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The *Kipling Journal* is the quarterly magazine of the Kipling Society, a charity whose object is the advancement of public education by the promotion of the study and appreciation of the life and works of Rudyard Kipling. The Journal is open to submissions of any length between 500 and 5000 words from students, scholars, professional academics, and Kipling enthusiasts. All articles are peer reviewed.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF THE KIPLING SOCIETY

It was agreed at the 2022 AGM that we should continue to hold three ‘hybrid’ meetings a year at RoSL, followed by optional supper with the speaker, and two online meetings. The first in 2023 is our April meeting.

Wednesday 19 April 2023 4 pm BST: Online meeting: **Harish Trivedi, Professor Emeritus of the University of Delhi**, speaking on “Kipling, the Rajahs and the Raj.” The online Zoom link will be circulated beforehand in the Newsletter. (**NB: Please note the earlier time**).

Wednesday 5 July 2023 4.30 for 5 pm (5 pm BST online) Annual General Meeting in the Wrench Room, Royal Over-Seas League. Speaker at the following meeting to be arranged.

Wednesday September 20 2023 6 pm BST Online meeting: a filmed tour of “Kipling’s Rottingdean,” by **Richard Howell**, with other Council members.

March 2023

Alex Bubb
(Meetings Secretary)

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EDITORIAL AND NEWS

This issue of the *Kipling Journal* has a rich variety of articles. We lead with Harry Ricketts' article 'Sleeping back into terrified childhood: Kipling and trauma', based on his 2021 Stamer-Smith lecture. Here Kipling's acclaimed biographer unpicks the lasting effects of the House of Desolation on Kipling's mind and art, up to and including his last story collection *Limits and Renewals*. Ricketts' characteristic insight, sympathy and clarity make this article a must-read for lovers of Kipling's work.

This biographical theme is continued in Richard Howell's fascinating account of how the Kiplings (especially Carrie) enlarged the Bateman's estate, from 33 acres when they bought it in 1902 to over 300 acres by 1927. This is followed by 'The Small One', four delightful letters from Kipling to the Ohio engineer Howard Phillips between 1925 and 1936, edited and fully glossed by our Librarian John Walker. Virginia Phillips, the daughter of Howard (the 'small one' of the title), has most generously donated these letters to the Kipling Society. I thank her warmly for the gift and for permission to publish these letters in the *Kipling Journal*.

David Alan Richards' detailed, lively account of the clubs Kipling belonged to, from the Century in New York to the Savile, the Athenaeum, the Beefsteak and others in London, is full of fascinating insights into Rudyard Kipling's social, professional and political life. From a much earlier period, Richard Maidment has edited a review of *Departmental Ditties* in 1888 by Stephen Wheeler, Kipling's former boss at the *Civil & Military Gazette* (also known to his subordinate as the 'Amber Toad'). John Radcliffe has edited the first extract from Kipling's *France at War*, in which Kipling visits the ruins of Soissons and its battered cathedral, where a small but valiant congregation, mostly female, is defying the bombardment to attend Mass.

SHARAD KESKAR

As this issue goes to press, I am sad to report the death of our long-standing and distinguished member Sharad Keskar, whose work for the Kipling Society included editing the *Kipling Journal* and serving as our Chairman. A full obituary will appear in the June 2023 number.

‘SLEEPING BACK INTO TERRIFIED CHILDHOOD’: KIPLING AND TRAUMA

BY HARRY RICKETTS

[Harry Ricketts, Professor Emeritus of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University, Wellington, NZ, is Vice-President of the Kipling Society, author of *The Unforgiving Minute: A Life of Rudyard Kipling* (1999) and has published numerous works of criticism, poetry collections and anthologies. This article is based on the Stamer-Smith Lecture “Kipling and Trauma”, which he gave to the Kipling Society in September 2021. *Ed.*]

“Give me the first six years of a child’s life and you can have the rest,” reads the epigraph to Kipling’s autobiography, *Something of Myself*, written in the months before his death.¹ Which seems straightforward enough: looking back, his first six idyllic years in Bombay (Mumbai) are what he has come to see as the most formatively significant. Except that little in late Kipling is ever straightforward; the writing is shot through with layers of irony and implication – as it turns out to be here. The brief sketch of his early Indian years which follows is quickly overtaken and occluded by the detailed, gouging account of the next traumatic five-and-a-half years spent in Southsea. The epigraph, in other words, stands at the beginning as a kind of autobiographical commonplace which the Kipling-attuned reader will not take too literally.

Indeed, I am going to argue that the ongoing traumatic imprint of the Southsea years was far more integral to Kipling and his work than the legacy of the protected, carefree years that preceded them. His time with the Holloways in what he dubbed “The House of Desolation” and the fictional consequences of that experience are at the heart of what follows, but before I proceed, I should lodge a couple of disclaimers.²

Kipling and trauma is potentially a large topic, and I shall only be able to touch on some aspects of it here. I shall not, for instance, be talking about Kipling and his work as a significant cog in the trauma-production and trauma-legacy of late-nineteenth, early-twentieth century British Imperialism. This is a perfectly possible approach. It is one that has been eloquently adopted by a number of distinguished post-colonial critics (still most subtly, I think, by Edward Said) and also explored by various novelists, most dynamically perhaps by Shashi Tharoor in his fascinating, many-stranded *The Great Indian Novel* (1989). There, Tharoor splits Kipling into two characters – Colonel Rudyard, jingoistic perpetrator of the Hastinapur Massacre, and the more Indophile, but condescending, Professor Kipling. The denouement comes when two young Indians try to avenge the massacre by

killing Colonel Rudyard, but kill Professor Kipling instead – a mistake which leaves the narrator wondering whether Fate has not, after all, punished the more appropriate victim. I absolutely agree that a reprimanding case for a trauma-*inducing* Kipling can be made, but I am not remaking it here.

Nor am I going to say much about the additional trauma Kipling suffered in losing his beloved elder daughter Josephine to pneumonia in 1899 and his adored son John at Loos in 1915. Both deaths undoubtedly had traumatic effects on Kipling – how could they not? – and both deaths resulted in deeply moving stories and poems (including “They”, “Morrow Down”, “My Boy Jack” and “The Gardener”), but I shall only touch on these in passing. What I am going to concentrate on, indebted to some of the recent extensive writing in the area of Trauma Studies, is the idea that Kipling’s own story should be seen as one of trauma and trauma survival. And I particularly want to point out and reflect on some of the many fictional recapitulations and re-imaginings of this. For the sake of clarity, I shall refer to Kipling as a child as Rudyard and to his older self as Kipling.

The original site of trauma I have in mind is, as already intimated, Rudyard’s years as a small child with the Holloway family in Southsea. At the risk of reminding readers of details with which they are already familiar, here is a very brief outline. Rudyard at nearly six and his even younger sister Trix were lodged by their parents from October 1871 till April 1877 with Pryse Agar and Sarah Holloway and their son Thomas in Southsea. The sources for what happened during those five-and-a-half years are Kipling’s 1888 story “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep”, the opening chapter of his 1891 novel *The Light That Failed* and the opening chapter of his posthumously published autobiography, *Something of Myself* (1937) After his death, his sister Trix also wrote and published corroborating and supplementary accounts of the experience (used by Mary Hamer in her fascinating ‘biografiction’ *Kipling & Trix* [2012]).

In summary, Kipling and his sister presented the experience in these terms: Trix, although also traumatised, was favoured by Mrs Holloway, who had always wanted a daughter; Rudyard, the “extra boy about the house” and used to having his own way, was not.³ Particularly after Pryse Agar’s death in September 1874, Rudyard was emotionally, physically, religiously and psychologically bullied by the Evangelical Mrs Holloway and her son. (As readers of the March 2017 issue of the *Kipling Journal* will know, Mike Kipling has done valuable recent work in extending our knowledge of the Holloways’ respective backgrounds.) In 1935, Trix apparently asked her brother whether the Southsea house

was still standing, and he replied: "I don't know, but if so I should like to burn it down and plough the place with salt."⁴

Kipling's biographers have of course all extensively reflected on the Southsea experience and its significance, and on the roles of the various participants. Charles Carrington later came to think that only the last few months, when Rudyard's eyes began to go, were really harrowing and that Mrs Holloway was probably a limited rather than a wicked person.⁵ By contrast, Angus Wilson finds Kipling's and his sister's accounts "very convincing", but is careful to locate the whole experience within the social, cultural, religious and familial context of the time. So, he portrays Mrs Holloway as a "Calvinist Evangelical", who saw and punished Rudyard as a "lost reprobate". Wilson also makes the interesting observation that "the most traumatic psychological aspect of the Southsea misery" was what he calls Rudyard's "lost sahibhood" and being placed at Southsea under "a woman's rule".⁶ Lord Birkenhead, while largely accepting the brother's and sister's versions of what happened, asserts that "it is essential not to overestimate the effect of this ordeal on Rudyard Kipling's [subsequent] emotional life."⁷ Martin Seymour-Smith in his exasperating, but not unperceptive, biography claims that "There is little doubt that Mrs Holloway did some unattractive things", but feels that "[o]ne can feel a certain pity for her".⁸ Andrew Lycett, after pointing out a small factual inaccuracy in the *Something of Myself* account, suggests that "While this does not mean that his memories of Mrs Holloway, the mistress of the house, are wrong, it requires them to be treated with some discretion."⁹

As I noted in my own biography of Kipling, I visited the Southsea house in 1992 and met the owner, who had lived there since before the First World War. She showed me around the house and downstairs, in what had once been part of the room where Rudyard and Trix played, and where he used to be sent as a punishment, cut deep in huge letters into the whitewashed wall, was the single word 'HELP'.¹⁰ Seeing that was, as you can imagine, a heart-turning moment. But what I want to focus on here is not how bullied Rudyard was or was not, or for how long, or whether or not he deserved some of that treatment. I want to stress both children's sense of abandonment and entrapment, which comes out so strongly in their various accounts and left such searing marks on their work.¹¹

Naturally, all Kipling's biographers bring up abandonment and entrapment to a greater or lesser extent, but it now seems to me that these two elements constitute the real trauma. It is, after all, not so much what happens to us that matters as what we *think* has happened to us. Rudyard and Trix both clearly thought that they *had* been abandoned, and soon realised that they were utterly powerless to escape from their

situation, that (to use later parlance) they were now completely devoid of agency. Furthermore, Kipling and his sister came to feel, and never ceased to feel, that the experience had had a lasting effect on them. The narrator of “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep” speaks for both of them in the story’s final sentence:

when young lips have drunk deep of the bitter waters of Hate, Suspicion, and Despair, all the Love in the world will not wholly take away that knowledge; though it may turn darkened eyes for a while to the light, and teach Faith where no Faith was.¹²

The key phrase there is “for a while”. The narrator imagines no permanent “taking away”; it is just “for a while”. Some commentators have demurred at Kipling’s explanation in his autobiography for why he did not tell anyone at the time of his treatment: “Children tell little more than animals, for what comes to them they accept as eternally established. Also, badly-treated children have a clear notion of what they are likely to get if they betray the secrets of a prison-house before they are clear of it.”¹³ Just so: the demurrers have plainly forgotten what it is like to be a child.

In this connection, the following passage from Cathy Caruth’s introduction to the essay-collection *Trauma, Explorations in Memory* (1995) about the long-term effects of trauma seems especially pertinent:

While the precise definition of post-traumatic stress disorder is contested, most descriptions generally agree that there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience.¹⁴

With that description of trauma in mind, any reader well-versed in Kipling will readily recall a host of stories, poems and other pieces from the 1880s and the early 1890s, which portray and turn on traumatically related hallucinations, dreams and hauntings. A short list would include “The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes”, “The Phantom Rickshaw”, “The Gate of the Hundred Sorrows”, “The City of Dreadful Night”, “The Other Man”, “By Word of Mouth”, “The Sending of Dana Da”, “My Own True Ghost Story”, “Letter XI” of “Letters of Marque”, “At the End of the Passage”, “The Mark of the Beast”, “The Return of Imray”, “The Dream of Duncan Parrenness”, “The Disturber of Traffic”, and “The Finest Story in the World”. That is not to forget Kipling’s very first known pieces of fiction: the “Will Briart’s Ghost” fragment,

probably written at the age of eight, and “My First Adventure”, written when he was thirteen for “The Scribbler”, the magazine put together by the Morris and Burne-Jones children. Nor is it to forget poems like “La Nuit Blanche” with its haunted and haunting lines:

Then a Face came, blind and weeping,
 And It couldn't wipe Its eyes,
 And It muttered I was keeping
 Back the moonlight from the skies¹⁵

(With Birkenhead, I take these lines to be a phantasmagorical memory of the time Rudyard's eyesight was failing and, amongst other odd displays of behaviour while staying at the Grange, his cousin Margaret saw him lashing out at an apple tree with a stick to see whether it was his grandmother or not.)¹⁶ Nor am I forgetting that very strange poem “The Vision of Hamid Ali” with its ganja-released threats of mysterious, apocalyptic punishment and more occasional pieces like “De Profundis”.

A number of these works (particularly “The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes”) have been interpreted as reflections and projections of the anxieties and paranoia experienced by the British in India. They clearly are that, but they are also, I would argue, powered by delayed fall-out from the traumatic Southsea years. The supporting evidence for this lies in the repeated linking of entrapment, abandonment and extreme torment with childhood powerlessness. For instance, the fever-stricken, hallucinating narrator of “De Profundis” (originally published in *Civil & Military Gazette* in August 1885) is, within a single page, ravaged by “irrational terrors, and ... broken in spirit as children are broken at the prospect of impending and inevitable punishment”; “force[d]” by “ludicrous and pitiable delusions ... to sob like a child whose sum ‘won't come right’”; and finds himself conjecturing whether, after encountering “the three circles of [his] fiery inferno”, he has “returned unscathed; or at the most, if [the] journey has been a long one, only so weak as a little child”.¹⁷

In “The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes”, published in *Quartette* only months later, Jukes, light-headed with fever, finds himself apparently irrevocably trapped and friendless in a valley of cholera survivors, and feeling, he claims, “helpless as a child”.¹⁸ In Letter XI of “Letters of Marque”, Kipling concludes his account of his existential and sexual panic at the Gau-Mukh in Chitor by describing how he “floundered up [the steps], and so came out of the Gau-Mukh, bedewed with that perspiration which follow alike on honest toil or – childish fear”.¹⁹

Hummil in “At the End of the Passage” (1891) rowels himself with a spur so as not to fall asleep and be caught, he says, in a “place down there” by “[a] blind face that cries and can’t wipe its eyes, a blind face that chases him down corridors!” – an image which obviously recalls that of the traumatised child figure in “La Nuit Blanche” and behind that the downstairs room (“a place down there”) in Southsea. In a particularly resonant paragraph, as the doctor Spurstow observes the newly awoken Hummil, terror and childhood are viscerally fused:

As a sponge rubs a slate clean, so some power unknown to Spurstow had wiped out of Hummil’s face all that stamped it for the face of a man, and he stood at the doorway in the expression of his lost innocence. He had slept back into terrified childhood.²⁰

“He had slept back into terrified childhood”: that, I contend, is exactly what Kipling does compulsively in his early work, as he repeatedly constructs situations in which his protagonists feel trapped and powerless without hope of rescue; and, repeatedly, this state of powerless entrapment is associated with childhood helplessness.

