial power. He also uses and 'critiques' some important interrelated historical and cultural preoccupations of the late Victorian era. He both challenges aspects of education – in particular the public school cult of athleticism – and underscores the importance of the public schools' role in producing well-prepared future administrators of the Empire.

For *Stalky & Co.* promotes a myth of empire – as a *locale* for excitement, adventure and action; and Kipling's message about imperial boyhood is rendered particularly potent because of his use of three ingredients in the text. *First* is his choice of the enclosed world of the boarding-school as a setting, with its defined boundaries between home and school. *Second*, his subject-matter is the adolescent schoolboy, who operates in a kind of 'demilitarised' zone between childhood and adulthood, where moral questions about life are paramount. And *third*, the devious adventures of Stalky and his friends at 'the Coll.' are linked in the text to daring deeds on the North-West Frontier of India, whence Old Boys of the school return to relate feats of heroism. It is made clear in the text that the cunning and survival-skills used by the eponymous trio, both to cause and to get out of trouble at school, become useful in the 'real world' – that is, the Empire.

These elements, combined with the topical nature of the stories, Kipling's own brand of humour, and his undoubted public popularity, contributed to a book that appealed to both boys and men, children and adults. *Stalky & Co.* has remained popular, and never been out of print: it was re-issued in 1987 as a World's Classic – [a useful edition introduced and edited by Isabel Quigly, which contains five Stalky stories which are not in the standard London (Macmillan) and New York (Doubleday & McClure) editions.] However, just as some critics (now and at the time) have seen it as symbolising harmless fun, typical of adolescent fantasy, others have registered outrage at the 'savagery' and 'brutality' of the stories.

What the critics were horrified about (though not everyone agreed with them) was that 'stalkiness' undermined the strong public school

moral code of honour and loyalty. Undoubtedly a subversive text (in that it obliquely criticised the public schools' lack of preparedness for war, and incidentally encouraged an avalanche of stories about public schools written in a critical vein) it nevertheless had a worrying tendency to promote a myth about imperial masculinity, where cruelty and mercenary tactics are part of the code in fashioning boys into men. As Jacynth Hope-Simpson puts it, "Kipling wanted to show high-spirited boys as they really were. Did he succeed, or are his heroes, as H.G. Wells claimed, just 'mucky little sadists?'"<sup>1</sup>

Now, I will explore in more detail the background to this controversial book, to place it in its historical context. In 1898, Kipling wrote a series of stories about schoolboys, which first appeared in various magazines, but in 1899 were published as a complete book, *Stalky & Co.* The timing of the publication is significant. Kipling had long been anxious about the fate of the British Empire; and his talks with Cecil Rhodes in South Africa in the preceding year, coupled with the onset of the Boer War, only served to reinforce his anxieties. The answer to this crisis, he believed, should come from 'education'. Like most of the late-Victorian governing class, Kipling believed strongly in the role of the public school in producing men to lead the Empire, both as soldiers and administrators.

This view is borne out in a passage in "The Brushwood Boy" (1895, written some three years before *Stalky & Co.*, and collected in *The Day's Work*) where George Cottar, as head boy, carefully delineates the border between home and school:

Home was a far-away country, full of ponies and fishing, and shooting, and men-visitors who interfered with one's plans; but school was his real world, where things of vital importance happened, and crises arose that must be dealt with promptly and quietly.<sup>2</sup>

Kipling's ideology was propelled by a strong conviction that it is the boys of the present who are to become tomorrow's leaders of men; but he believed that the public schools would have to change, for these young boys to become the effective men who were needed to hold firm the crumbling bastions of empire. *Stalky & Co.* was Kipling's deliberately didactic message (albeit couched in humour) by which he was able to suggest a radically new ideal type of public school imperial boy. Boys, he felt, needed to be toughened up and shown how to use their wits and initiative, rather than to be preoccupied with school and house loyalty, and games-playing – the norm in the public schools of the time. Kipling's book then was written with a dual purpose. Using

his own experience of his schooldays at the U.S.C. at Westward Ho! in Devon, he aimed to amuse and entertain children, but at the same time he had a specific message. At first reading, it does appear to be a story about rebellious schoolboys, and it can of course be read at such.

As the book falls within the *genre* of popular school stories of the time, I will digress a little at this point to touch on the nineteenth-century school story, and to highlight the marked differences between *Stalky & Co.* and the popular school story from the 1880s, with its own formula and stereotypical characters. The school story had come into vogue from the mid-nineteenth century with *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) by Thomas Hughes; but had increasingly, towards the end of the century, moved away from an ideal of bourgeois Christian manhood with its sentimental, earnestly moral and intellectual attitudes. Instead, it had become – in an imperial age, and as athleticism grew in popularity – to be much more action-based. The dominant ideal was 'manly' and athletic, combining Christian principles with a social Darwinian instinct for survival. As the vehicle for his imperial message Kipling chose, with good reason, a highly popular literary *sub-genre*.

This was a particularly English and idiosyncratic kind of book, and was in its heyday when *Stalky & Co.* was published. The period 1880 to 1940 saw a profusion of boys' papers and comics; and school novels appeared in print at the average rate of one every fortnight. They were immensely popular, reaching across the social classes in Britain, and were closely allied to ideologies of manhood.

However, *Stalky & Co.* went against the grain of mainstream school stories, most of which were happy to reinforce the *status quo*. *Stalky* set out to subvert school authority, in rebellion against public school norms, and also against the norms of the school story of the day.

Patrick Scott comments that Kipling undermines the predictable plot of the standard school story: "the vital school match, the school bully, the house that had struck bad days and needed to be pulled together, the dangerous expedition to the mountain, the unknown thief."<sup>3</sup> *Stalky & Co.* are loyal neither to the house nor to the good of the school; nor do they display conventional leadership qualities.

George Orwell, in his *Horizon* essay, sums up the stories of that period:

The year is 1910 – or 1940, but it is all the same. You are at Greyfriars, a rosy-cheeked boy of fourteen in posh tailor-made clothes, sitting down to tea in your study on the Remove passage after an exciting game of football which was won by an odd goal in the last half-minute. There is a cosy fire in the study, and outside the wind is whistling. The ivy clusters thickly around the old grey

stones. . . . Everything is safe, solid and unquestionable. Everything will be the same for ever and ever.<sup>4</sup>

Kipling's *Stalky & Co.* was a challenge to that notion of safety and security, which had been – and continued for some time to be – part of the *genre*.

We should not perhaps be too surprised that Kipling's text was critical and innovatory, since everything about Kipling tended towards the maverick, and I think that as I comment on some pictures you will agree that they illustrate the fact that he was no typical student; and that his old school, on which the book is modelled, was no ordinary English public school; and that *Stalky & Co.* is certainly an atypical school story.