Indeed, so deeply imbedded were Southsea and its environs for Kipling that the reader will suddenly trip over a reference in a quite unexpected context. It is thus no coincidence that the graceless, free-loading, drunken loafer in “Mister Anthony Dawking” (*Civil & Military Gazette*, 1888), who ends up “as slovenly and unhandsome a corpse as could be desired”, was born in Southsea.²¹ Nor is it a coincidence, as John Coates points out in his notable, posthumously published *Kipling the Trickster* (2021), that the Colonel’s Wife in “The Watches of the Night” (1887) is eaten up by an evangelical Protestantism which instantly evokes how Kipling would soon be describing Auntie Rosa in “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep” (1888): “Being deeply impressed with the doctrine of Original Sin, she [that is the Colonel’s wife] could not believe in the face of appearances. She knew too much, and jumped to the wildest conclusions”.²² Nor is it a coincidence that the mad lighthouse-keeper Dowse in “The Disturber of Traffic” (1891) ends up “believing that the guilt of blood is on his head, and finding no rest either in Portsmouth or Gosport Hard”. Both of these are places near Southsea, visited by the child Rudyard with Pryse Agar Holloway on their walks.²³ For Kipling the young writer, to borrow a famous line from William Faulkner’s *Requiem for a Nun*: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”²⁴

Having briefly outlined the case that delayed trauma finds repeated expression in the early work, I want also to argue that Kipling’s marriage in 1892, settling in Vermont and becoming a parent, profoundly affected the way that the traumatic Southsea years subsequently reconfigured

themselves in his work. Here, I have found extremely helpful a passage from Donald Haase's essay "Children, War and the Imaginative Space of Fairy Tales". Haase is specifically talking about how child survivors of "the violence of war, exile, and the Holocaust" later imaginatively recreate their traumatic experience:

[S]ome adults who have experienced the violence of war, exile, and the Holocaust as children map those experiences with the overlay of the fairy-tale landscape, attempting to transform trauma through desire for the reconstituted safety of home Storytelling itself could become a space of refuge – familiarity – linked to protection, security, and the return to meaningful life.²⁵

This is precisely what happens in Kipling's Mowgli stories in the two *Jungle Books*, the Indian forest and its animal inhabitants providing the equivalent of the more traditional fairy-tale landscape and cast of characters, with Kipling's deliberately old-fashioned style significantly contributing to the overall fairy-tale effect. Within this "overlay", Kipling can reimagine, perhaps unconsciously, an improved and successful version of the Southsea years.²⁶ Mowgli is at once a version of the stock fairy-tale figure of the abandoned child and Kipling's own surrogate.

In fact, in traditional fairy-tale fashion, Kipling very substantially raises the fictional stakes. For instance, he makes Mowgli not just an orphan, but a triple orphan. In the opening story, "Mowgli's Brothers", he first loses his human parents and is then ostracised by the wolf-pack: "The Jungle is shut indeed to thee henceforward," as Bagheera tells him. Later, in "Tiger! Tiger!", Mowgli is banned by the village: "They are not unlike the Pack, these brothers of thine," said Akela ... 'It is in my head that, if bullets mean anything, they would cast thee out.'" In place of the more conventional fairy tale substitute parents, protectors and sidekicks – benevolent fairy godmothers, friendly woodcutters *et al* – Kipling provides Mowgli with an array of seriously dangerous wild animals (a bear, a black panther, a huge rock python and assorted wolves), who compete with each other to guard, rescue and adore him, and, what is more, acknowledge his power over them. "I – we – love him", as Baloo says to Kaa of himself and Bagheera, soliciting the python's help when Mowgli is abducted by the *Bandar-log*, and "I love thee, Little Brother," says Bagheera to Mowgli in "Letting in the Jungle", after he has been unable to hold Mowgli's stare. In "Red Dog", there is even an exchange in which Kaa and Akela bicker over which of them Mowgli belongs to. To Akela's question "'And where is my Man-cub?'" Kaa proprietarily replies: "As for *thy* Man-cub,

from whom thou has taken a Word and so laid him open to Death, *thy* Man-cub is with *me*, and if he be not already dead the fault is none of thine, bleached dog!”²⁷

The stakes are also raised as regards the role of the fairy tale villain/monster, Shere Khan, the lame tiger, who quite literally (and appropriately) wants to eat Mowgli. The tiger’s real-life equivalent is the toothy Sarah Holloway (though it was her husband who was lame), with Shere Khan’s sycophantic stooge, the jackal Tabaqui, standing in for Sarah’s son Thomas. In real life, Rudyard had felt he had no means of outwitting or defeating his tormentors, but here Mowgli manages to turn the tables on his enemy by using his greater intelligence and know-how, first driving Shere Khan away with the “Red Flower” (fire) in “Mowgli’s Brothers” and eventually masterminding his death, trampled by the buffaloes in the narrow ravine in “‘Tiger! Tiger!’” (a method later borrowed by the makers of *The Lion King*).²⁸ Similar plotlines are also explored elsewhere in *The Jungle Book* in, for example, “The White Seal” and “‘Rikki-Tikki-Tavi’”, both of which are concerned with finding a new home and in the latter case, like Mowgli, having to overcome large, deadly enemies by means of cunning, enterprise and courage.

So, eventually, the fairy-tale world of the Jungle does indeed become (in Haase’s phrase) a “reconstituted safety of home”, while the act of storytelling constantly supplies “a space of refuge –familiarity – linked to protection, security, and the return to meaningful life”. Indeed, there is a double return to “meaningful life” as the Mowgli stories develop, since at the end he must leave the achieved “safety” of the Jungle for the putative “safety” of the human world of the village (a nice Kiplingesque paradox). Or to change the terms slightly” remembering that, at the start of the final story “The Spring Running”, Mowgli is “nearly seventeen years old”, exactly the age Kipling was on returning to India in 1882, he must leave the achieved “safety” of childhood and adolescence for the putative “safety” of the adult world.²⁹ (I cannot be the only childhood reader who, on first encountering the passage where Mowgli must leave the Jungle, found their own sobs matched his.)

I now want to consider trace-elements and reworkings of the Southsea experience in a couple of slightly later stories, “The Brushwood Boy” (1895) and “The House Surgeon” (1909). “The Brushwood Boy”, the final piece in *The Day’s Work* (usually a crucial position in any Kipling collection), redeploys two early Kipling subjects—a potentially threatening dream-world and army life in India—set within, the newer (for him) milieu, that of the English country-house, and given an uncharacteristically conventional romantic ending. The story contains a number of Southsea-charged references, beginning with the name of three-year-old

Georgie Cottar's nurse Jane, called after one of the temporary maids at the Holloways.³⁰ The second is seven-year-old Georgie's happy visit to Oxford, mirroring a similarly happy one Rudyard had made (mentioned in *Something of Myself*). Thirdly, we are told that Georgie, on leave from India, fills up his parents' house "with that kind of officer who lived in cheap lodgings at Southsea ..."³¹

The point is that here these references are not included, consciously or unconsciously, to register sub-textual traumatic reverberations, as they are in the earlier work. Georgie's tumultuous dream-world is deliberately reminiscent of aspects of Kipling's own childhood experience at Southsea, beginning with a beach landscape similar to that evoked at the start of *The Light That Failed*, and then shifting into surreal, often disturbing and uncontrollable scenarios. Provided he can remember it is all a dream, Georgie remains in charge and powerful. However, things quickly collapse into an image of childhood abandonment and desperation:

He could never hold that knowledge more than a few seconds ere things became real, and instead of pushing down houses full of grown-up people (a just revenge), he sat miserably upon gigantic door-steps trying to sing the multiplication-table up to four times six.³²

But the difference here is that the dream-world does not take over and overwhelm Georgie in India (as it clearly had Kipling on occasions). It actually turns out to be the eventual means of securing his domestic happiness, when at his parents' house he recognises the visiting Miriam as 'the girl of his dreams' (an instance of Kipling, as elsewhere, fictionally literalising a cliché). Here, for the first time, a substantial amount of Southsea-related material is specifically clustered together in a story whose narrative arc is one of resolution and happy ending. To see the story in this way certainly gives it strong biographical interest, and the dream-sequences are utterly compelling, but such a reading is unlikely to convert a reader (like myself) who finds Georgie altogether too much of a model public school product, the Indian scenes perfunctory, the relationship between Georgie and his mother wince-making, and the *dénouement* cloying.

As a story, "The House Surgeon", the comparable final story in *Actions and Reactions*, is much more satisfactory. The plot centres on a gloom-haunted house, teasingly named Holmescroft and inhabited by a *nouveau riche* Jewish family, the M'Leods. The narrator, invited to Holmescroft, soon experiences its profound gloom in a justly famous passage:

I moved toward the bed, every nerve already aching with the foreknowledge of the pain that was to be dealt it, and sat down, while my amazed and angry soul dropped, gulf by gulf, into that horror of great darkness which is spoken of in the Bible, and which, as auctioneers say, must be experienced to be appreciated.

Despair upon despair, misery upon misery, fear after fear, each causing their distinct and separate woe, packed in upon me for an unrecorded length of time, until at last they blurred together, and I heard a click in my brain like the click in the ear when one descends in a diving bell, and I knew that the pressures were equalised within and without But I also knew that any moment the darkness might come down anew³³

Moved by the M²Leods' predicament, the narrator determines to play psychic detective. More Inspector Clouseau than Sherlock Holmes, he discovers that the haunting is caused by the combination of the pleading spirit of dead Aggie Moultrie, wrongly thought to have committed suicide, and the concentrated will of her still living elder sister Mary, who believes Aggie irrevocably damned: another potent combination of entrapment, abandonment and extreme evangelical Protestantism. Once Mary is persuaded that Aggie in fact died as the result of an accident the gloom is lifted. (In another neat literalisation of a stock expression – 'to stumble on the truth' – the characters discover, by accident, that Aggie tripped trying to open a low, tricky window and fell to her death).

Daniel Karlin's excellent article on *Actions and Reactions* (*Kipling Journal* 336, April 2010) teases out other significant threads in the story, not least its sympathetic treatment of the current Jewish owners of Holmescroft, and my own summary above gives no sense of the story's subtle blend of social observation, compassion and comedy. My interest here lies in the way the story once again replays aspects of Kipling's own childhood trauma, and once again offers fictional resolution.

In *Something of Myself*, Kipling encourages his readers to link the haunted house in the story to Rock House, St Marychurch, Torquay, in which he and his young family briefly lived after returning from America in 1896. Rock House, he recalls, had a "brooding Spirit of deep, deep Despondency within the open, lit rooms" and clearly was one prompt for the story. Kipling mentions that, as in his story, "three old maids" had lived in the St Marychurch house for "thirty years", and, as a nudge, he calls the eldest sister Mary.³⁴ However, as J.M.S. Tompkins suggested over sixty years ago in her brilliantly perceptive study *The Art of Rudyard Kipling* (1959), behind Rock House lies Lorne Lodge, the home of the Holloways: "The Moultrie sisters are developed from the three old maids who had inhabited [the house at

Torquay] for thirty years, and to them he added, I believe, the unfor-
gotten Evangelical woman of his childhood [ie Mrs Holloway].³⁵

Tompkins is careful to add that such ‘belief’ is not literary criticism, but it makes good sense in biographical terms. To put the relationship somewhat reductively: Mary Moultrie turning her damning glare on the spirit of her younger sister Aggie stands in for Mrs Holloway turning her damning glare on Rudyard, while the spirit of poor Aggie desperately trying to explain what actually happened stands in for Rudyard desperately trying and failing to explain and excuse himself to Mrs Holloway. Here is how the narrator puts it, when the “aching, helpless grief” of Aggie’s spirit overwhelms them at dinner: “Behind that pain I was conscious there was a desire on somebody’s part to explain something on which some tremendously important issue hung.” And, as he later, so tellingly, says, after the accidental nature of Aggie’s death is revealed:

I ... lay awake till morning, thinking more specially of the dumb
Thing at Holmescroft which wished to explain itself. I hated Miss
Mary as perfectly as though I had known her for twenty years, but I
felt that alive or dead, I should not like her to condemn me.

Appropriately, the opening stanza of “The Rabbi’s Song”, which follows the story and acts as a coda to it, contains the word “desolation” always so resonant in the Kipling lexicon:

If Thought can reach to Heaven,
On Heaven let it dwell,
For fear that Thought be given
Like power to reach to Hell.
For fear the desolation
And darkness of thy mind,
Perplex an habitation
Which thou hast left behind.³⁶

“The House Surgeon” (beginning, significantly, on “an evening after Easter Day”) portrays restitution and regeneration So, too, do a number of the post-war stories that deal with the traumatic effects of shell-shock and its delayed consequences.³⁷ For example, in that underrated story, “The Woman in His Life” (1928), John Marden (whose name in a skewed fashion suggests his problem) served as an engineer, and was blown up and buried at Messines Ridge. Now, after the war, he finds himself experiencing, in Caruth’s phrasing, “repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event”:

he said not a word of the horror, the blackness, the loss of the meaning of things, the collapses at the end, the recovery and retraversing of the circle of that night's Inferno; nor how it had waked up a certain secret dread which he had held off him since demobilisation.³⁸

Here resolution is achieved when, searching for and rescuing his buried dog, Dinah, Marden must re-experience his own traumatic burial (entrapment and imagined abandonment) and thus work through his "secret dread". There is a degree of implicit self-identification here with Kipling's earlier portrayals of trauma, but this is far less marked than those in the much more elaborate, multi-layered "Fairy-Kist" (1927) and its accompanying poem, "The Mother's Son".

The trauma story embedded within "Fairy-Kist" concerns Wollin, a Somme-survivor, "wounded and gassed and gangrened". He has emerged from the war hearing voices which tell him to "go out and plant roots and things at large up and down the country-side".³⁹ This activity, undertaken at night, has led to him being wrongly suspected of murdering a local village girl. As in "The House Surgeon", the truth is discovered by accident rather than clever sleuthing. The girl was in fact hit by the tip of a girder protruding from the back of a passing, skidding lorry.