The first photo [**Ph 1**] shows Kipling in 1881-2, in a peer group of about a dozen boys at the U.S.C, where he was from 1878 to 1882. He had arrived aged twelve, emotionally battered after a miserable six years with foster-parents at Southsea, where he had been brought back from India and placed by his parents at the age of six. By the time he entered the U.S.C. he had experienced a breakdown, and his eyesight had deteriorated badly. With his thick spectacles he had taken on the nickname 'Gig-lamps', shortened to 'Gigs' or 'Gigger'. The picture reveals that he was more physically developed than his peers, with a thick moustache which sprouted early in his time at the U.S.C.

Next [**Ph 2 & 3**] are pictures of the school – which Kipling described as "that long white barrack by the sea". It consisted of a row of converted seaside lodging-houses, five storeys high, and was not a typical public school of the time. As Janet Adam Smith says, it had "no ancient buildings, no old pieties, no sweetness and light: all was raw, functional and bracing."<sup>5</sup> Founded in 1874 by a consortium of service officers to provide a cut-price education for their sons, its emphasis was on the coaching of boys for the Army Entrance exam, rather than the turning out of Christian gentlemen, or 'muscular Christians'. And since it was in direct competition with London crammers who allowed a degree of freedom, the older boys were allowed to smoke.

The school was spartan but healthy; it had open, curtainless dormitories, and an emphasis on strenuous activity. The headmaster, Cornell Price, believed in sending the boys to bed dead tired. There were games, paper-chases, and bathing – either off the 'Pebble Ridge' or at the cold, open-air, sea-water Nassau Baths [**Ph 4**]. The narrator in "The Brushwood Boy" summed up the underlying ethos: "For the rest, the school was not encouraged to dwell on its emotions, but rather to keep in hard condition, to avoid false quantities, and to enter the army direct, without the help of the expensive London crammer, under

whose roof young blood learns too much."

Just as the U.S.C. was no ordinary school. Cornell Price [Ph. 5] was no ordinary Headmaster. 'Uncle Crom', as he was known to Kipling, was a family friend. He was the anti-imperialist, anti-Jingo friend of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. It was Rudyard Kipling's aunt Georgiana, wife of the painter Edward Burne-Jones, who suggested the U.S.C. to the Kipling family; and Kipling, throughout his childhood, paid regular holiday visits to the Burne-Jones London home in North End Road. At the school, Price's study boasted Pre-Raphaelite reproductions and Rossetti drawings, and he owned an extensive library, to which he gave Kipling unlimited access. Price was hugely influential in Kipling's adolescent years and beyond: Kipling, for ever grateful, dedicated *Stalky & Co.* to him.

Here [Ph. 6] is a picture of Kipling shortly before he left school. In those four years at the U.S.C. under Crom Price's tutelage, he had become a well-read boy of letters; had taken part in amateur dramatics; and had become editor of the school *Chronicle*. But the next portrait of Kipling [Ph 7] is the oil painting by Philip Burne-Jones, done in 1899, the year *Stalky & Co.* was published, and now in the National Portrait Gallery. It shows Kipling the mature artist, the dreamer.

It had been a combination of sometimes conflicting impulses and influences which moulded this man, who seventeen years after leaving the U.S.C. had become the author of *Stalky & Co.* He was at the same time Kipling the gifted story-teller for children, Kipling the enthusiastic imperialist, Kipling the educator, and the Kipling who celebrated self-reliance and meaningful choice, yet was pessimistic and fatalistic about the decline of the Empire. And underpinning all of this, together with other childhood experiences, were his formative years at the U.S.C. – where the pragmatic and unsentimental existed side by side with the literary and artistic.

These contradictions are at work in *Stalky & Co.* As the practical imperialist he is concerned in *Stalky* with the turning of boys into men. He rejects the moral idealism of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, in which Hughes set out to recommend a "brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman – a Christian and a Gentleman". *Stalky & Co.* aims to produce a practical and resourceful defender of Empire. In the series of boisterous tales, the trio of schoolboy heroes – Stalky [Ph. 8, showing General Dunsterville], M'Turk [Ph. 9, showing G.C. Beresford in later life] and Beetle, who was Kipling – with their daring escapades outwit local land-owners, school bullies, prefects and members of the staff, like "Foxy" [Ph. 10, showing Sergeant George Schofield].

Boys are shown as Kipling felt they should be depicted, as wild, untamed creatures capable of killing cats, cooking sparrows on pen-

nibs over gas-jets, and the like. Always their motive is revenge in the name of a cause; and Stalky and his friends always appear as injured innocents. They manipulate, in each episode, a situation where two groups will unwittingly become enemies; and on each occasion the three boys retreat to watch the consequences of their actions, and to gloat over their own cleverness or 'stalkiness'. (The term "stalky", incidentally, was College slang for "clever, well-considered and wily as applied to plans of action".)<sup>7</sup>

Initiative, it is constantly implied in the book, is allowable to the point where rules can be broken and bounds exceeded in the name of action; and on discovery, punishment has to be accepted. These unwritten rules give room for the trio to manoeuvre; and 'stalkiness' and initiative are at times closely aligned with acts of vandalism, bullying and brutality.

The tone of the book is deliberately unsentimental and practical: there is nothing sanctimonious about these heroes. A new master is mocked for reading two still popular school stories : Dean Farrar's *Eric, or Little By Little* (1858), and *St. Winifred's, or The World of School* (1862). Of the latter, M'Turk says scornfully, "They spent all their spare time stealing at St. Winifred's, when they weren't praying or getting drunk at pubs."<sup>8</sup>

But Kipling the artist, man of letters and storyteller *par excellence*, knows in *Stalky & Co.* how to draw in the reader by touching on the very essence of boyhood. The first story in standard editions of the book, entitled "In Ambush" – though not the first one written in the series – was perhaps chosen because of its evocation of the world of the young adolescent. It begins :

In summer all right-minded boys built huts in the furze-hill behind the College – little lairs whittled out of the heart of the prickly bushes, full of stumps, odd root-ends, and spikes, but, since they were strictly forbidden, palaces of delight. And for the fifth summer in succession, Stalky, M'Turk, and Beetle (this was before they reached the dignity of a study) had built, like beavers, a place of retreat and meditation, where they smoked.<sup>9</sup>

It is in these and other lyrical descriptions of the North Devon countryside that we glimpse the developed artistic sensibility. As early as 1893, when he wrote the essay "An English School", which foreshadows the use of his schooldays in *Stalky*, he describes the setting of the U.S.C. in the following way:

It stood within two miles of Amyas Leigh's house at Northam,

overlooking the Burroughs and the Pebble-ridge, and the mouth of the Torridge whence the *Rose* sailed in search of Don Guzman. From the front dormitory windows, across the long rollers of the Atlantic, you could see Lundy Island and the Shutter Rock, where the Santa Caterina galleon cheated Amyas out of his vengeance by going ashore. If you have ever read Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* you will remember how all these things happened.<sup>10</sup>

The literary references, as in this passage, are an innovation in the boys' school story, and a unique feature of *Stalky & Co.* References to Homer, Horace, Shakespeare and the Bible, together with Latin phrases and French quotations, are liberally sprinkled in the text. They serve to highlight the schism between Kipling the schoolboy aesthete and the anti-intellectual pragmatist.