While under suspicion and fearing incarceration as a homicidal maniac in Broadmoor, Wollin hides in his cellar with a candle and a revolver and emerges "burned out – all his wrinkles gashes, and his eyes readjustin' 'emselves after looking into Hell". Again, a searing image of entrapment and abandonment. Wollin's bolt-hole immediately recalls a wartime dug-out in a trench, but behind that (again) is the downstairs room at Lorne Lodge. This submerged link is obliquely made by the reference to Juliana Ewing's *Mary's Meadow* (1886). This was first published in *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, which had earlier published her *Six to Sixteen*, which Kipling read in Southsea, and of which he says in his autobiography: "I owe more in circuitous ways to that tale than I can tell." Or, as the perhaps overly Scottish McKnight claims at the end of "Fairy-Kist": "Juliaana Horratria Ewing ... [t]he best, the sweetest, the most eenocent tale ever the soul of a woman gied birth to."

But if resolution is again achieved in the story, in the introductory poem, "The Mother's Son", no resolution is possible. Here the speaker, also a damaged war-survivor, is in an institution very like Broadmoor, trapped, abandoned and suicidal:

I have a dream – a dreadful dream –
 A dream that is never done.
 I watch a man go out of his mind,
 And he is My Mother's Son.

They pushed him into a Mental Home,
 And that is like the grave:
 For they do not let you sleep upstairs,
 And you aren't allowed to shave

What with noise, and fear of death,
 Waking, and wounds and cold,
 They filled the Cup for My Mother's Son
 Fuller than it could hold

And no one knows when he'll get well –
 So, there he'll have to be:
 And, 'spite of the beard in the looking-glass,
 I know that man is me!

The historian and trauma studies critic Dominick LaCapra has drawn a helpful distinction between two different (positive) responses to trauma, “acting-out” and “working-through”. In these terms, circumstances have led to Marden in “The Woman in His Life” literally “acting-out” his traumatic experiences in the War, and by implication “working-through” them. As LaCapra puts it: with acting-out, “the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present, rather than represented in memory and inscription”. “Working-out”, on the other hand, he claims, involves “gaining critical distance on [traumatic] experiences and re-contextualising them in ways that permit a re-engagement with ongoing concerns and future possibilities.”⁴⁰ The predicaments of the protagonists of “His Mother's Son” and “Fairy-Kist” offer parallels and contrasts to this scenario. Both protagonists exist in a traumatised hell. The man in the poem, however, is a permanent resident, for whom neither “acting-out” nor “working-out” are viable options; only death will bring release. Like Marden, Wollin is forced into an “acting-out”, but again, by good fortune and the goodwill of others, achieves a “working-out” and thus “a re-engagement with ongoing concerns and future possibilities”.

So, my final contention is this. For Kipling, part of the lifelong satisfaction of and need for storytelling was that stories and (more occasionally) poems could embody and offer an outlet for his own, usually transposed, traumatic childhood experience of entrapment and abandonment. Sometimes these stories result in resolution for the protagonist, but not always. From the *Jungle Books* onwards, there is usually resolution within the fiction, though only a very limited one in the two stories connected to Kipling's loss of his daughter and son. “‘They’” ends with the narrator just once allowed the unseen touch of his dead daughter's

hand, with the prohibition that this contact can never be repeated – fictional consolation of a kind, but hardly closure. Similarly, in “The Gardener”, Kipling’s surrogate, the unmarried Helen Turrell, who like him cannot publicly grieve as a parent for her dead son, is allowed a momentary release (if it is that) when the gardener (perhaps Jesus), breaking the silence of the rest of the story, tells Helen he will show her where her son is buried. Again, hardly a point of closure.

Which is the main point of this essay: that while resolution, even sometimes closure, may be possible for Kipling and his characters in fictional terms, the fact that he keeps returning to such experiences suggests that for him there never was nor could be real closure. To quote Cathy Caruth again: “The story of trauma . . . as the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality – the escape from death, or its referential force – rather attests to its endless impact on a life.”⁴¹ There can be no permanent resolution for the individual who suffers really serious childhood trauma, any more than there can be for those who endured the Holocaust or have survived warfare.

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NOTES

- 1 Pinney, Thomas, ed., *Rudyard Kipling: Something of Myself*, p. 3. Hereafter *Something of Myself*.
- 2 *Something of Myself*, pp. 7, 12.
- 3 Kipling, Rudyard, *Wee Willie Winkie*, p. 285. Hereafter *Wee Willie Winkie*.
- 4 Fleming, Mrs A.M., "More Childhood Memories of Rudyard Kipling", *Chambers' Journal*, July 1939, p. 506.
- 5 Carrington, C.E., "'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' – Fact or Fiction", *Kipling Journal*, June 1972, pp. 7–14.
- 6 Wilson, Angus, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, pp. 20, 27, 28, 23.
- 7 Birkenhead, Lord F.W.F., *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p. 28. Birkenhead is one of several Kipling biographers and scholars who dismiss or downplay Edmund Wilson's reading of the lifelong impact of the Southsea years on Kipling and his work. While Wilson's claim that, as a result of that experience, "the whole work of Kipling's life is to be shot through with hatred" is certainly excessive, there is surely something in his suggestion that the experience helped to leave Kipling "with a fundamental submissiveness to authority". Wilson, Edmund, "The Kipling That Nobody Read" (1940), reproduced in Rutherford, Andrew, ed., *Kipling's Mind and Art*, pp. 21, 28.
- 8 Seymour-Smith, Martin, *Rudyard Kipling*, pp. 22, 23.
- 9 Lycett, Andrew, *Rudyard Kipling*, p. 48. For a moving fictionalised portrayal of the Southsea years, see the second chapter of Mary Hamer's fine novel, *Kipling and Trix* (2012).
- 10 Ricketts, Harry, *The Unforgiving Minute*, p. 29.
- 11 See "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep": "Punch [Rudyard] and Judy [Trix], through no fault of their own, had lost their world" (*Wee Willie Winkie*, p. 282) and Trix's

- comment: that “Looking back, I think the real tragedy of our early days ... sprang from our inability to understand why our parents had deserted us”. (Fleming “Some Childhood Memories of Rudyard Kipling”, p. 171).
- 12 *Wee Willie Winkie*, p. 312.
 - 13 *Something of Myself*, p. 11.
 - 14 Caruth, Cathy, “Trauma and Experience: Introduction” qtd in Bond, Lucy and Craps, Stef, *Trauma* pp. 55–56. Hereafter *Trauma*.
 - 15 Pinney, Thomas, ed., *The Cambridge Edition of the Poems of Rudyard Kipling*, vol 1 p. 56.
 - 16 Birkenhead, p. 25.
 - 17 Pinney, Thomas, ed., *Rudyard Kipling: The Cause of Humanity* p. 27.
 - 18 Kipling, *Quartette* (Lahore: The ‘Civil and Military Gazette’ Press, 1885), p. 58.
 - 19 Kipling, *From Sea to Sea and Other Sketches*, vol, p. 101.
 - 20 Kipling, *Life’s Handicap* pp. 176, 177, 175.
 - 21 Kipling, *The Cause of Humanity*, pp. 187, 185.
 - 22 Coates, John, *Kipling the Trickster*, p. 133. Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills* p. 90.
 - 23 Kipling, *Many Inventions*, p. 5.
 - 24 Faulkner, William, *Novels 1942–1954* (New York: The Library of America, 1994), p. 535.
 - 25 Haase, Donald, “Children, War, and the Imaginative Space of Fairy Tales,” (2000), p. 366. This essay was kindly drawn to my attention by Talia Crockett, a PhD student in the English Programme at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington.
 - 26 A comparable re-imagining of “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep” occurs in Kipling’s little discussed story “The Potted Princess” in which Punch and Judy, aged seven and five, have never been sent to England to suffer under Aunt Rosa.
 - 27 Kipling, Rudyard, *The Jungle Book*, pp. 40, 116, 63; *The Second Jungle Book* pp. 86, 239–240.
 - 28 Kipling, *The Jungle Book*, p. 33 *passim*.
 - 29 Kipling, *The Second Jungle Book*, p. 263.
 - 30 Fleming, “Some Childhood Memories of Rudyard Kipling”, pp. 169, 170.
 - 31 Kipling, *The Day’s Work*, p. 390.
 - 32 Kipling, *The Day’s Work*, p. 362.
 - 33 Kipling, *Actions and Reactions*, pp. 267–268.
 - 34 Kipling, *Something of Myself*, pp. 79, 78.
 - 35 Tompkins, J.M.S., *The Art of Rudyard Kipling*, p. 166.
 - 36 Kipling, *Actions and Reactions*, pp. 272, 289, 301. The “dumb Thing” here perhaps recalls the “blind face” of “La Nuit Blanche” and “At the End of the Passage”.
 - 37 Kipling, *Actions and Reactions*, p. 263. Other trauma-focused stories, both pre- and post-war, which would reward attention from this perspective include: “Mrs Bathurst”, “The Dog Hervey”, “In the Same Boat”, “Mary Postgate”, “A Madonna of the Trenches”, “The Eye of Allah”, “The Miracle of St Jubanus” and “The Tender Achilles”.
 - 38 Kipling, *Limits and Renewals*, p. 44. Hereafter *Limits and Renewals*.
 - 39 Kipling, *Limits and Renewals*, pp. 164, 172, 169, 6, 178, 151–2
 - 40 LaCapra, Dominick, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, p. 70; *History in Transit: (2004)*, p. 45. qtd in *Trauma*, p. 78.
 - 41 Caruth, Cathy, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, p. 7.

‘SOME LAND THE LAW CALLS MINE’: HOW THE KIPLINGS CREATED THE BATEMAN’S ESTATE

BY RICHARD HOWELL

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At the time that Rudyard and Carrie Kipling bought Bateman’s in June 1902, they paid £9,300 for the house and thirty-three acres of land. This included the house and gardens, the nearby Park Mill and an adjoining field of twenty-five acres, situated to the east of the house. However, through thirteen separate transactions, spread over twenty-five years, they increased their land holdings, so that by the time that Caroline died in December 1939 and the property passed to the National Trust, the estate extended to over three hundred acres. It has often been suggested that the reason for this expansion was to secure their privacy, but, as this article will explain, the original cause appears to lie in the research and influence of Rudyard’s friend and fellow author, Henry Rider Haggard, at the turn of the century, and his concerns over Britain’s heavy dependence on imported food in the event of a war in Europe.

On 22 December 1902, just over three months after moving in to Bateman’s, Rudyard wrote in a letter to Haggard: ‘For the last week or more the wife and I have been reading *Rural England* with deep joy (I don’t mean on account of the state of things revealed) and admiration. [...] I take off my hat to you deeply and profoundly because it’s a magnum opus and altogether fascinating and warning and chock full of instruction.’¹ The book to which Rudyard was referring was *Rural England: Being an Account of Agricultural and Social Researches Carried Out In the Years 1901 & 1902*, which Haggard had recently published in two volumes.

Since the 1870s onwards British farmers had found themselves unable to compete with cheap imports from abroad, with wheat coming from the prairies of America and Canada, and from the 1880s the invention of refrigeration made it possible to import cheap meat from countries such as Australia and Argentina.² As a consequence land values plummeted during this period, and between the 1870s and the 1890s prices fell from £54 per acre to £19 per acre.³ In 1900, Haggard, who owned his own country estate in Ditchingham, Norfolk, had set out to travel the counties of England to find out for himself the true situation of British agriculture. His main concern was that food from other countries could be produced more cheaply than in Great Britain,

and that it also benefited from preferential rates granted by the railway companies. This meant that imported products reached the market at a cheaper rate than the British farmers could deliver.⁴ Another major concern was the exodus of labour away from the countryside into the towns and cities. He saw a countryside where the elderly people and young children remained, 'the latter to be reared up at the expense of the agricultural community for the service of the towns and cities. As they mature into the fullness of manhood or womanhood they leave the home and are seen no more.' He went on to note, 'some parts of England are becoming almost as lonesome as the veld of Africa.'⁵

But what would have alarmed the Kiplings the most, and almost certainly caused them to think about enlarging their own estate, would have been Haggard's prediction of what might happen to Britain in the event of a war in Europe:

I am convinced that the risk of starvation which might strike our country in the event of a European war, is no mere spectre of the alarmist. It should be remembered that fleets of battleships, even if they could keep the great seas open as is cheerfully supposed, can never control the operations of the foreign and indeed the home speculators in foodstuffs. Within a fortnight of the declaration of such a war – which we must expect some day – corn would, I believe, stand at near 100s. a quarter.⁶

Just how catastrophic that rise of the price of wheat to 100 shillings a quarter would be, can be shown by the observation that Haggard made in his report that at the time of the harvest of 1902, wheat fetched 'less than 25s. a quarter, a price at which it cannot pay to grow'.⁷ A four-fold increase in the price of bread would make it unaffordable to many people in Britain at that time, and he foresaw that it would be speculators who would stand to profit most from this increase, and not the farmers. He then went on to add:

If we could think that the War Office was ready to meet such an emergency – to supply food, allay panic, &c., perhaps there would not be such cause for alarm. But what intelligent person who has studied the action of that Department during our recent troubles – in the matter of the supply of horses, for instance – can conscientiously expect anything of the sort?

Those 'recent troubles' represented a reference to the Second Boer War which had broken out in 1899. When the Boers finally surrendered in May 1902, the war had exposed many deficiencies within the British

army in terms of supply, armaments, and training of troops.⁸ Rider Haggard's alarm at England's apparent unpreparedness and inability to feed itself in the event of a European war would certainly have been shared by the Kiplings. However, with only thirty-three acres of land, they would be severely limited in what they would be able to produce, and it was this that appears to have caused them to make the decision to expand their land holdings at Bateman's.

The opportunity to make their first acquisition arose the year after they moved into Batemans, and it would be Caroline who made the purchase. On 10 October 1903 she wrote to their solicitor, George MacDonald, 'I am anxiously waiting for some news about Rye Green. If the money is not to be invested there, I want to invest it elsewhere.'⁹ The money to which she was referring, was money from the recent sale of Naulakha, their house in Vermont, which up until this time they had been unable to sell. However, a buyer had at last been found and Caroline, being the nominal owner, received £1,000 into her account. She had also been the beneficiary of a bequest following her grandmother's death in 1901.¹⁰

Rye Green was a farm adjoining the Bateman's lands to the west. By chance it had come on to the market during the summer, when it had been advertised for sale in the local newspaper.¹¹ The purchase was completed in November 1903, and included the farmhouse, buildings and just over fifty acres of land. The property was bought in Caroline's name and the purchase price was £650 plus £273 2s for the timber, making a total payment of £923 2s. Rye Green appears to have been a mixed farm of arable, pasture, woodland, a field growing hops and an orchard, and would have been typical of many other small farms in the area at that time. There was already a tenant in place, William Coppard, who was paying a rent of £75 per year.¹² Excluding the money that was paid for the value of the timber, the price they paid for Rye Green Farm worked out at £13 per acre including all the buildings. Thus, within less than eighteen months after moving in to their new home, the Kiplings had increased the size of their holding from thirty-three acres to just over eighty acres. The money paid was well within their means as Caroline recorded in her diary at the end of the year 'Income Tax ending 5th April 1903 – £984 3s. 1d. Income by Watt [Rudyard's agent] – £13,715. Invested – £9, 279.'¹³

Shortly after the purchase of Rye Green the Kiplings left England for South Africa and it was whilst there that they appear to have made the decision that if they were to expand the estate further, they would need to make a direct approach to the neighbouring landowners and be prepared to pay in excess of the going market rate, rather than hope that other properties would come on to the open market. The only other

alternative would be for them to sell Bateman's and seek another property with more land, but by that time this would have been unthinkable to them. They returned from South Africa at the end of April 1904 and on 1 June Carrie wrote in her diary, 'Business about buying Little Batemans' and on 5 June she wrote 'There seems a chance now of getting hold of Little Batemans now, buying from the purchaser, one Dowell [Howell] who has been the tenant for years.'¹⁴

Little Batemans was a small-holding about a quarter of a mile north-west of the main house, adjoining the lane that leads down to Bateman's from the main Lewes Road. Its occupant was Charles Howell, who also part-owned it along with two other vendors, Constance Walker of Holmbush, Burwash and Thomas Jarvis, butcher, of Burwash. Included in the sale was 'All that stone built cottage and several pieces and parcels of land' which amounted to just over nine acres, and the purchase was completed on 27 September 1904. The price paid, including the cottage, was £750 and the purchase was made in Rudyard's name.¹⁵ In a letter to her mother of 19 June, Caroline wrote, 'There is a wonderful view from the house, a good water supply and a frontage to Batemans Lane as well as the main Lewes Road.'¹⁶

On the same day that they bought Little Batemans, they also purchased from Thomas Jarvis two further adjoining fields known as Upper Oxfield and Lower Oxfield with a total acreage of just over seven acres, of which Charles Howell was the tenant. For these they paid £420 and again the purchase was made in Rudyard's name. It was recorded on the deeds that the two fields were 'formerly part of a certain farm and lands called Batemans Farm.'¹⁷ The combined purchases of Little Batemans and the two Oxfields amounted to sixteen acres of land, including buildings, for which they paid £1,170 or just over £73 per acre. This represented a significant increase in the amount they paid per acre over what they had paid for Rye Green just a few months earlier, indicating that they had made a conscious decision to expand their land holdings and price was not going to be a barrier.

At the end of 1904 the Kiplings were visited by Rider Haggard, who came to see their new home for the first time. It would appear that during his visit they discussed expanding the estate, since in a letter to his friend on 4 December 1904, Rudyard wrote, 'On your advice we are taking steps to get Naboth's vineyard but – oh Lord, how one has to be bled for it!'¹⁸ This was a tongue-in-cheek reference to the biblical tale in which Naboth refused to sell his vineyard to King Ahab as related in 1 Kings 21, and in this instance 'Naboth' was Alexander Scrimgeour, the man from whom the Kiplings had bought Bateman's two years earlier. Scrimgeour, a stockbroker by profession, was clearly driving a hard bargain. Eventually, on 21 February 1905 they bought from Scrimgeour,

‘All that freehold messuage and water corn mill called Dudwell Mill and also all and singular the lands and hereditaments known as Dudwell Farm or Park Farm.’ This land lay immediately to the east of Bateman’s and amounted to forty-eight acres and thirty perches, for which they paid £5,000.¹⁹ At the same time, in a separate transaction, they also purchased from Scrimgeour just over twenty-four acres of ‘pieces and parcels of land’ to the north of Batemans for £2,126.²⁰ Both purchases were made in Rudyard’s name.

These latest purchases, which amounted to seventy-two acres, cost the Kiplings £7,126, or nearly £100 per acre and illustrates how much they were prepared to pay over the market rate, bearing in mind that they had purchased Rye Green Farm, less than eighteen months earlier, for just £13 per acre. It is highly unlikely that anyone other than the Kiplings would have had either the inclination or the funds to purchase what was an otherwise unremarkable area of farmland, and which would have been of little value to anyone else. Following its purchase, Dudwell Farm and its forty-eight acres were immediately let to Thomas Jarvis, with whom they had had dealings at Little Batemans, for three years at an annual rent of £80 payable quarterly.²¹

Throughout 1905, the purchasing of land continued. On 31 July Caroline wrote to their solicitor George MacDonald, saying that they had instructed Stephen Lusted, a local builder and their *de facto* foreman, to purchase a field just to the west of Little Batemans.²² In this letter she writes: ‘It is the last bit of high land connecting us on that side, and I think Mr. Lusted has driven a very good bargain [...] We hope that there will be very little trouble and expense in connection with it, as it is part of the original Bateman’s land.’²³ The field was just eight acres in size and the price that Lusted had negotiated with its owner, Albert Jarvis, was £450. Whilst this was considerably less than what they had paid for the land that they had purchased from Scrimgeour, at just over £56 per acre it was nevertheless substantially more than the going market rate for agricultural land.

The purchase of this field, which gave them access from the Lewes Road, was completed on 13 September, when Caroline recorded in her diary, ‘We enter into possession of Jarvis field on a line with Little Suttons.’²⁴ Just four days later, on 17 September, she wrote of a further transaction, noting in her diary, ‘Lusted reports agreement with Noakes to sell part of Ashlands, 31 odd acres at £50 per acre.’²⁵ The sale to the Kiplings was completed on 4 October 1905 when they bought five fields amounting to thirty-one acres for which they paid £1,500, with the purchase being made in Rudyard’s name.

The purchasing of land by the Kiplings continued into 1906 when on 11 January they bought just over twenty-one acres of land to the east

of Bateman's, paying £800, or just over £38 per acre. The vendors were Benjamin D'Anson Breach and Hubert Decimus Egerton, agents and surveyors of 29, Fleet Street, London, and Helen Egerton of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. It was recorded on the Conveyance that Helen Egerton owed £3,300 to the other two vendors, so the transaction was probably made to reduce the money that was still owed, and may explain why it was sold to the Kiplings for a relatively low price. Included in the purchase was a brickworks. In his autobiography, Rudyard recalled, 'We had a real one [brickworks] of our own at that time where we burned bricks for barns and cottages to the exact tints we required.'²⁶

Just three weeks later, on 1 February, they completed the purchase of 'three pieces and parcels of land' which adjoined the site of the former brickworks. These comprised Gravel Pit Field of just over six acres, a meadow of five acres, and three acres one rood thirty perches of 'Land, late arable but now pasture, formerly used as a hop garden.' These fields had once formed part of a farm called Reeds, which had been sold as a separate lot in 1878.²⁷ The vendor was Thomas Jarvis of Burwash, and the purchase was made in Rudyard's name, at a price of £1,115.²⁸ This purchase added just over fourteen acres to their estate and cost them just under £80 per acre.

Between the time that the Kiplings had bought Rye Green Farm in November 1903 and the time they bought the three fields of the former Reeds farm in February 1906, the size of their estate had increased in size to around 250 acres from the original thirty-three acres they had bought when they first acquired the property in 1902. During this period, they had expended £13,133, paying an average price of just under £60 per acre, which was well in excess of the prices that similar properties were selling for in the area. With the exception of Rye Green, they had all been purchased in Rudyard's name.

However, around this time Rudyard appears to have suddenly realised how excessive were the sums they were paying for their acquisitions. In a letter from South Africa to his friend, Colonel Feilden, on 16 February 1908, he wrote, 'Goodness knows, that now is neither the time nor is England the country in which to buy land. I only hope that the Miss Schroeters are not contemplating any sale at such an inauspicious juncture. [...] For myself the mere prospect of being saddled with any more land makes me groan.'²⁹

The 'Miss Schroeters' to whom he refers were the owners of the neighbouring Bough Green Farm, which adjoined the Bateman's estate to the west, and their story perfectly illustrates the dramatic fall in land prices that occurred during the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. In November 1881, John Schroeter, a merchant from Brixton, London, bought Bough Farm comprising 113

acres for £3,000.³⁰ In May 1882 he bought a further fifty-three acres off the adjoining Green Farm for £1,500³¹. He had thus purchased over the course of six months 163 acres at a cost of £4,500 or just over £27 per acre. This was at a time when the prices for agricultural land were already in decline. In 1911 the family finally decided to sell the farm with its 163 acres and it was put up for sale by auction in July of that year, but it was withdrawn from sale when the bidding stopped at £1,900.³² It was finally sold by private treaty to Fred Hayward, a farmer from Heathfield, for £2,000.³³ In this instance, the cost per acre was just over £12 and less than half of what the family had paid nearly thirty years before. This is indicative of the way that agricultural land prices had fallen during this period and illustrates the excessive amounts that the Kiplings paid for their purchases.

However, even though Rudyard appears to have decided against buying any more land, Caroline had other ideas and over the ensuing years she gradually extended her own land holdings around Rye Green. On 1 July 1910 she recorded in her diary, 'Mr Harden reports that he bought at auction for me "The Orchards" part of Rye Green for £1200.'³⁴ The purchase was completed 11 August 1910 and comprised twenty-four acres of meadow, wood, orchard and fruit plantation.³⁵ Two years later, on 21 April 1912 Caroline wrote in her diary, 'A letter from Mr Haviland offering us 'Keylands' Farm which adjoins our property and cuts into it in part. The price asked is £650. Too much we think.'³⁶ There is no evidence of the Kiplings purchasing a farm called 'Keylands.' However, Keylands is the name of a house about one and a half miles to the west of Bateman's. On 20 September Caroline completed the purchase of Fenners Farm, which is situated to the west of Bateman's and comprised fourteen acres 'with the messuage or dwelling house, farmhouse, barn and outbuilding' for the full asking price of £650.³⁷ It seems likely, therefore, that Keylands was one of the houses that was once part of Fenners Farm.

Thus, in the years preceding the outbreak of war in 1914, their joint landholdings amounted to 288 acres. However, two further purchases would be made in the years after the ending of the war, both of which were made by Caroline. The first of these purchases was a four acre field adjacent to Keylands, for which Caroline paid £140, the purchase being completed on 12 November 1925.³⁸ On 12 September Rudyard had noted in a letter to Elsie, 'Mum has bought a four acre field and a tiny bit of shaw which lies along the lower end of the land to Keylands.'³⁹

The final purchase was made on 28 June 1928, when two fields of just over four acres each were bought at the auction of the neighbouring Judens Farm. The price that Caroline paid for the two fields was £295.⁴⁰ These latter two additions both adjoined her Rye Green holdings, thus

increasing her own share of the estate to just over one hundred acres, or nearly one third of the entire Batemans estate. Judens Farm was being broken up into separate lots by the vendors, with the farmhouse being sold as one of the lots, of which the sale particulars stated, 'The District is a favourite residential one, the estate of Rudyard Kipling Esq., the world-famous author, being in view of the residence.'⁴¹

This would be the final addition to the Bateman's Estate. It had grown in size some ten-fold from the time that the Kiplings first bought the house and thirty-three acres of land in 1902. With the exception of Rye Green Farm with its fifty-three acres, which Caroline purchased in 1903, all the subsequent purchases up to the acquisition of Reeds in 1906 had been made in Rudyard's name. Thereafter, Rudyard's enthusiasm for the 'farming' project that they had embarked upon, inspired by his close friendship with Rider Haggard, appears to have waned, although he would always take a close interest in the farms and the estate. Given the excessively high prices they paid for much of the land, they could never have seen a financial return on their investments. What is very clear is how central Caroline was to the whole enterprise. From the time that they first bought Bateman's, she shared Rudyard's initial enthusiasm for both the house and his motivation for increasing the size of the estate. It was she who made the first purchase, that of Rye Green Farm and with each acquisition she was central to all the negotiations and legalities that took place. Even after Rudyard decided that the prospect of any more land would make him 'groan', she continued to acquire other parcels of land in her own name up until 1928, so that by the end she had purchased over one hundred acres; approximately one third of the estate. It is most likely that without her involvement and support the estate would never have grown beyond the thirty-three acres that they bought with the house at the time of its purchase in 1902.

NOTES

- 1 *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard: The Record of a Friendship* ed. by Morton N. Cohen (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 49.
- 2 *British Agriculture 1875-1914* ed. by R. J. Perry (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1973), pp. 3-5.
- 3 *Champagne & Shambles* by Catherine Beale (Stroud, The History Press, 2009), p. vii.
- 4 H. Rider Haggard, *Rural England: Being an Account of Agricultural and Social Researches Carried out in the Years 1901 & 1902*, (London: Longmans Green & Co. 1906), II, 560
- 5 Haggard, *Rural England*, II, p. 536.
- 6 Haggard, *Rural England*, II, p. 560.
- 7 Haggard, *Rural England*, II, p. 544.

- 8 Simon Heffer, *The Age of Decadence: Britain 1880 to 1914* (London: Windmill Books, 2018) pp. 262–263.
- 9 Brighton, East Sussex Record Office (ESRO), Additional Manuscripts (AMS) 5928/3.
- 10 Andrew Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999). pp. 364–365.
- 11 *Sussex Express*, 18 July 1903, p. 1.
- 12 East Sussex Record Office (ESRO) AMS/5982/3/3.
- 13 Caroline Kipling (CK) Diaries, http://www.kj2.uk/car_03.pdf
- 14 CK Diaries, http://www.kj2.uk/car_04.pdf
- 15 ESRO, AMS/5982/4/20.
- 16 ESRO, Sussex Manuscripts (SxMs) 68/1.
- 17 ESRO, AMS/5982/5/21.
- 18 *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard*, p. 56.
- 19 ESRO, AMS/5982/6/84.
- 20 ESRO, AMS/5982/7/10.
- 21 ESRO, AMS/5982/6/85.
- 22 Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p. 350.
- 23 ESRO, AMS/5982/8.
- 24 CK Diaries, http://www.kj2.uk/car_05.pdf
- 25 CK Diaries, http://www.kj2.uk/car_05.pdf
- 26 Kipling, *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Thomas Pinney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) p. 109.
- 27 ESRO, AMS/5982/11/4.
- 28 ESRO, AMS/5982/10/13.
- 29 *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, III, p. 306
- 30 ESRO, AMS/7011/1/17.
- 31 ESRO, AMS/7011/1/19.
- 32 *Sussex Express*, 28 July 1911, p. 3.
- 33 ESRO, AMS/7011/1/22.
- 34 CK Diaries, http://www.kj2.uk/car_12.pdf
- 35 ESRO, AMS 5982/13/1.
- 36 CK Diaries, http://www.kj2.uk/car_12.pdf
- 37 ESRO, AMS 5982/14/1.
- 38 ESRO, AMS/5982/15.
- 39 *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, V, pp. 262–263.
- 40 ESRO, AMS/5982/17/5.
- 41 ESRO, AMS/5982/17/3.