Returning now to the impulse behind the book, we know that Kipling wrote it as a didactic story, because he stated in his autobiography that he had conceived it as a series of 'tracts' or 'parables'. He said: "There came to me the idea of beginning some tracts or parables on the education of the young. These, for reasons honestly beyond my control, turned themselves into a series of tales called *Stalky & Co.*"<sup>11</sup>

The passive phrases, "beyond my control" and "turned themselves into", are curious – suggesting an impulse that is somehow divinely orchestrated or God-given. Couched in these terms, it suggests almost a sense of religious zeal. Both Kipling's maternal and paternal grandfathers were ministers; and the book contains both biblical quotations and Old Testament themes of retribution. Angus Wilson quotes from a letter from Kipling to his cousin Florence Macdonald, in which he says that "Three generations of Wesleyan ministers . . . lie behind me – the pulpit streak will come out."<sup>12</sup>

In that same passage of his autobiography, Kipling added that "My very dear Headmaster, Cormell Price. . . said. . . that my tracts would be some time before they came to their own." These words did prove prophetic, since, with its innovatory techniques and impulse, *Stalky & Co.* was in many ways ahead of its time. And that Kipling valued this text is clear from a revealing inscription that he wrote many years later, on the flyleaf of a signed copy of *Stalky & Co.*: "This is not intended to be merely a humorous book, but it is an Education, a work of the greatest value. Rudyard Kipling at Inglemere, Ascot. Sunday 25th Jan. 1925."<sup>13</sup>

To conclude, I think that *Stalky & Co.*, almost a hundred years on, is still a work of value. Although we no longer need to mould boys to become imperial men, we continue to debate – in educational circles, and society in general – questions about masculinity and authority, and

what are acceptable models of behaviour for young people, not least the young adolescent male.

It was Kipling's special magic as a storyteller for children [Ph 12, a photograph of Kipling sitting on the deck of a ship, telling a story to a rapt group of children], coupled with the fact that he himself retained a sense of boyishness in his own adult life, that has enabled an idea, about initiative and resourcefulness, to be propelled from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century, and certainly beyond.

Ignoring the dangerous side of the Stalky message – which was to suggest war and empire as sites of adventure and heroism – the Scout movement, 'Outward Bound', and youth educators worldwide, continue to work with, tap into, and channel the idealism, enthusiasm, humour, and enjoyment of *camaraderie* that are typical of the adolescent male. By tracing Stalky's influence over time, we are perhaps made aware of both the possibilities and the pitfalls involved in the literary and artistic representation of the business of fashioning boys into men.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Jacynth Hope-Simpson (Ed.), *Tales in School: an anthology of boarding-school life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), p 10.
2. Rudyard Kipling, "The Brushwood Boy", collected in *The Day's Work* (London: Macmillan, 1898), p 367.
3. Patrick Scott, "The Schooling of John Bull : Form and Moral in Talbot Baines Reed's Boys' Stories & Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*" (*Victorian Newsletter*, Fall, 1981).
4. George Orwell, "Boys' Weeklies" in *Collected Essays* (London: Mercury Books, 1966), p 103.
5. Janet Adam Smith, "Boy of Letters" in *Rudyard Kipling: the man, his work and his world*, ed. John Gross (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), p 8.
6. Rudyard Kipling, "The Brushwood Boy" (as at note 2), p 367.
7. Explanatory note by Isabel Quigly in [the complete] *Stalky & Co.* (Oxford U.P., World's Classics edition, 1987), p 298. N.B. all page references to *Stalky & Co.* in these Notes are to that edition.
8. Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, p 62.
9. Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, p 29.

10. Rudyard Kipling, "An English School", in *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides* (London : Macmillan, 1923), p 255.
11. Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself* (London: Macmillan, 1937), pp 134-5.
12. Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1977), p 7.
13. From volume 1 (ed. Roger Lancelyn Green) of *The Readers' Guide to Rudyard Kipling's Work* (privately published for the Kipling Society, 1961), p 395.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The principal works consulted are shown in the Notes & References above. To these should be added:

Robert J. Kirkpatrick, *Bullies, Beaks and Flannelled Fools*, an annotated bibliography of Boys' School Fiction, 1742-1990, self-published by R. Kirkpatrick, London, 1990.

Also Isabel Quigly, *Heirs of Tom Brown: the English School Story* (Oxford U.P., 1984).

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

The photographs which Mrs Naylor projected as accompaniment to her talk, were mostly copied from :

*Rudyard Kipling: the man, his work and his world*, ed. John Gross (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972).

*United Services College 1874-1911*. A short account of Rudyard Kipling's old school at Westward Ho! by Major H.A. Tapp (privately published, Aldershot, 1933).

'O Beloved Kids' (Rudyard Kipling's Letters to his Children), ed. Elliot L. Gilbert (London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983).

## BOOK REVIEW

by HUGH BROGAN

[Professor Hugh Brogan, of the Department of History at the University of Essex, delivered a most interesting talk on "The Great War and Rudyard Kipling" to a Kipling Society audience in February 1998, and it was published in our issue of June 1998, at pages 18-34.

All who heard or read it will understand why I thought of Professor Brogan when I referred to a recent anthology of the "poetry and experience" of that war, in a Library notice at page 61 of the *Journal* for June 2000. The book was *Minds at War*, edited by David Roberts, and published in 1996 in the U.K. by Saxon Books, and reissued in paperback in 1998 for £13.99.

The book seemed to me, on a casual perusal, to be strongly prejudiced against Kipling, and I wrote that it was "controversial", and merited "an authoritative review". I am glad to say that Professor Brogan later consented to review it for us. Here below is what he wrote. – *Ed.*]

At present there are, I think, four schools of thought where war is concerned. Pacifists hold that war is the worst of all human evils, both in itself and in its consequences, and nothing – not the invasion of Belgium, the mass slaughter of the Jews, or national self-defence – can make it either right or rational. Militarists, when they do not topple into fascism, accept war as an inevitable aspect of human life, not without its redeeming features; see it as a legitimate instrument of public policy; and insist on the citizen's duty to rally to the national standard when called on to do so.

The third school (to which I myself belong) is much the largest, accepting that some wars are necessary, and some are well conducted, but holding that others are not. The insuperable difficulty lies in deciding which is which. Debates about particular wars or campaigns will, according to this school, inevitably be endless and inconclusive. In practical terms, war should be avoided when possible, so great are its horrors and dangers; but sometimes the guns must fire.

The fourth school is sentimental. It adopts the rhetoric of pacifism without its logic; it abuses militarists without trying to understand them; and it tries to bounce the honest doubters into accepting its assertions, simply by the noise it makes. Closely examined, the beliefs of this school boil down to one: that the First World War was uniquely evil and unpleasant, and the rest of history need not be considered. Mr David Roberts is a devoted member of this school.

Nothing matters to him except British (he calls it English) suffering on the Western Front. So it is not surprising that his literary and

historical judgments are worthless, and that the anthology which he has built upon them would be worthless too, were it not for the artistic merit of much of the writing which he includes. But the work of, say, Owen, Sassoon and Rosenberg does not justify Mr Roberts's enterprise, which will all too probably mislead the young and ignorant.

His handling of Kipling amounts to wilful misrepresentation. He reads the solemn and complex "Hymn before Action"(1896) –

Ah, Mary pierced with sorrow,  
Remember, reach and save  
The soul that comes to-morrow  
Before the God that gave . . .

as merely associating God with England's conquests; and he omits to explain the context of "A Song of the White Men" (1899). He prints "For All We Have and Are" without direct comment, but plainly thinks that it is nothing but empty militarist propaganda (a word he is very fond of). He picks up Kipling's ferocious anti-Germanism, and finds "A Dead Statesman" apt to his purposes; and that is all. The vast bulk of Kipling's writing about the war, in all its variety, is simply ignored; no prose is quoted or mentioned. This is misrepresentation by snippets.

I would be more indignant, if it were not Mr Roberts's universal method. Bernard Shaw, whom he favours, fares even worse. He is quoted half a dozen times, but never at any length – perhaps because he was an argumentative fellow, and Mr Roberts is afraid of argument. What he wants to do, as an old-fashioned socialist, is to persuade us all to vote for Ramsay Macdonald; and nothing can be allowed to qualify or complicate the drift of his propaganda (for that, ironically, is what it is).

Mr Roberts is not reliable. He says that Kipling was "Director of Propaganda to the British Colonies", which I cannot confirm from any biography. Housman's contempt for anthologies would have been deepened by the dog's-dinner made of the lineation of "Here Dead We Lie". All theatres of war except the Western Front are totally ignored (not even Shaw-Stewart's wonderful poem on Achilles is included). There is almost no representation of the writings of other nations, except for two extracts from the German novelist Remarque (of course) and a poem by the American 'e.e. Cummings' – no Hemingway. The time is long past for such 'Little Englandism', but Mr Roberts lets nothing stand in his tendentious way.

Almost any other anthology of First World War poetry is preferable to this one: Brian Gardner's *Up The Line To Death* (1964), for instance, or the Hibberd & Onions *Poetry of the Great War* (1986). But Roberts can be recommended to all who want their prejudices confirmed. •

## KIPLING, JOYCE AND THE 'BITCHED LINE'

by DAVID H. STEWART

[Professor David Stewart, late of the Texas A. and M. University, now retired and living in Montana, needs little introduction to our regular readers. He has contributed a miscellany of pieces to the *Kipling Journal* in recent years. He writes both authoritatively and entertainingly – with a lightly blended presentational style which matches the criteria by which the *Journal*, ideally, is guided.

I now have pleasure in reprinting, with grateful acknowledgment to the *Victorian Newsletter*, a stimulating article of his which first appeared long ago – in its issue of the Fall of 1988 – but which has not, I think, attracted the attention it deserves as a contribution to the study of Kipling. Professor Stewart characteristically said to me, about this essay : "It is about 50% pure mischief. I subscribe to William Faulkner's opinion, that Joyce was struck by divine fire, and it consumed him." – *Ed.*]

Those familiar with James Joyce's biography by Richard Ellmann will recall that Joyce praised Rudyard Kipling: "I believe that the three writers of the nineteenth century who had the greatest natural talent were D'Annunzio, Kipling and Tolstoy – it's strange that all three had semi-fanatic ideas about religion or about patriotism." Joyce believed that "*Plain Tales from the Hills* showed more promise than any other contemporary writer's youthful work. But he feels that its author did not fulfil that promise."<sup>1</sup>

Made in the 1930s, this judgment represents Joyce's considered opinion; but of course by that time the literary establishment had closed ranks against Kipling. It is unlikely that Joyce read his later work. It is probable that he was merely echoing the enthusiasm for *Plain Tales* he had recorded to his brother back in 1907<sup>2</sup>.

By contrast, Arnold Bennett declared in 1897 that Kipling was "not an artist at all. And especially he is not an artist with words. I have never (in his prose work) found a trace of the artist's passion for words, and loving care over them."<sup>3</sup> Bennett's opinion is typical of the twentieth-century literary establishment, but today we recognise the superiority of Joyce's opinion, because we have access to Kipling's autobiography, and some of his manuscript revisions. There is no longer any question about his "passion for words", though most critics would claim that he used them in the service of bad causes.

Joyce's approval suggests that Kipling's idiom satisfied the Master Modernist of prose, whereas Bennett found Kipling alien. This seems odd, because conventional wisdom links Kipling with Bennett rather than with Joyce, as a Victorian realist with tinges of romanticism, not a fabulator of texts.

If we remember the prophetic strain in Kipling's work, we may wish to revise conventional wisdom. He not only affirmed old-fashioned values, he anticipated the consequences (*dire* consequences, he thought) of mass media, of socialism, of uncurbed technology, of cultural *anomie*. He had a poor opinion of most twentieth-century literature because it dramatised the death of values dear to him; but this did not prevent him from understanding that artifice is the precondition of all literature.

As craftsmen, Kipling and Joyce were on the same side. We can demonstrate this by their reactions to lines of "bitched print". The issue may seem quaint, if not trivial, but it sheds light on each writer's relationship with texts during the period in literary history when mass literacy and triumphant print were causing a crisis, the dimensions of which we are only beginning to recognise.

Scholars define the crisis in terms of the relationship between oral and literate modes of communication. Whereas one critic sees them as two halves of an equation; another places them in symbiotic relationship; while still others note a tension or conflict between them.<sup>4</sup> However related, the two modes caught Kipling's and Joyce's attention. Each author saw clearly that print was an active ingredient in (not a passive conveyor of) the literary transaction between the writer/speaker and the reader/hearer.

Joyce often receives credit for first exploiting, if not discovering, the dramatic potential of the print medium. To be sure, writers as varied as Cervantes, the emblematic poets, Swift and Sterne toyed with print and exposed its ambiguities as part of the story-telling process. But Hugh Kenner established the widely accepted view that it was Joyce who fully grasped the implications of print as an actor in the literary process.<sup>5</sup> In *The Mechanic Muse* Kenner provides a "footnote" to *Ulysses* 16.1257. It reads: ".) **eatondph 1/8 ador dorador douradora.**" [*sic*] Here Joyce "was trying for a plausible 'line of bitched type' in a newspaper, and it's one of the few things he didn't get exactly right."