‘TO THE SMALL ONE’

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY **JOHN WALKER**

[John Walker is Honorary Librarian and former Chairman of the Kipling Society.]

In early September 1925, Rudyard Kipling received a letter of praise for his stories and verse from Columbus, Ohio. Howard E. Phillips was working in publicity for a local department store, but he had served in the U.S. Navy during the First World War, for a while on a destroyer in the North Sea. He had retained his love of the sea, and it seems that he was enjoying the Pycroft stories, perhaps in *Traffics and Discoveries* (New York: Doubleday Page, 1904). More importantly for us, Howard was also keen to tell of his joy in sharing his love of literature with his daughter Virginia.

We must guess the content of that letter since it was presumably burnt, along with so much personal material, by Rudyard himself or later by Elsie. However, the reply reveals Rudyard’s very real pleasure in the compliments from a veteran, as well as his quick appreciation of interests and opinions.

Virginia, now approaching her hundredth birthday, remembers *Puck of Pook’s Hill* and its colourful illustrations, which were perhaps those by Arthur Rackham (New York: Doubleday Page, 1906). More importantly for the Society, her pleasure in those memories has led her to donate to us the original copies of this and three further letters to her father, and these are now safely with our Honorary Archivist, Dr Toby Parker, at Haileybury. We are enormously grateful to Virginia, now living in Maryland, and to her friend Shelley Friedman who made first contact and arranged safe delivery.

Virginia went on to gain her Master of Library Science degree in 1957, and to work for many years in the libraries of the District of Columbia. Howard’s love of books proved understandably lasting for his ‘small one’ – as Kipling referred to her in one letter.

The four letters are all on Bateman’s standard stock, dated 21st September 1925, 4th December 1926, 22nd January 1927 and 6th January 1936. Below are my transcriptions, with some notes about each, and two illustrations of a letter typed by Rudyard himself, which I am sure readers will enjoy. (I would be happy to offer researchers digital copies subject to the usual permissions.) The originals will be stored and conserved at Haileybury College, with advice from our Honorary Archivist, Dr Toby Parker.

Private

4 September 1925

Dear Mr. Phillips,

That was a really splendid letter of yours and I am very proud of it, and specially glad that Pyecroft and his works seem good to you. He was an able man, and, as a rule, held his liquor.

You sound as though rather homesick for the sea, which is remote from the State of Ohio. I should think there were times when you went to your job in the morning with a certain amount of fed-up-ness. I sit within eleven miles of Beachy Head, as the 'plane flies, and during the war one used to hear the ships going up – or rather down; and there was a rather comic engagement in daylight between two submariners off the Head. The Hun would have it that the class of boat he was dealing with had only one tube. He was right – by the book, but not abreast of recent dockyard improvements – whereby there were two tubes, and for a wonder, they both delivered all right. Result, the captured Hun Commander, as soon as they got the salt water out of him, accused our chap of cheating! It was a fairly insane four years, wasn't it?

You must take it that I have answered your letter, very gratefully, in the spirit in which it was written. One can't spread one's feelings about on paper in these matters, but one can wish you all the good fortune in the world and, (if you desire it) a return to within working distance of the beach.

Very sincerely yours,
Rudyard Kipling [Handwritten]

[At this time, Elsie was staying at Bateman's (Bateman's Visitors Book), and her father was busy with the Stalky stories. Rudyard and Caroline were soon to set off on a motor tour of the West of England. (See Caroline's diaries).

There seems to be no corresponding record of the sinking of a U-boat by a British submarine off Beachy Head, though this may have been UC65, torpedoed by HM Sub C15 at 50°31'N 00°27'E, in 1917. (<https://uboat.net/wwi/fates/losses.html>). J.W.]

The second letter, typed by Kipling himself, is dated 4th December 1926. (See scan on p. 36).

Dec. 4/26

Private

Dear Mr. Phillips,

I have been away from my place for a bit, and am just off again, but I must first thank you for your long letter of the 11th November.

Thank you specially for your “study of a Semitic interior” and its inhabitant. It is not a yoke that is easy to bear, and it very soon exhausts the limitations of the native tongue. I could tell you a tale about that, which my Corona can not well set down in the chill of type.

But surely Master Mariners are licensed, or “certificated” on both sides the water. Otherwise, how can *passegel* [*sic*] savee Number one Captain? I ask with some interest because I stand a chance of being made an “honorary Master Mariner”, and I’ll trouble you to find a more mouth-filling title for a man who could not navigate a raft across a reservoir. I have not been anywhe[re] in a ship for ages – not counting an hotel on a keel which takes me across the Bay to Marseilles and such like foreign ports. It is supplied with a lift and palms.

I gather from various friends that the issue at your next Election will be Prohibition; and that the odds are in favour of “modification.”

I take it that this “blessed word” means a free fight all round. The politician (on both sides the water) never seems to learn that he gets into more trouble from preternding to be virtuous than if he followed his natural instincts.

Now I have to fly off and navigate in a car for the week-end. I ought to have written more, but I have only just time to send you all Christmas wishes, and specially to the Small One who has such a sound taste in literature.

Ever sincerely,
Rudyard Kipling
Please forgive our typing [Handwritten]

[Kipling had been in London to meet Stephen Tallents of the Empire Marketing Board, and the film producer Walter Creighton, regarding a ‘propaganda’ film, involving ingredients for ‘The King’s Christmas Pudding’ gathered from the Empire (Lycett, page 536). Rudyard and Caroline were invited to Chequers (the Prime Minister’s country residence) for the weekend of 4th/5th December, leaving Batemans at 12.15 p. m. (see Caroline’s diary). The ‘study of a Semitic interior’ was presumably a written one. Howard Phillips enjoyed writing, and was hoping to publish. (Memories of Virginia Phillips). Kipling was to be made an Honorary Master Mariner (possibly a ‘Younger Brother’) at Trinity House on 22nd June 1927 (Alastair Wilson ed: CK diaries). The Small One – Virginia Phillips, was just three years old. J.W.]

The third letter, again typed by Kipling himself but a little more successfully (presumably with more time) is dated 22nd January 1927.

Jan. 22/27

Private

Dear Mr. Phillips,

This is on the eve of departure to thank you for yours of the 12th. What on earth makes the mails so slow? It used to be inside of eight days.

I am now really going to navigate in foreign parts, and my hardships will include private bath with shower and nickel-plated taps, interlocking rubber-tiles, sitting room, palm-court, wireless communication, and all those other perils which Drake and Anson faced so nobly. But no Horn for me. Rio will be enough. You[r] tale of vulgar brawls with the Sea round Cape Stiff make[s] me sick. I met a fat well-groomed man the other day who weighed in with a yarn of his experiences in those parts during the war, when rumours of Hun cruisers were added to the weather. He said it distracted him from (oddly enough), salt-boils on his wrist.

Your forecast of "directional Liners" will come true in fifteen years or so. Then we shall see all Israel taking to the sea.

It was not true about Marine hair-dressers. A later edition said that ladies are still employed. I suppose the Tonsorial Trades Union objected to *Pyecroft*. [Handwritten addition]

All luck to you and yours,

Very sincerely,

Rudyard Kipling [Handwritten signature]

[Rudyard and Caroline left for Southampton at 11.00 a.m. on 27th January, to board the Royal Mail Ship Andes, bound for Rio de Janeiro. 'Cape Stiff' is a sailor nickname for Cape Horn. 'Directional Liners' may be a reference to automated steering and helm controls, developed in the early 1920's (Oil tanker JA Moffet). Regarding Marine hair-dressers, had Phillips been reading 'The Janeites', whose protagonist is the former Royal Artillery gunner Humberstall, a hairdresser 'somewhere at the back of Ebury Street'? Before publication in Debts and Credits (1926), there were other versions in magazines, such as Hearst's International (in which Humberstall may have been a Marine...) J.W.] ...

Finally there is a letter dated 6th January 1936. Typed by a secretary (Miss Nicholson), this is one of the last letters to be personally signed by Kipling. He and Carrie set out for London on 9th January, and Rudyard was taken to Middlesex Hospital on the 13th.

6th January 1936

Private

Dear Mr. Phillips,

Ever so many thanks for your interesting letter of the 16th December and for all the kind things you are pleased to say about my work. But, up to now, I haven't received your "new cut ashlar". Does that mean it hasn't been published? If so, please send it when it is. You don't give me a hint of what it is about.

Yes, you were right about deaf road-menders and the like. It is what is technically called "enterprise" – i.e. a lie out of the whole cloth. Incidentally too, the modern motor-traffic and the cement roads to take it abolished the road-mender and the stone-breaker a goodish few years ago. Also a deaf stone-breaker would have been in the local morgue after the first week.

Like you I am watching the course of events with mild wonder tempered with occasional mental dizziness.

Every good wish for the year ahead of us.

Sincerely,

*Rudyard Kipling*P.S. I have not been given a licence to navigate even the Queen Mary!

Rudyard Kipling

[As previously noted, Howard Phillips hoped to become a published writer. The 'new cut ashlar' is a quotation from Kipling's own 'Envoi' to Life's Handicap (1891), which he knew or assumed was familiar to his correspondent. The 'deaf road-mender' may refer to false claims for injury in the United States, reported in the pre-war years, or perhaps was a general comment on unsuitable jobs. The remark about 'events' over Christmas 1935 may be a response to a comment from Phillips on Mussolini's 2nd Italo-Ethiopian War, or perhaps the Nuremberg rallies in Nazi Germany. J.W.]

SOURCESAndrew Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999)

Virginia Phillips, personal communication (email)

A. Wilson, ed., *Diaries of Carrie Kipling*, www.kiplingsociety.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

March 2023

NEW MEMBERS

It is my great pleasure to publicly welcome and introduce the following members who have joined the Kipling Society in recent months:

Mr. Hugh COONEY (*Co. Kildare, Ireland*)

Mr. Curtis EDMUNDSON (*Ohio, USA*)

Dr. Timothy FFYTCHÉ (*London, UK*)

Mr. Mark GUINAN (*West Yorkshire, UK*)

Mr. Jonathan JUETT (*Kentucky, USA*)

Mr. Andrew McCARTHY (*London, UK*)

Mr. Peter McHUGH (*Tyne and Wear, UK*)

Mr. Gerald McRANEY (*California, USA*)

Mr. David RANDALL (*New York, USA*)

Mr. Clive RUTLEDGE (*London, UK*)

Mr. Josh SCOTT (*Oxford, UK*)

PAYING BY STANDING ORDER

UK-based members who would like to pay their annual subscription by standing order should contact me to receive the necessary form. See below for my contact details.

RENEWING YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ONLINE

It is possible to renew all types of subscription using a credit or debit card and the PayPal facility on the joining and renewing page of the Society's website.

LEAVING THE SOCIETY

We are always sorry to lose one of our members but understand the various reasons underlying such a move. If your subscription will not be renewed when it becomes due, I would greatly appreciate a short message to that effect in order to keep our membership records up to date. I can be contacted by post (Keylands, Burwash, East Sussex TN19 7HP, UK) or via email (ksmemsec@outlook.com).

Fiona Renshaw
Membership Secretary

KIPLING AND HIS GENTLEMEN'S CLUBS

BY DAVID ALAN RICHARDS

[David Alan Richards, author of *Rudyard Kipling: A Bibliography* (2010), is President of the Kipling Society. His most recent article for the *Kipling Journal* is "Kipling and 'The Friend': Boers, Badges and Bibliographers", KJ 390, May 2022. *Ed.*]

The atmosphere of a club "softens the ferocious, gives countenance to the meek and comfort to the solitary, educates the overlearned, silences the argumentative, and has been known to arrest the predestined prig on his downward path." *Rudyard Kipling*

"Sometimes, in a smoking-room, one learns why things were done."
*Rudyard Kipling*¹

KIPLING AND THE SAVILE CLUB

In early October 1889, Rudyard Kipling arrived in England after travelling from India and across the United States, and by 23 October had taken rooms in Embankment Chambers on Villiers Street in London. On 1 November, in a postcard sent to his American friend from India Edmonia Hill and her sister Caroline Taylor, he wrote breezily: "Dined at Savile am down for it. [Novelist Walter] Besant goes there and everyone seems to know me."² Kipling's autobiography *Something of Myself* (1937) reveals that a novel by Besant inspired him to leave India and make a career as a writer in England. Of his membership of the Savile Club, he wrote:

To my great pride I was elected a member of the Savile—"the little Savile" then in Piccadilly—and on my introduction, dined with no less than [Thomas] Hardy and Walter Besant. My debts to the latter grew at once, and you may remember that I owed him much indeed. He had his own views on publishers, and was founding, or had just founded, the Authors' Society. He advised me to entrust my business to an agent and sent me to his own—A. P. Watt.³

Throughout his career, Rudyard Kipling was (*contra* Charles Carrington)⁴ a clubman, first in Lahore's Punjab Club⁵, then in New York City's Century Association; finally in London in (successively and sometimes simultaneously) the Savile, the Athenæum, the "Club", the Beefsteak, and Grillion's. He had a *carte de visite* printed using the Savile Club as his address, and thereafter a business card for the Athenæum.⁶ All these clubs, the friendships he formed and the contacts

he made therein, had a significant influence upon his career, both as a professional author and as a public figure whose private club memberships brought him to sit across dining tables from or in circles of great leather chairs, conversing with leading politicians in America and Great Britain.