Joyce should have written "etaoin shrldu" immediately after some typographical error. The keyboard layout on the Mergenthaler linotype located these most frequently used letters in the left columns of keys, and the operator used them to complete a botched line with nonsense that proof-readers could easily see and remove. (The corresponding line of 'English' on a standard typewriter is "qwerty".)

One may conjecture that when Joyce's visual memory failed, his ear took over and provided a melodious "douradora" for an unpronounceable "shrldu". A proof-reader, working visually, would never do this.

The point to be made (and the point that Kenner makes) is that the line of "bitched type" is an emblem of the "age of transparent technology", of the ascendance of visual over audible language, that broke the old illusion of the story-teller's "voice", and made the very act of composition problematical, at least to a writer as sensitive to change as Joyce.

Kenner traces the problem to the seventeenth-century abolition of rhetoric and substitution of a "plain style" heralded by Thomas Sprat (1635-1713) and the Royal Society. The ideal was "so many *Things*, almost in an equal number of *Words*." This is a grave mistake because "the real language of men is chameleonlike; words refuse to mean what they ought to, and a culture which does not observe this is a culture in decay".<sup>6</sup> (*Pace* Sprat, Wordsworth and Symbolists such as Arthur Symons!)

Now Kipling, like Joyce, was acutely aware that good prose is not plain talk but high artifice. His many portraits of the artist are similar to Joyce's in that both writers seek to blend the priestly visionary with the humble craftsman. The grand goal of making words that (in Kipling's phrase)<sup>7</sup> "became alive and walked up and down in the hearts of all . . . hearers" could be achieved only by mundane drudgery with the flawed implements of language, especially print.

Elsewhere I have argued that Kipling wrote his finest fiction by ear rather than by eye; yet in some ways, Kipling is the last author whom one would think of as oral rather than literate. After all, he apprenticed for seven years as a journalist. Even before he joined the news staff in Lahore, he apparently learned to read type "upside down and backwards" (if the Stalky tale called "The Last Term" is trustworthy).

He wrote during the high tide of European literacy. Only during the last half of his life did radio and film challenge print; and only after his death did television and computers reveal the possibility of "post-literacy". His news reporting in India reveals that he was a typical hyper-literate journalist writing for an audience that read quickly and silently. In "The Man who would be King" (1888) he records the cub-reporter's sense of being a cog in the machinery of international journalism. Reality stops at the door of the press office, within which "there were no Kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper". Print seems to blot out reality utterly, or to create a counterfeit reality.

He was fascinated by high-speed typesetting and the process of zinc-etching that he discovered during his first American tour.<sup>8</sup> The surest sign of his sensitivity to the visual impact of texts is the alacrity with which he welcomed illustrations, especially his father's. There is also his own readiness to supply graphic supplements. We see this in the

elaborate ornamentation of his early manuscript notebooks of verse. We see it in the drawings he added to the *Just So Stories*.

It was in 1887 that Kipling anticipated Joyce's preoccupation with print (or *misprint*) in *Ulysses* 16.1257 – in a manner that would have delighted the younger author. An article called "An Important Discovery" in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, of 17 August 1887<sup>9</sup>, begins with a Punjabi compositor's mangled "rough proof: "The Poligs of the Oern vent in dugard to the Brounicinl is the colic of the unscrifulouse Gawler."

Calling himself "the Reader", Kipling first turns this typographical nightmare into the sense it had when he originated the sentence: "The policy of the Government in regard to the Provincial Contract is the policy of the unscrupulous lawyer,' and behold [continues "the Reader"], with a mere turn of the wrist, [the compositor] had glorified, and enriched with the wealth of an exuberant Orientalism that simple sentence, till it stood forth a gem, or rather a collection of gems!"

Next "the Reader" speculates about what George Meredith might have woven from "Oern Vent" in *The Shaving of Shagpat*; or what some writer "of the American school" might have done with "Unscrifulouse Gawler", perhaps a "ghoulodemoniacal, triple Quilpian, Jekyll-and-Hydeous character." But then he realises that he has discovered the secret of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*. Carroll must have seen the rough proof of a very vilely written poem. Perhaps he was enchanted by the value of misprints and made the printer drunk.

He therefore must unreconstruct Carroll's deconstructed verse. He translates Carroll's "Jabberwocky" back into standard language.

"Twas brillig and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe. . .

"Bearing that in mind," Kipling (still "the Reader") continues, "read this":

" 'Tis fitting Arthur slight thy love.  
Did gyve and gin bind in thy mate?"  
Ah! Memory wreathes the barren groves  
And the worn paths of fate!

"A word of explanation ["the Reader" goes on] is necessary. The first two lines, you will see, are addressed by some happy girl, rich in

Arthur's love, to a proud and passionate woman with a past, a widow, or a mistress betrayed if the allusion to 'gyve and gin' have any meaning. Hear the latter's wailing protest against the hardships of Destiny that fills the last two lines. The memory of those fair days when yet she was all in all to Arthur drives her to meet inevitable scorn from Arthur's bride. On this splendidly dramatic situation the key-note of the verses is struck, and the pitch of passion is sustained throughout. You may, as "the Reader" did, reconstruct it for yourself."

We would pay little attention to this typographic spoof, were it not for Joyce – or rather for Hugh Kenner's pursuit of Joyce's print-bound imagination through a lino-type operator's bitched line. "Etaoin shrdlu" leads us back to Kipling's joke, and reminds us that he and Joyce had the wit to laugh at the stresses and dilemmas that print posed for the story-teller. In Kipling's article, "the Reader" claims that "had Carroll not been first... I could have made something of Oern Vent – an epic, perhaps." But it was Joyce, not Kipling, who made epics out of morphemic Jabberwocky.

That both men actually tried to *hear* typographical errors suggests a shared trait that may explain an affinity between them. The deadening influence of print infected the novel with sclerosis from 1870 on. Except for regional fiction that relied on dialect, prose no longer invited oral performance.

But Kipling and Joyce, for all their sensitivity to print and to visual effects, summon readers to speak and listen. That is why they are both valuable for sharpening reading skill. Their "messages", of course, differ radically, in part because Joyce capitulated to print, while Kipling remained amused by it.

#### LIST OF WORKS CITED

Bennett, Arnold, ed. James Hepburn, *The Letters of Arnold Bennett* (New York: Oxford UP, 1968).

Ellmann, Richard, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983).

Kenner, Hugh, *The Mechanic Muse* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987).

Kenner, Hugh, *The Stoic Comedians: Flaubert, Joyce and Beckett* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

*Kipling, Interviews and Recollections* (ed. Harold Orel, 2 vols., Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1983. Also London: Macmillan, 1983).

*Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches, 1884-1888* (ed. Thomas Pinney, New York: Schocken Books, 1986. Also London: Macmillan, 1986).

Stewart, David, "Kipling's *Kim*: Rehearsals and Echoes", *Journal of Narrative Technique* 17 (Winter 1985), pp 52-68.

Stewart, David, "Orality in Kipling's *Kim*", *Journal of Narrative Technique* 15 (Winter 1983), pp 47-57.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Ellmann, p 661 n.
2. Ellmann, p 235.
3. Bennett, *Letters* 2, pp 77-78.
4. The three positions are exemplified by (i) Eric Havelock, (ii) John H. Fisher and (iii) Walter J. Ong and Jacques Derrida.
5. Kenner's *Stoic Comedians*, pp 30-66.
6. Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse*, p 131.
7. From Kipling's speech on "Literature", delivered at a Royal Academy dinner in 1906, and collected in *A Book of Words*.
8. Kipling, *Interviews and Recollections*, ed. Orel, vol. 2, pp 190, 194.
9. *Kipling's India* (ed. Pinney), pp 254-57.

---

#### KIPLING SOCIETY FINANCES

For the Treasurer's Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 1999, as presented at the Annual General Meeting in July 2000, see pages 80 and 81.

KIPLING SOCIETY

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1999

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	1999		1998	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Subscriptions	12,047		12,007	
Overseas Branches (2)	3,396		532	
Bank interest	1,238		1,987	
Other Income (3)	<u>758</u>		<u>1,160</u>	
		17,439		15,685
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Print and despatch of <i>Journal</i>	11,926		10,491	
Lectures and meetings	922		691	
Library	123		229	
Administration (4)	2,854		1,826	
Website set up/maintenance	1,215		–	
Depreciation (5)	<u>230</u>		<u>255</u>	
		<u>17,270</u>		<u>13,492</u>
Surplus for year		<u>£169</u>		<u>£2,193</u>

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**

1. These accounts are prepared on the accrual basis.
2. The Branches of the Society in the USA and Australia make contributions in accordance with Rule 17.
3. Includes miscellaneous sums from advertising, sale of *Journals* and copying.
4. The Society employs no paid staff and has no permanent office. All overheads, professional fees and running expenses are allocated to the heading of 'Administration'.
5. Fixed assets are depreciated over 5 years at 20% per annum pro rata except the Library bookcases which are depreciated at 10% pro rata.

KIPLING SOCIETY

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1999

## BALANCE SHEET

	1999		1998	
	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Library, including additions		14,555		14,382
Office Equipment – cost	8,497		8,497	
Depreciation	<u>(6,914)</u>	1,583	<u>(6,684)</u>	1,813
		16,138		16,195
Investment:				
COIF Fixed Interest Fund		20,000		–
		36,138		16,195
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Cash at Bank and in hand	30,304		30,256	
Debtors	<u>1,302</u>		<u>1,490</u>	
	31,606		31,746	
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
Creditors	<u>(5,765)</u>		<u>(1,131)</u>	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		25,841		30,615
Net Assets		<u>£61,979</u>		<u>£46,810</u>
<b>RESERVES</b>				
Balance at 1 January		46,810		44,617
Legacy		15,000		–
Surplus for year		<u>169</u>		<u>2,193</u>
Balance at 31 December		<u>£61,979</u>		<u>£46,810</u>

6. Payments including reimbursement of expenses were made during the year to Trustees: Mrs B.G. Schreiber £36; J.W.M. Smith £1,187; G.H. Webb £200; R.C. Ayers £362; J.F. Slater £186; J. Radcliffe £1,215.

7. The market value of the units was at 31 December 1999 £19,521.

**SIGNATORIES**

Note: The signatories were R.A. Bissolotti (Honorary Treasurer) and J.W.M. Smith (Honorary Secretary).

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

For the Report on the Kipling Society's Accounts by the Independent Examiner, Professor Georges Selim, see page 82.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE KIPLING SOCIETY

I hereby report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 1999 [as printed on pages 80 to 81].

**Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner**

As the Charity's Trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts: you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 ('the Act') does not apply. It is my responsibility to state (on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity, and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees, concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the view given in the accounts.

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act

and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

30 June 2000

Georges M. Selim  
City University Business School  
Frobisher Crescent, Barbican Centre, London EC2Y 8HB

## ANNUAL REPORT, 1999

[The September 1999 issue of the *Kipling Journal* contained the Kipling Society's Annual Report of the Trustees for 1998. We now present the Report for 1999, mainly compiled by the Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Treasurer and the Chairman. – *Ed.*]

The Kipling Society, whose postal address in 1999 was 2 Brownleaf Road, Brighton BN2 6LB, was founded in 1927. It is registered with the Charity Commissioners (No. 278885), and is constituted under Rules approved in July 1999. As stated in the Rules, the object of the Society is the advancement of public education by promotion of the study and appreciation of the life and work of Rudyard Kipling.

The Society is administered by a Council comprising Honorary Executive Officers and elected Ordinary Members. Those serving in the year under review are listed below, together with the dates of election and termination of office of the Ordinary Members and some of the Officers.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

**Chairman:** Mr G.C.G. Philo, C.M.G., M.C. (to July 1999); Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C. (from July 1999); **Secretary:** Mr J.W.M. Smith; **Treasurer:** Mr R.A. Bissolotti, F.C.A.; **Journal Editor:** Mr G.H. Webb, C.M.G., O.B.E.; **Membership Secretary:** Lt-Colonel R.C. Ayers, O.B.E.; **Meetings Secretary:** Mr P. Merry (to July 1999); Mr S.D.J. Keskar (from July 1999); **Librarian:** Mrs B.G. Schreiber (to July 1999); Mr J.F. Slater (from July 1999); **Electronic Editor:** Mr J. Radcliffe.

### ORDINARY MEMBERS

Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C. (1996 to July 1999 – Vice-Chairman to July 1999); Mr P.G.S. Hall (1997 to 2000 – Vice-Chairman from July 1999); Mr N. Entract (1998 to 2001); Mr K.M.L. Frazer (1996 to July 1999); Dr Linda Hall (1998 to 2001); Professor Sandra Kemp (1997 to 2000); Dr J.D. Lewins (1998 to 2001); Mr Andrew Lycett (1997 to 2000); Mr D.N. Vermont (1999 to 2002).

### In furtherance of its Object, and on an on-going basis, the Society:

- Publishes a substantial quarterly magazine, the *Kipling Journal*, distributed to all members and Journal-only subscribers, dealing with matters of interest to readers and students of Kipling.
- Promotes and holds meetings, lectures, visits, discussions and readings, and generally encourages the study of Kipling's works.
- Maintains in City University, London, an extensive library of books and archive material, available to members and researchers.
- Maintains a "Kipling Room" at the Grange Museum in Rottingdean, Sussex.

- Maintains a world-wide web-site ([www.kipling.org.uk](http://www.kipling.org.uk)) containing information and pictorial material about the Society; about Kipling's prose and poetry; and about his life and times; also the catalogue of the Society's Library, and a comprehensive index to the *Kipling Journal* from its inception in 1927. The web-site attracts requests for information from all over the world, and serves to attract new members. The Society also, in association with the University of Newcastle, provides an e-mail discussion forum, on which questions relating to Kipling are canvassed and discussed.

#### Specific activities in 1999

- Four issues of the *Kipling Journal* were published.
- The content of the web-site was considerably increased, so that it now includes a Kipling 'Poem of the Week'; reviews of recent publications; and Internet links with book-sellers both new and antiquarian; also a draft glossary (compiled by Michael Smith) of Hindustani / Urdu / Hindi words found in Kipling's works.
- Five meetings were held, at which lectures were followed by discussion; and a visit to Bateman's (Kipling's Sussex home from 1902 to 1936) took place, at which a selection of his poems were read. The Annual Luncheon was addressed on the subject of "Collecting Kipling", by Mr D.A. Richards of New York, a notable collector and bibliographer of Kipling.
- The Society's new Rules – embodying the first revision since 1979 – were approved at the Annual General Meeting on 14 July 1999, following submission to the Charity Commissioners.

At the end of 1999 the Society had over 500 individual members, and about 110 'Journal-only' subscribing universities and libraries in 21 countries. There was one self-administering overseas branch in Melbourne (Australia), some of whose members are also subscribers to the parent Society.

Financially, the results for the year show a surplus of £169, against that of £2193 for the previous year. This decrease is mainly due to: (1) the setting up of the Society's web-site on the Internet at a cost of £1215 during the year; (2) the increase in administrative costs resulting from the interest in the Society created by the web-site, which has led to a substantial increase in the number of enquiries falling to be dealt with by the Honorary Secretary; and (3) the discontinuation by the printer of the *Journal* of the special concession previously enjoyed\*, with a resulting increase of nearly £1500 in printing costs. The Trustees will continue to expand the activities of the Society, but in doing so will continue their efforts to maintain the present subscription rates.

[Signed] Sir George Engle (Chairman)

\* [And very generously given again for the present bumper issue – Ed.]

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### COUNTRY PURSUITS

*From Mr F. A. Underwood, The Coplow, 44 Station Road, Winterbourne Down, Bristol BS36 1EN*

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for improving my article on "Foxhunting with Kipling" [June 2000, pages 41-50] with an illustration from Surtees's *Handley Cross*, and the illustration and summary of Kipling's "Little Foxes" [*Actions and Reactions*].

Since writing the article, I have chanced on an anthology of stories and verses, *Kipling on Horses and Horsemen*\*, selected and introduced by John Welcome, best known, I think, as an author of books on racing. This includes both "Little Foxes" and "My Son's Wife" [*A Diversity of Creatures*] which had a particularly good introduction, reading in part:- "Here Kipling is letting himself go with a vengeance at the intellectuals and 'the immoderate left', their pretensions and insincerities, and the redemption of his protagonist, Midmore, by country pursuits and country people. It is extraordinary how well this story [. . .] stands up. [It is] told with a sure hand and without a false note." John Welcome cleverly added five verses of Kipling's "In Partibus" at the end of the story —

It's Oh for one deep whisky-peg  
 When Christmas winds are blowing,  
 When all the men you ever knew,  
 And all you've ceased from knowing,  
 Are "entered for the Tournament,  
 And everything that's going" —

In conclusion, may I mention a misprint in my article, undoubtedly due to my atrocious handwriting. Half way down page 42, "our followers" should read "car followers".

Yours faithfully  
 F.A. UNDERWOOD

\*This book (ISBN 1-873919) was published in 1992 by Marlborough Books, Swindon, in association with Punchestown Books, Dublin. It has 156 pages and was priced (in the U.K.) at £11.95. Its editor, John Welcome, asserts that Kipling's "writing on equine-related subjects has never been surpassed and seldom equalled". – *Ed.*

## KIPLING AND THE BACONS

*From Professor T.J. Connell, City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB.*

Dear Sir,

A professorial gauntlet was cast at my feet in mid-1999 by the Baconian Society of St Albans, challenging me to speak on the subject of Francis and Roger Bacon "in the context of Kipling's works". I think our readers will agree that Kipling seemed an odd point of reference for the two Bacons.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) lived in St Albans (Roman Verulamium), was raised to the peerage as Baron Verulam, and is buried there, in St Michael's church. A brilliant lawyer and scholar, his eminent career led to his appointment in 1618 as Lord Chancellor, but in 1621 he was convicted of bribery and corruption, barred from public office, and fined £40,000. However, his writings on science and philosophy were of great importance, and his *Essays* are rightly famous.

Roger Bacon (c. 1214 to c. 1292), an English monk and scholar, was an outstanding philosopher and pioneer of pre-Renaissance scientific thought.

All I had to start with was "The Eye of Allah" (*Debits and Credits*), and "The Propagation of Knowledge" (a late 'Stalky' story, also in *Debits and Credits*). The former is set in an English monastery, beautifully depicted, and reaches its climax in a tense scene when the Abbot reluctantly compels his friend Roger Bacon to bow to the Church's relentless discipline in its prohibition of scientific research.

The cause of the confrontation is a primitive Moorish microscope, brought from Spain. Its revelations of living organisms, detected in a drop of muddy water, greatly excite Friar Roger, but the Abbot warns that the Church would burn anyone who even scrutinised such things, and he deliberately smashes the microscope.

In "The Propagation of Knowledge", Francis Bacon's alleged authorship of Shakespeare is a pivotal topic with which the boys mischievously distract a visiting examiner.

A literary 'Mayday' was sent out on the Society's web-site. Lisa Lewis promptly responded with a detailed note on Kipling's Shakespearean spoof, "The Marrèd Drives of Windsor", which has a long-winded footnote claiming to find a cryptic Baconian message. Sir

George Engle and Andrew Dodsworth engaged in learned debate on the translation of Francis Bacon's *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, and whether a schoolboy translation of "The Advancement of Learning" (the title of the English version which appeared in 1605, whereas the Latin translation appeared in 1623) could possibly be "The Propagation of Knowledge". An enquiry from me about when the sale of Army commissions was abolished (evidently 1871), brought an immediate and detailed response from Roger Ayers.

I spotted another possible Kipling/Bacon connection, between Kipling's "Gods of the Copybook Headings" and Bacon's four Idols, of the Tribe, Market-place, Cave and Theatre; but on reflection I feel it is coincidental.