The Savile, whose premises are at 69 Brook Street but which then met at 107 Piccadilly,⁷ especially attracted literary men and artists, and was the principal literary club of its day. Although Kipling was not to be elected until 1891, he was evidently free of the club almost at once after his moving to Embankment Chambers, as a guest of other Savilians such as Andrew Lang.⁸ He wrote to Edmonia Hill shortly after sending his postcard about the club that “the long-haired literati of the Savile Club are swearing that I ‘invented’ my soldier talk in Soldiers Three. Seeing that not one of these critters has been within earshot of a barrack, I am naturally wrath.”⁹

Kipling’s “wrath” was probably a pose, and presumably unvoiced within the clubhouse. Shortly after the Savile’s founding, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: “Here gather daily those young eaglets of glory, the swordsmen of the pen who are the pride and wonder of the world, and the terror and envy of the effete pensionnaires of the Athenæum... They are all young...And they are all Rising.”¹⁰ The delay between Rudyard’s introduction by the literary critic and collector of fairy tales Andrew Lang on 25 October 1889 and his induction in 1891 was due to the club’s limitation on membership to 500 persons. He could not be entered officially as a candidate for election until a vacancy was known to be imminent, although his eligibility was undoubted. On 18 November 1889, John Addington Symonds wrote a friend that “It seems to me that he is going to make a name in England. The Savile Club was all on the *qui vive* about him, when I lunched there with Gosse.”¹¹ On 25 March 1890 he was the subject of a leader in *The Times*, reviewing all of his work.¹² The relevant page of the club’s Candidates Book, dated 30 January 1891 and describing him (in Lang’s handwriting) as “author of Plain Tales from the Hills, Departmental Ditties, &c”, bears some 45 members’ signatures, beginning with Andrew Lang and Henry James and Sidney Colvin, and including Besant, James Bryce, Edward Clodd, John Collier, H. Rider Haggard, Edmond Gosse, Thomas Hardy,¹³ Austin Dobson, J. W. Mackail (husband of Rudyard’s cousin Margaret Burne-Jones), Walter Herries Pollock, George Saintsbury, and W.J. Henley—all authors or editors—and the publishers George A. Macmillan and Rupert Hart-Davis, to name only the most prominent.¹⁴

Macmillan’s Magazine would publish its first Kipling contributions, the poem “A Ballad of East and West” and the story “The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney”, in December 1889, becoming the leading British

outlet for his short stories; Macmillan afterwards became Kipling's publisher of fiction in hard covers in Great Britain.¹⁵ Henley, the most important and influential editor of his day at the helm of the *Scots* (later *National*) *Observer*, ran Kipling's initial contributions, the poems "The Explanation" and "Danny Deever", in the issues of 1 February and 22 February 1890, respectively. Rudyard was then visited at his lodgings by the *Scots Observer's* proprietor Fitzroy Bell and his solicitor Herbert Stephen (also a Savile member), to whom he declaimed the just-drafted ballad "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" and, asked if there was anything else, fished out of his wastebasket "Cleared," which had been rejected by *The Times* but was then published in the *Observer* on 8 March.¹⁶ In the next four months, Henley published "Tommy", "Fuzzy-Wuzzy", "Loot", "The Widow at Windsor", "Gunga Din", and "Mandalay". That summer, Rudyard's portrait was painted by Savile Club member John Collier, and he sat for him again a decade later.¹⁷

While mutual club membership with these magazine editors and proprietors was important for Kipling's career, the friendships he made were the real prize: Walter Besant, George Saintsbury, literary critic and wine connoisseur, who was to dedicate his *Notes on a Cellar Book* to Kipling in 1920, Walter Pollock, editor of the *Saturday Review*, Rider Haggard (sufficiently like-minded for them to remain close friends into old age), Andrew Lang, the most prolific writer of his generation, who persuaded the publishing house of Sampson Low to buy the English rights to the six Kipling titles in Wheeler's Indian Railway Library.¹⁸ Also congenial were Edmund Gosse, critic and essayist, one of the central figures of the literary establishment (who as London agent for the American magazine *The Century*, introduced Rudyard to Wolcott Balestier, brother of the woman Rudyard was to marry), and Thomas Hardy (whose honorary fellowship at Magdalene College, Cambridge Kipling would fill at Hardy's death). These remained his especial friends among men of letters.¹⁹

From them he learned much: "One heard very good talk at the Savile."²⁰ Besant gave his valuable advice on advancing in the London literary world's "dog-fight" without picking sides. Other members gave him

much kindness and toleration. There was Gosse, of course, sensitive as a cat to all atmospheres, but utterly fearless when it came to questions of good workmanship; Hardy's grave and bitter humour; Andrew Lang, as detached to all appearances as a cloud but—one learned to know—never kinder in your behalf than when he seemed least concerned with you;... Rider Haggard, to whom I took 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 tables: Saintsbury, a solid rock of learning and geniality whom I revered all my days; profoundly a scholar and versed in the art of good living... There were scores of other good men at the Savile, but the names and faces of those I have named come back clearest.²¹

Kipling resigned from the Savile in 1905,²² but from a chatty letter of advice in 1916 to his friend the Canadian physician and novelist Andrew Macphail, he explained something of his philosophy of London men's clubs:

Now as to Clubs. This is a grave matter. It is easier to recommend a man a wife than a club for the one—but I will not pursue the parallel. Much—most, I think—depends on your geographical location. For example, Victoria was for many years my station and the Savile 107 Piccadilly my club. The Savile is grossly literary but comfortable and in a way sociable. There is a little card-playing upstairs and the liquors are decent. Later on, Charing + became my station and I never set foot in the Savile for so many years that out of shame and economy, I at last resigned [in 1905] and kept only to the Athenæum [to which he was elected in April 1897]. That extra half mile westward was as effective as a barrage. I don't know whether you'd care for the Savile—Now, ink's a fine thing in its place but after blood it is sometimes flat—or flatulent.²³

KIPLING AND THE CENTURY CLUB

When Kipling lived in Vermont in the United States, he joined the Century Association in New York City, the members of which believed it (with good reason) to be the American equivalent of the Athenæum.²⁴ Founded in 1847 as a private social, arts and dining club in New York City for “authors, artists, and amateurs of letters and the fine arts”, it was exclusively a men's club until 1988, when women were first admitted. It took its name from the initial number of members – one hundred – and was devoted to enabling a flowering of artistic production in the United States, with a mission to introduce artists to men of commerce, thus promoting a market for the artists' works. In 1882, a member described its transformation: “Our club is an assemblage...of every profession – Artists, Literary Men, Scientists, Physicians, Officers of the Army and Navy, Members of the Bench and Bar, Clergymen, Representatives of the Press, Merchants, and men of leisure. The effect of this re-union is not so much the *promotion* as the *creation* of intelligence.”²⁵

Its clubhouse, a five-story palazzo style building located at 7 West 43rd Street near Fifth Avenue in midtown Manhattan, was designed by McKim, Mead & White, and constructed from 1889 to 1891; ironically, the source for its design by Stanford White was the oldest of London clubs, White's on St. James's Street, known for its card games, wagering, and drink.²⁶ The members, known as "Centurions", have included eight United States Presidents (among them Theodore Roosevelt – upon election in 1884 as New York City's Civil Service Commissioner²⁷ – and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who shared a passion for Kipling's verses with Winston Churchill), 43 cabinet members, 29 Nobel Prize laureates, and scions of the Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, and Astor families. Many others have made significant contributions in the fields of law, science, academia, business, arts, journalism, and athletics.²⁸

Kipling, notwithstanding the removal of his family's residence from Vermont to England in 1896 after only a year of membership, remained a member from his induction on 2 November 1895 until his death in 1936.²⁹ At his election, midway through his 29th year, he was already the world's most famous living author.³⁰ His father Lockwood's good friend, the American collector of Indian art Lockwood de Forest, nominated the young man for membership on 28 June 1895; his seconder was Richard Watson Gilder, editor-in-chief from 1881 of *Scribner's Magazine*, which in November of that year became *The Century Magazine* (yes, taking its name from the club), and in 1891 commenced serial publication over 10 issues of *The Naulahka*, which Kipling had co-written with his brother-in-law Wolcott Balestier. It was Gilder's assistant, William Carey, whom Kipling told he and Carrie would become "settled down citizens of the United States."³¹

His seconders included sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens, architect Henry Rutgers Marshall, writer and humorist John Kendrick Bangs, poet Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet Frank Dempster Sherman, and John Hay, President Abraham Lincoln's private secretary and biographer and President James Garfield's Assistant Secretary of State (later President William McKinley's Ambassador to Great Britain and then Secretary of State).³² Kipling's letter of thanks to Stedman (21 July 1894) granted Stedman the requested permission to include some of Kipling's verse (he printed six poems) in his *Victorian Anthology, 1837–1895*, in the section "Colonial Poets – India – Australasia – Dominion of Canada". In giving consent to the editor, the youthful author protested mildly: "Isn't it a little early to anthologize the likes of me? But it shall be as you please."³³

On 4 November 1895, Kipling responded from his Vermont home "Naulahka" to Robert Underwood Johnson, who informed him of

his election to the Century on 2 November (the youngest person ever elected to this club at that date:

Very many thanks. Now, as the private soldier said when they locked him up, “now, I have a place to get drunk in.” In all seriousness I am much indebted to you and Gilder and my many good friends. I hope to be down some day and explore my new possessions. Meantime I feel very gorgeous and grateful.

In his postscript, he illustrated his letter. “What the deuce is an ‘Imperial’ photograph? The committee informs me I’ve got to be photoed that way and – I don’t know how.” His appended self-portrait shows him wearing a papal tiara.³⁴ To Stedman, writing on the same day and referring to the American eagle which formerly stood in the basement of the old Century Club, he declared: “It is a fine thing to be a centurion and when you come to think of it the original centurions marched under the Eagle.”³⁵

Kipling’s membership of the Century significantly affected his life in two other ways. First, his and Carrie’s new home in Brattleboro was designed by Henry Rutgers Marshall, a Centurion and friend of the Balestier family.³⁶ When Kipling’s *Barrack Room Ballads* appeared in 1892, he sent a presentation copy to Marshall, wrapped in an illustrated manuscript of “The Princess and the Pickle Bottle,” as a gift for Marshall’s daughter Serena. (A longer version would appear in the January 1893 issue of the children’s magazine, *St. Nicholas*).³⁷

Marshall had also built the home of Kipling nominator John Kendrick Bangs’s house in Yonkers, New York. One day Bangs and Kipling lunched with him at the Century; when Marshall asked them how they liked their respective houses, Bangs responded that there were only two things he didn’t like, “the inside and the outside,” and Kipling said that he had “only one objection to my house, and that is that I ever had it built at all.” Marshall belatedly realized that this dual ambush had been pre-planned, and took it (the Century’s official history records) “in good part.”³⁸

Secondly, while his new home was being built, Kipling decided to petition for a new post office at the intersection of the road from his house and the main Brattleboro highway. Centurion John Hay called on the Kiplings on their trip to Washington, D.C. in 1895, shortly before Kipling was formally nominated for the Century (seconded by Hay), and introduced him there to influential lawyer William Hallett Phillips.³⁹ Phillips in turn persuaded President Grosvenor Cleveland, a Centurion from 1890, to grant the request in June, having noted that Kipling got more mail than Brattleboro’s biggest firm, the Estey Organ

Company, and had also secured support by submitting a petition from local farmers. From September 1895, while the Century's Admissions Committee reviewed his membership nomination as a resident of Brattleboro, Kipling headed his letters "Naulakha, Waite, Windham County, Vermont,"⁴⁰ and mid-September, Kipling sent out signed, pre-printed change of address cards.⁴¹ This is the only post office ever established in Vermont for the convenience of one person, and it was closed in July 1897 after the Kipling's abrupt departure from the U.S. and never re-opened

Nevertheless, his active life in his New York club, first as a guest and then a member, lasted only a few years. Once, according to a Centurion's diary, Kipling "told some stories of jungle and camp life in India," prompting Yale University President Arthur Twining Hadley, sitting nearby, to inquire privately of the head-waiter who the glorious talker might be.⁴² When Kipling, having removed his family to England in July 1896 following his too-public lawsuit with his brother-in-law Beatty Balestier, briefly returned to New York City in 1899 and fell seriously ill, the Century sent him "hearty congratulations upon his prospect of recovery from the severe illness which has caused its members the deepest solicitude, and to assure him that it unites with the whole English-speaking world in rejoicing that his prophetic voice is not yet to be silenced."⁴³ In the meantime, given his removal to Great Britain, he asked if his dues might be suspended; the club agreeing, he remained a member all his life. Two years after his return to England, he also presented the club library with a subscription to the new 'Outward Bound' edition of his collected works.⁴⁴

Centurion Brander Matthews was a critic, theater historian and professor at Columbia University, who became a friend and correspondent of Kipling⁴⁵ (they probably first met in London at the Savile Club), and whose death in 1932 prompted Kipling to write to a Centurion, urging that the Century perhaps commission and display a bust of Matthews, with whom Kipling had often debated about Shakespeare. (The bust was never commissioned.)⁴⁶ Following Kipling's own death in 1936, "A group of Centurions, cherishing the memory of their fellow member Rudyard Kipling, have presented to the Club the Burwash edition of Kipling's works, the most beautiful and complete Kipling edition."⁴⁷

THE ATHENAEUM AND OTHER LONDON CLUBS

Kipling's election to the Athenæum in 1897 marked an ascension, both socially and intellectually, as his wife wrote to a friend: "Did you hear of his election under Rule II (distinguished service to literature) to the Athenæum Club? He is the youngest member by 20 years. It's the only

honour worth having in England and we are very proud and pleased.”⁴⁸ Kipling himself recalled it with pride in *Something of Myself*:

A great, but frightening, honour came to me when I was thirty-three [actually thirty-one] under Rule Two [*sic*], which provides for admitting distinguished persons without ballot. I took council with [his uncle Edward] Burne-Jones. ‘I don’t dine there often,’ said he. ‘It frightens *me* rather, but we’ll tackle it together.’ And on the night appointed we went to that meal. So far as I recall we were the only people in that big dining-room, for in those days the Athenæum, until one got to know it, was rather like a cathedral between services... Before long I realized that if one wanted to know anything from forging an anchor to forging antiquities one would find the world’s ultimate expert in the matter at lunch.⁴⁹

Kipling had written his American friend Charles Eliot Norton on 30 October 1896 that “Uncle Ned” had “seconded me for the Athenæum and I hope to be a bishop before I die.” (The club was famous for its episcopal members.) “There’s some chance of the A’s electing me by committee—some day.”⁵⁰ The day came sooner than expected because Sidney Colvin, keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum, had suggested that Kipling be spared the normal membership procedures and invited to join under the club’s now-famous Rule II.⁵¹

It was (and is) not unusual for English gentlemen to have more than one club membership; Trollope was elected to the Athenæum in 1864, just two years after joining the Garrick Club.⁵² And Kipling’s admission under the Athenæum’s Rule II described a special distinction. From its founding in 1823 as a club for ‘literary and scientific men, and followers of the fine arts,’ the club’s prestige and desirability resulted in the path to ordinary membership being clogged with applicants who might wait a decade and a half for the stated limitation on membership to be reduced by the deaths of current members.⁵³ To enhance the Club’s standing, its General Committee in 1830 introduced this rule, whereby the Committee could elect ‘a certain number of persons of distinguished eminence in Science Literature or the Arts’ each year – but no more than nine, reflecting the full membership’s unwillingness to allow the General Committee to control the election of new candidates.⁵⁴

Under Rule II, in the full flowering of the arts and sciences in Victorian Britain, when the Athenæum was “the focus of the intellectual life of the nation”,⁵⁵ the club boasted many famous literary members, admitted under both elective systems: Browning, Trollope, Willkie Collins (Rule II, 1861), Henry James, Hardy (1891), Stevenson (1888, while already abroad for his health’s sake), Haggard (1895), Arthur

Conan Doyle (1901), John Galsworthy (1920, like Kipling a winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature), Max Beerbohm the Kipling antagonist (1929), and after Rudyard's death, W. B. Yeats (1937), the Athenæum's third literary Nobel, and Kipling Society Vice President T. S. Eliot (1949), Kipling admirer and later Vice-President of the Kipling Society. By the 1870s, the Rule II honor was so well known outside the clubhouse at 107 Pall Mall that Rule II elections were announced in the press, and the procedure could be referred to by a biographer without explanation.⁵⁶ Only two literary men were on the General Committee at the time of Rudyard's election: Besant and Colvin, both members of the Savile.⁵⁷ Burne-Jones's letter to his nephew congratulating him on his election, now framed and on display at the club, is illustrated with bishops in gaiters sitting in armchairs reading newspapers, or walking about.⁵⁸

Other old friends from India were members, notably former Viceroy of India Lord Dufferin, and Field Marshal Earl Roberts of Kandahar (Rule II), and Savile members such as Andrew Lang and George Macmillan. In the "solemn halls of the Athenæum",⁵⁹ Rudyard was to meet many of the current and rising military and political leaders while lunching there.⁶⁰ In a letter of July 1897 he noted that he "met Thursfield last night at the Athenæum and discussed naval manœuvres – and Admiral Stevenson whom I may some day respect but cannot love."⁶¹ On 29 May 1903, Kipling was among the invitees gathered for "a dinner to Mr. Chamberlain [Colonial Secretary, elected 1882] by personal friends in the Athenæum." Among the guests were Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, seated next to Earl Roberts, future PM Henry Asquith, and future Secretary of State for India John Morley. Chamberlain's son Austen was seated to Kipling's left; to his right was Sir George Goldie, founder of the Royal Niger Company.⁶² Kipling's cousin Philip Burne-Jones drew a picture of Kipling in the club window of the Athenæum reading *The Times* and wearing the kind of hat that Philip considered suitable to his new dignity, of which Rudyard attempted to make light to his American architect Marshall:

You are entirely wrong in your estimate of the Athenæum. 'Tisn't a club to be found dead in—unless you're a bishop...you keep out of it on account of the lowness of the Company and its variegated boredom. You can't even take a stranger across the door mat: and as for drinks—you'd be cast out of the British Constitution by the Archbishop of Canterbury in person. We'll go to the Savile as of yore.⁶³

At the start, he found it formidable: he wrote a friend in a letter (undated but presumably in June 1897 when Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated): "The Athenæum (Golly, what a Club! I have been afraid to enter it for fear the hall porter would kick me out) is good enough for me – and London in Jubilee is unspeakable Tophet."⁶⁴ Thirty years later, in 1926, Hugh Walpole wrote: "A wonderful morning with old Kipling at the Athenæum. He was sitting surrounded by the review of his new book [*Debits and Credits*] beaming like a baby."⁶⁵

Kipling mentioned the club often in his correspondence: in 1901, he joined the opposition to allowing strangers to be invited for dinner: "Indeed, as the seniors put it feelingly, the Athenæum is the only club left for a man's sure privacy."⁶⁶ In 1902, he gleefully advised Charles Eliot Norton that under the new licensing act, if the Athenæum as a club sold a drink to an honorary member – "let us say [John] Hay" – it would be breaching the laws regulating clubs and subject to police raid. "From that police court it would certainly appeal but *there is not in the length and breadth of Great Britain a judge who could try the appeal because they are all members of the club*. This is a nice and circular proposition which grows as you go into it."⁶⁷ In 1909 he wrote his son John: "Mummy and I went up to London yesterday and I lunched at my Club on soused mackerel (in vinegar) and fish pie which is rather a silly sort of food. Nobody much was there and I didn't hear any good stories."⁶⁸

Between 1909 and 1912, Kipling served on the club's General Committee, voting on Rule II members.⁶⁹ In 1914, the Librarian Henry Tedder's fortieth year of service to the club, Kipling wrote out his sonnet entitled "To A Librarian" in faux sixteenth century script on worn and crumpled paper, which he tendered to Tedder to be displayed beneath the librarian's portrait then painted for club display. The text was printed as a broadside for distribution to club members.⁷⁰ In 1929, he presented to the club William Strang's portrait etching of him, signed by the artist and autographed by the author;⁷¹ this now hangs alongside the stairs to the club's third floor among portraits of other members. Nevertheless, he did not especially put himself forward: the Donation Books do not mention Kipling giving any of his works to the Athenæum's Library, and he declined to speak at club's centenary dinner in 1924; instead, Sir Henry Newbolt replied on behalf of "literature".⁷² The story attributed by Lord Birkenhead to Elsie Bambridge, that Rudyard was stalked from England to the Cape and back again by a lunatic who tried to shoot him outside the Athenæum, is not confirmed by the Club's records.⁷³

In later life, Kipling was elected to even more select or specialized men's dining clubs, including "The Club" or Literary Club, founded in 1764 by Dr. Johnson and Joshua Reynolds, boasting as members Boswell, Gibbon, Burke, and Goldsmith, to which he was elected on 5 May 1914; in Rudyard's day, its members dined in white waistcoats

at the Café Royal.⁷⁴ He proposed his cousin Stanley Baldwin (former Prime Minister Arthur Balfour seconding), before Baldwin became PM, following as members Gladstone, Salisbury, and Asquith, and signed (but did not write) the letter to Baldwin announcing that the recipient “had last night the honour to be elected a member of the Club.” This Kipling styled “the Gibbonian formula – it has never varied”, and advised him that “the rig is short-jackets and black ties but P.M.s can use anything.”⁷⁵

Sir William Osler wrote of a dinner there in 1919, with the Archbishop of York in the chair, and John Buchan, Henry Newbolt, Charles Oman, and H. A. L. Fisher among the diners. “Kipling was in very good form, and told many good war stories. He said he would not be surprised if in a few years the monastic life was revived – as men were seeking relief from the burdens of a hard world and turning more to spiritual matters.”⁷⁶ Kipling was in the dinner meeting’s rotating chair on Baldwin’s first attendance, on 19 February 1925, at the Café Royal; seated between them was Lord Crawford and Balcarres, who recorded in his journal that Kipling was “telling us war stories, or rather describing to us the nature of his collection” of the testimonies of soldiers heard in railway stations on which Rudyard had taken notes.⁷⁷ In 1933, he chatted at the Club with George Macaulay Trevelyan about a published compilation of the private correspondence of Sarah the Duchess of Marlboro.⁷⁸

In later life, Kipling was elected to two other select – if not as famous then or now – dining clubs, namely the more oriented Grillion’s, and the more private and career-diverse Beefsteak Club, to which he transferred his lunch appointments from the Athenæum. At Grillion’s he found ‘more good *talk* and more political tosh’ than in most places, but his reports were unenthusiastic; on 18 July 1928, he found himself at one of his first dinners near “the deadly Bore [1st Baron] Darling” and two years on he found himself dining there with “both Archbishops, ex- and present one – and many more eminent besides. Result, a de-dull meal”.⁷⁹ His proposer for the Beefsteak Club (founded 1735, wound up 1867 and re-founded 1876)⁸⁰ was his publisher, Sir Frederick Macmillan.⁸¹ The two seconders were Perceval Landon and, known from their days of working with Henley, Charles Whibley; eighteen other members inscribed the book in his support, all necessarily from personal acquaintance.⁸²

In *Something of Myself*, apparently alluding to his lack of a London residence, Kipling wrote:

My life made me grossly dependent on Clubs for my spiritual comfort.
Three English ones, The Athenæum, Carlton, and Beefsteak, met my

wants, but the Beefsteak gave me the most. Our company there was unpredictable, and one could say what one pleased at the moment without being taken at the foot of the letter. Sometimes one would draw a full house of five different professions, from the Bench to the Dramatic Buccaneers. Otherwhiles, three of a kind, chance-stranded in town, would drift into long, leisurely talk that ranged half earth over.... But it was best of all when of a sudden someone or something plunged us all in what you might call a general 'rag,' each man's tongue guarding his own head.⁸³

Those signing the book for his candidature at the Beefsteak in 1924 included, as well as the composer Edward Elgar (who had set Kipling's "Fringes of the Fleet" in 1917), and several authors, including Maurice Baring, A. E. W. Mason, and Hugh Walpole.⁸⁴ Other members included his lifelong schoolfriend Lionel Dunsterville ("Stalky"), Percival Landon and H. A. Gwynne, his friends and fellow reporters in the Boer War, and the writers Duff Cooper,⁸⁵ Harold Nicolson, Sir James Barrie, Harold Nicolson, Lord Dunsany,⁸⁶ E. V. Lucas, A. A. Milne, Alfred Noyes, R. C. Sherriff, P. G. Wodehouse (Kipling's ardent admirer), and from Bloomsbury, Clive Bell and Desmond McCarthy.⁸⁷ Dunsterville, who in the late 1920s had drifted apart from Kipling and regretted it, recorded on 16 June 1930 that he 'had lunch at the Beefsteak, and by an extraordinary chance Rudyard Kipling walked in, just back from Jamaica, and we had lunch and a long talk together.'⁸⁸

The Beefsteak, at 9 Irving Street, has neither a library nor drawing room nor bar, opens only for lunch or dinner, and has at its center a handsome dining room with one long table, where members are seated in order of their arrival. In 1932, while up to London for meetings of the Imperial War Graves Commission, Kipling wrote his daughter: "In the intervals I lunched at the Beefsteak, a great treat, and also dined there with Gwynne and Sir Percy Bates. We were all by our lones the last hour or so, and it was a delightful time."⁸⁹ Another experience was less delightful, if the story is true (it is apparently quoted to new members as a salutary warning): one young member, not recognizing his neighbor, lectured Kipling on how to write short stories.⁹⁰

One final measure of Kipling's gratitude for his club life is shown by his willingness to sit, only weeks before he died on 18 January 1936, for what was probably his last portrait by an artist – for a club. Grillion's was founded in 1812 by British diplomat Stratford Canning as a meeting place free from the violence of political controversy, originally meeting at Grillion's Hotel on Albermarle Street, and included leading statesmen, among them prime ministers Gladstone, Salisbury, Balfour, Asquith, and Kipling's cousin Stanley Baldwin. Rudyard was

elected on 9 May and attended his first meeting on 6 June 1928; he wrote his daughter that he “had been unanimously elected to Grillions Club, which is said to be a high honour.”⁹¹ Kipling compared the Beefsteak and Grillion’s for Percy Bates: the first was “a very nice human pot house,” and in the second he heard “more good talk and more political tosh than most places.”⁹² (In 1935, he met Sir John Simon there, and found the Foreign Secretary to be extraordinarily naïve about Ribbentrop.)⁹³ Grillion’s commissioned portraits in black and white of all its prominent members, and Carrie Kipling’s diary for 28 November 1935 reads “Sitting for Grillon [*sic*] portrait – Miss Footner?”⁹⁴

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NOTES

- 1 Kipling, 1924, quoted in Henry F. Pringle, *The Century* p. 83; “The Puzzler” (poem) *Actions and Reactions* (Macmillan 1909) p. 225
- 2 Kipling ed. Pinney *Letters of Rudyard Kipling Volume 1*, p. 353.
- 3 Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p. 50. Alexander Watt took Kipling on at once and transformed his financial position, doubling his income in the three months to March 1890. (Lycett, p. 198.)
- 4 “Kipling was never, really, a clubman’: Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling*. Of Kipling’s biographers, only Philip Mason spends much time on Kipling’s clubs, but even he pays attention mainly to Rudyard’s experience in India.
- 5 Charles Allen, *Kipling Sahib*, pp. 82–83, 127–128.
- 6 Examples of both cards are held in the Richards Collection, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 7 Lejeune, *The Gentlemen’s Clubs of London* p. 197.
- 8 See Carrington, p. 177, and Kipling *Letters, Vol.1*, p. 357; also Stephen Bann’s “Kipling and the Club,” pp. 36–43.
- 9 Kipling, *Letters, Vol. 1*, p. 358. His Indian paperback *Soldiers Three* (1888) was published in London in January 1890. For “long-haired literati” c.f. “long-haired things” in his 1889 poem “In Partibus.”
- 10 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Diogenes at the Savile* pp. 10–11. Stevenson (1850–1894) had joined the Savile in 1874. He moved to Australia in 1888 and settled in Samoa in 1890. Kipling hoped to meet him but never did (Bann, p. 41).
- 11 Symonds, quoted in Ricketts, *The Unforgiving Minute* p. 151.