Even so, I may have found another Baconian echo. In his *Essay XV* (on "Seditious and Troubles") Francis refers to the four Pillars of Government: religion, justice, counsel and treasure. If these are shaken or weakened, he observes, "men had need to pray for fair weather". This is echoed by Kipling in "My Father's Chair", about the government of Henry III:

There are four good legs to my Father's Chair –  
    Priest and People and Lords and Crown.  
I sits on all of 'em fair and square,  
    And that is the reason it don't break down.

The image of the chair also appears in Bacon's *Essay LVI*, "Of Judicature":

"Let judges remember that Salomon's throne [*sic*] was supported by lions on both sides: let them be lions, but yet lions under the throne."

The lecture, delivered in September 1999, focused on comparable events in the lives of the three men, their personal stands on different issues, their troubles in getting published, and their views on morality in public life. I like to think that it was well received.

Yours faithfully  
TIM CONNELL

[Professor Connell has agreed to provide a fuller text of his lecture on this unusual topic, which I hope it will be possible to place in a future issue. – *Ed.*]

## "THE MANNER OF MEN"

*From Mrs E.L. Breuilly, 178 Bournville Lane, Birmingham B30 1LT*

Dear Sir,

This is a copy of comments that I have also sent to the Kipling Mailbase; but it may be of interest to readers not on the mailbase.

I was interested to read the articles by Inger K. Brøgger – on "Friendly Brook" [March 2000, pages 12-20], and especially "The Manner of Men" [June 2000, pages 24-32]. The two stories about St Paul in *Limits and Renewals* ["The Manner of Men" and "The Church that was at Antioch"] are among my favourites, and several reflections arise in response to the article on "The Manner of Men".

First, though Mrs Brøgger gives several Bible references, she does not mention the biblical source of the story, in Acts 27 and 28. In checking this passage, I was struck anew by the extraordinary accuracy with which Kipling weaves in every detail of a very detailed account.

This is one of the 'we' passages in Acts, implying that St Luke, the writer, was actually present at these events; and there is a vividness in the original writing, which Kipling enhances. It makes striking contrast with "The Church that was at Antioch" [*Limits and Renewals*], where Kipling is elaborating on a much sketchier biblical account.

The two stories lead me to wonder how common was this technique of re-telling Bible stories from a different point of view. It is quite common in modern re-tellings; but was Kipling one of the originators of the *genre*? The only parallels I know of, from the first half of the twentieth century, are in poetry – notably G.K. Chesterton's "The Donkey". Do others know of other examples, perhaps earlier ones?

I am also reflecting on what seems to be Kipling's fascination with the verse in 1 Corinthians, 15: 32:- "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth me, if the dead rise not?" Here, Kipling is mainly concerned with the first half of the verse (and I agree that he is probably mistaken in reading it literally). In "A Madonna of the Trenches" [*Debits and Credits*], he uses the first half of the verse to point obliquely to the second half – "what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?"

It seems to be a key verse in Kipling's consciousness. Perhaps, given his known interest in spiritualism, he is also taking the second half of the verse more literally than most commentators would.

Yours faithfully

LIZ BREULLY

**GIFT AID: A NOTE FOR MEMBERS**

from the Society's Honorary Treasurer, R.A. Bissolotti, F.C.A.

Members of the Kipling Society living in the U.K. will have noticed, as an enclosure with this issue, a Gift Aid Declaration form. This represents an excellent opportunity to benefit the finances of our Society without having to pay anything extra to do so.

Until the recent Budget legislation, members wishing to allow their annual subscription to be treated as having been paid net of tax (thus allowing the Society to claim this from the Inland Revenue) had to enter into a Deed of Covenant for four or more years. Any one-off donations (above a minimum amount) required the completion of a separate Gift Aid form for each donation.

Such bureaucracy has been abolished from 6 April 2000. Members signing the enclosed Gift Aid Declaration (GAD) will have all their future subscriptions and/or donations covered – provided that the member is a basic rate (22%) U.K. taxpayer. With the present basic tax rate, the Society will be able to claim back £5.64 on each £20 subscription covered by a GAD. It therefore makes good economic sense to Gift-Aid your subscription. So please help the Society by completing the form and sending it to our Membership Secretary, Lt-Col Roger Ayers, O.B.E., at 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SB.

When signing the GAD, I suggest that you date it 6 April 2000, the date from which the current legislation became operational, as it will enable the Society to recover the tax on subscriptions, etc, paid from that date. Members who are already currently covenanting their subscriptions are also encouraged to sign the GAD, as it will simplify possible future subscription changes, and follow up once the covenant expires.

Thank you so much, in advance, for your valuable co-operation. Should you have any queries regarding the GAD, please don't hesitate to telephone me on (020) 7834 9132.

*Rudolph Bissolotti*

**OBITUARY: SIR JOSIAS CUNNINGHAM**

by LISA LEWIS

[It is a sad irony, that so soon after congratulating Sir Josias Cunningham on his knighthood (March 2000, page 73), we have to record his untimely death in August, in a car crash. I asked Lisa Lewis, as a Vice-President of the Society and a friend of Sir Josias, to write this obituary notice. – *Ed.*]

Sir Josias Cunningham joined the Kipling Society in 1968. His was a rare but welcome presence at our events; his few letters in the *Journal* were always concise, well-phrased and well-informed, often raising questions no one had thought of before. He found time in his busy life to correspond with many of us, being always ready to help with queries, or to find someone else who knew the answers. His 'low profile' concealed a serious Kipling scholar, familiar with everything published in our field. This was typical of Joe, a modest man of great integrity and gentle manners, who was always of more substance than he seemed.

His many obituaries included one in the *Los Angeles Times*. Several mentioned his interest in Kipling, besides his careers in business and farming, but their main theme was his importance in the shark-pool of northern Irish politics. This led to his knighthood in the 2000 New Year's Honours. Up till then, he had managed to avoid publicity, but in the few months that remained before the road accident that killed him, it came out that he had been and still was a key player in the peace process. As a descendant of a presbyterian family settled in Co. Antrim since the seventeenth century, grandson of a leader of the anti-Home Rule campaign in 1913-14, and an active member of the Orange Order, his Unionist credentials were beyond doubt; but his influence was always for moderation, and against extremism. He was liked and trusted on both sides, as in all the many worlds he inhabited.

My cousin, who was present at the funeral, tells me that as part of the ceremony one of his sons read "If – ". Few men can so well have lived up to the standards demanded in that poem.

## ABOUT THE *KIPLING JOURNAL*

The *Kipling Journal*, house magazine of the Kipling Society, is sent quarterly to all our currently subscribing 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 has now been 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 austere 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 unpublished letters by Kipling himself, particularly ones of any bibliographical 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.**

## ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY

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. There is a large membership in North America; and 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 Membership Secretary, Kipling Society, 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SB, England.** (The Society's Internet web specification is: <http://www.kipling.org.uk>)

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