- 12 The *Times* leader was reprinted in Carrington, who suggests it was by “one of his kindly elderly patrons at the Savile Club” (pp. 193–4).
- 13 Kipling met Hardy at the Savile several times in the summer of 1891. See Millgate, *Thomas Hardy* p. 314.
- 14 The page of signatures was reproduced in *Kipling Journal*, nos. 96, December 1950, p. 4, and 369, p. 40
- 15 Allen, *Kipling Sahib*, p. 303.
- 16 Andrew Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p. 205; Carrington, pp. 198–199.
- 17 Lycett, p. 333; Collier’s first painting is reproduced on the cover of this book.
- 18 Allen, *Kipling Sahib*, p. 301.
- 19 Roger Lancelyn Green “The Coming of Kipling,” *Kipling Journal*, October 1950, 6.
- 20 Kipling *Something of Myself*, p. 51
- 21 Kipling *ibid.*, pp. 51–52.
- 22 When it was proposed, forty years after his induction, that the Savile hold a dinner for him, Kipling declined because the place would be “too full of ghosts.” Sir John Squire, *Solo and Duet* p. 305.
- 23 6 October 1916, in Pinney, ed., *Letters, Vol. 4*, p. 407. For Kipling’s date of resignation, see Pinney’s footnote 2, p. 410.
- 24 Michel Miller’s *The Athenæum* refers to “the Athenæum’s sister club in New York, the Century”, (p. 293)
- 25 John Durand, “Prehistoric Notes of the Century Club,” quoted in Duffy ed. *The Century at 150*, p. 5.
- 26 Mosette Broderick, *Triumvirate: McKim, Mean & White: Art, Architecture, Scandal and Class in America’s Gilded Age* (New York: Knopf, 2010), p. 286.
- 27 Roosevelt invited Kipling to dinner in Washington, D.C. on 7 March 1895, and after a difficult beginning (TR was not fond of the English generally, occasionally thanking God aloud that he had “not one drop of British blood in him”), they became friends. See Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* pp. 476–477, 479 and Kipling *Something of Myself*, p. 72 (which misdates the meeting to 1896).
- 28 See *The Century: 1847–1896* (New York: The Century Association, 1946), and Duffy ed. *The Century at 150*.
- 29 The Century mounted an exhibition in celebration of Kipling’s membership over the winter of 2015–2016 on the 150th anniversary of his birth (*Kipling Journal*, No. 363, March 2016, pp. 6–7).
- 30 *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1970), vol. 13, p. 382.
- 31 Kipling to William Carey, 26 March 1892, in Pinney, ed., *Letters, Vol. 2*, p. 52.
- 32 Charles Lesley Ames “Kipling’s Clubs” printed in in “Editorial”, *Kipling Journal*, September 1967, pp. 5–6. The list of Kipling’s nominators is on p. 5.
- 33 Laura Stedman and George Gould, *Life of E. C. Stedman* (New York, 1910) vol. II, p. 189.
- 34 Kipling ed. Pinney *Letters, Vol. 2*, p. 211. The illustrated letter is reproduced in facsimile in Johnson, *Remembered Yesterdays* pp. 398–99 and Richards, *Bibliography*, B/30, p. 472.
- 35 Kipling, *Letters, Vol. 2*, p. 211. Kipling probably did not know that the Century’s Admissions Committee Minutes for 23 October 1895 records one vote against him (Century Association Archive Collection, Admissions Committee Minutes, 23 October 1895).

- 36 Lycett, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
- 37 Richards, *Bibliography*, A479, pp. 351–352, describing a privately printed edition of the original version of *Princess*, appearing in 2006.
- 38 *The Century: 1847–1946*, p. 68.
- 39 The Kiplings in turn spent 16–18 September with Hay at his summer home in Newbury, New Hampshire; Hay then wrote to Henry Adams on 20 September 1895: “how a man can keep up so intense an intellectual life without going to Bedlam is amazing. He rattled off the frame-work of about forty stories while he was with us.” Henry Adams Papers, microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society.
- 40 Lycett, pp. 270–3. Kipling thanked Phillips in a letter of 19 June 1895 (*Letters*, Vol. 2, 1890–99, pp. 190–3).
- 41 The only two known cards now extant are at Pasadena’s Huntington Library and in the Richards Kipling Collection at Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book Library.
- 42 Leonard Bacon, “Poets and the Century,” in *The Century: 1847–1946*, p. 195.
- 43 Minutes of the Monthly Meeting, 4 March 1899, *The Century at 150*, pp. 178–179.
- 44 *The Century: 1847–1946*, pp. 68 (on the book gift), 387 (lifetime membership). On Kipling’s continued interest in the club, see Bacon, p. 196. For the presentation of the Scribners’ edition, announced at the annual meeting on 8 January 1898, see *The Century at 150*, p. 179.
- 45 See the letters from Matthews in Pinney *Letters of Kipling Vols 2–5*, and Brander Matthews’s collection of his letters from luminaries including Kipling, *The Bookshelf of Brander Matthews*. Remarkably, in 1892, Matthews had been congratulated by fellow Centurion Theodore Roosevelt, who had not then met Kipling, on blackballing the author from New York City’s Players Club: Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling*, p. 271.
- 46 See, e.g., Kipling’s letter to Matthews of 10 October 1919, *Letters*, Vol. 4, p. 579.
- 47 See the Century’s minutes for April 1947.
- 48 Caroline Kipling to F. N. Finney, in a letter dated 9 June 1897, sold within lot 497 in *English and American First Editions Autograph Letters and Manuscripts* (New York: American Art Association/Anderson Galleries, Inc., N.Y., Catalogue 4283, Dec 9–10, 1936. https://rarebookhub.com/search/result?page=1&per_page=25&q=4283-57&search_type=ae&utf8=%E2%9C%93)
- 49 Kipling *Something of Myself*, p. 84.
- 50 Kipling *d Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 267.
- 51 Lycett, p. 294, mentioning that Burne-Jones was Kipling’s proposer, and Henry James his seconder. Kipling thanked James on 30 October 1896: “I’ll be a bishop and die in gaiters, yet”: *Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 267–268.
- 52 Bann, “Kipling and the Club” p. 42.
- 53 Lejeune, p. 25, notes that at “one time in the 19th century there was a 16-year waiting list for this most exclusive of London clubs.”
- 54 Michael Wheeler, *The Athenaeum*: pp. 48, 92.
- 55 George Macaulay Trevelyan, *Sir George Otto Trevelyan: A Memoir* (London: Longmans Green, 1932), p. 100.
- 56 Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists* pp. 13–15.
- 57 Angus Wilson, *The Strange Life of Rudyard Kipling*, p. 202.
- 58 De Protani, pp. 23–24.
- 59 Kipling to Brander Matthews, 29 April 1919, in Pinney, ed., *Letters*, Vol. 4, p. 551.
- 60 Carrington, pp. 51–52.

- 61 Kipling to Moberly Bell, 22 July 1897, *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 308.
- 62 Miller, pp. 173–174.
- 63 Kipling to Marshall 1897, quoted in Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* p. 177.
- 64 Kipling to Stanley Weyman 12 May 1897, “Letters to Stanley Weyman”, *Kipling Journal* No. 144, December 1962, p. 7.
- 65 Rupert Hart-Davis, *Hugh Walpole*, p. 273. The fullest treatment of Kipling’s membership in the Athenæum is Jennie de Protani, “Kipling and the Athenæum,” *Kipling Journal*, September 2012, pp. 23–33.
- 66 Kipling to Charles Eliot Norton, 19 May 1901, *Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 54. The move against allowing strangers in the coffee room was defeated 125 to 132 after a division at the 1901 AGM: Miller, p. 175.
- 67 Kipling to Norton, *Letters* Vol. 3, p. 115.
- 68 Rudyard Kipling to John Kipling, 28 September 1909, *Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 389. He had quit the Savile in 1905, so this must be the Athenæum.
- 69 De Protani, p. 27.
- 70 The text was printed in the *Library Association Record*, May 1915, and reprinted in the *Library Journal*, July 1916. The only known copy of the broadside, autographed by Kipling, is in the Athenæum archives; the MS is lost. The story “Dayspring Mishandled” (1928) turns on a spurious poem by Chaucer in a forged MS, and Kipling is said to have faked a medieval manuscript in his own hand before writing it: Carrington, p. 548.
- 71 “Rudyard Kipling [No. 2]”, 1898, in an edition of 80, of which it is thought about 60 were signed, reproduced in *Catalogue of the Printed Work of William Strang* (Glasgow, 1962), no. 441.
- 72 Miller, p. 221.
- 73 Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* p. 233; de Protani, p. 27.
- 74 Kipling to Elsie Kipling, 19 July 1922, in Pinney, ed., *Letters*, Vol. 5, p. 123.
- 75 Kipling to Baldwin, 10 December 1924, *Letters*, Vol. 5, p. 188.
- 76 Osler, quoted in Carrington citing Harvey Cushing, pp. 569–570.
- 77 *The Crawford Papers* ed. John Vincent, quoted in *Letters*, Vol. 5, p. 207 at note 1. At this dinner, Kipling was seated next to the former War Secretary Richard Haldane, whom he disliked. See letter to Elsie Kipling 19 February 1925, *Letters*, Vol 5 p. 206.
- 78 Kipling to George Macaulay Trevelyan, 14 July 1933, in Pinney, ed., *Letters*, Vol. 6, p. 197. Kipling does not mention The Club in *Something of Myself*.
- 79 Kipling, quoted in Gilmour *The Long Recessional*, p. 288; Kipling to Elsie Bambridge, 19 July 1928 and 30 January 1930, *Letters* Vol. 5, pp. 449, 520.
- 80 Editorial, *Kipling Journal*, September 1986, p. 8.
- 81 Kipling was nominated in November 1924 (Kipling to Macmillan, 18 November 1924: ALS, British Library) and elected the next January, attending his first meeting, brought by Perceval Landon, on 18 February 1925: Kipling to Elsie Bambridge, 19 February 1925, *Letters*, Vol. 5, p. 206.
- 82 Editorial, *Kipling Journal*, p. 9.
- 83 *Something of Myself*, p. 85 There is no other mention of the Carlton club by Kipling or his biographers. [Perhaps he was taken there as a guest? Ed.]
- 84 For the full list of nominators, see George Webb ‘Editorial’, *Kipling Journal* 269, September 1986, pp. 8–10, taken from the Beefsteak Club Records, pp. 9–10.

- 85 In a letter printed in *Old Men Forget*, Kipling wrote to Cooper “I’d like to talk that, and many other matters, over with you when we next meet at the Beefsteak.” (pp. 186–7).
- 86 Lord Dunsany told Kenneth Rose in 1999 that when a fellow-member of the Beefsteak asked him what he thought of Kipling, he replied “As Kipling put me up for membership in this club, I can only tell you that I am on his side.” Peter Jackson, “Kipling and Lord Dunsany,” Letter to the Editor, *Kipling Journal*, 290, June 1999, p. 54. Kipling also seconded Sir Percy Bates, Chairman of the Cunard Steamship Company; Kipling to Bates, 15 December 1931, *Letters Vol 6* pp. 71–2.
- 87 Wilson, pp. 329–330.
- 88 “‘Stalky’ 5: More Extracts from the Dunsterville Diaries”, *Kipling Journal* 231, September 1984.
- 89 Kipling to Elsie and George Bambridge, 19 December 1932, *Letters, Vol. 6*, pp. 144–5.
- 90 Lejeune, p. 39.
- 91 Carrie Kipling’s diary, 6 June 1928, from ‘The Carrington and Rees Extracts’ www.kiplingsociety.co.uk; Kipling to Elsie Bambridge, 12 May 1928, *Letters, Vol. 5*, p. 427.
- 92 Kipling to Percy Bates, 2 February 1932, KP 14/13, University of Sussex, quoted in Gilmore, p. 288, and to Bates, 8 September 1931, *Letters, Vol. 6*, p. 53.
- 93 Kipling to Gwynne, 23 September 1935, Kipling Collection, Dalhousie, cited in Gilmore, p. 305. Sometimes such gossip was accurate; in a letter to his son-in-law George Bambridge of 11 December 1931, he wrote: “Went to Grillion’s and The Club and gathered a mass of confident and confidential explanations of the attitude of the Lords towards the India Bill – so confident indeed, that I fully expected (what happened yesterday) that the House would crumple”: *Letters, Vol. 6*, p. 69.
- 94 C. Kipling 28 November 1935, “Extracts from The Diaries of Mrs. Rudyard Kipling” ed. Wilson. The drawing of Kipling by F. Amicia de Biden Footner (1874–1961. in the National Portrait Gallery (NPG D2083) is reproduced, apparently signed by Kipling, in *Kipling Journal* 271, September 1994 p. 11.

THE AMBER TOAD REVIEWS
DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES:
 “AN ANGLO-INDIAN POET” (1888)

INTRODUCED AND EDITED BY **RICHARD MAIDMENT**

[Richard Maidment’s most recent articles in the *Kipling Journal* are ‘The Man Who Would Horsewhip Kipling’, KJ 381 March 2020 and ‘*Writ In Barracks: Edgar Wallace’s Tribute And Debt To Kipling*’, KJ 387 September 2021. *Ed.*]

“The Amber Toad . . . a severe taskmaster . . . tetchy and irritable . . . stiff and discouraging”:¹ 17-year old Rudyard Kipling’s first editor at the *Civil and Military Gazette* plays an unenviable role in the Kipling chronicles as the man who discouraged original writing in favour of dry *précis* and scissors-and-paste journalism, and rewarded his assistant’s efforts with “a healthy snarl.”² The elderly Kipling paid him a dutiful tribute in *Something of Myself*: “the little I ever acquired of accuracy, the habit of trying at least to verify references, and some knack of sticking to desk-work, I owed wholly to Stephen Wheeler,” but he admitted that as a young man he had loathed him for three years.³ Kay Robinson, who took over from Wheeler, said that his predecessor had tried to turn Kipling into “a good second-rate journalist”⁴ and Kipling welcomed Robinson’s new, more flexible, regime as “a joyous reign” of creative opportunities.⁵

Wheeler, the eldest son of an historian and diplomat in the Indian Civil Service, had joined the *Pioneer* in 1877 as assistant editor before taking over at the *CMG*. He was 28 years old when Kipling arrived in 1882 and married with three young daughters.⁶ A serious, scholarly man, he clearly saw the business of a newspaper as providing facts rather than fiction and although he eventually allowed Rudyard the occasional poem or short story, it was done with “a running lecture on the sinfulness of writing such stuff” and a complaint that his young assistant was “making things hard for him”.⁷

Wheeler’s irritability was probably exacerbated by repeated bouts of ill-health. Kipling later gave a graphic account of the physical discomfort of an Indian journalist’s life during the hot weather, when “the thermometer from March to October during the day hovers at about 116 in the shade. At dawn it is 84, and all through the night, after the air has been pumped through wet reeds. Outside during the day everything is dusty and red hot. I have seen the blackness of midnight occur at midday from the dust storms. The editor must have green paper on the glass of his window to keep out the glaring light . . . [and] . . . have

every piece of paper about him weighted down, else the fans which are ceaselessly going to prevent suffocation, will blow everything away.”⁸ Kipling’s letters give details of Wheeler’s repeated periods of sick-leave and absences through illness. When he resigned as editor in 1887, it must have been a relief to both of them.⁹

Back in England, Wheeler worked as a journalist specialising in Asian, mainly Indian, affairs, producing books on Afghanistan and Northern India. He was commissioned by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, to compile the official illustrated history of the coronation durbar of 1903 and he wrote scholarly articles for *St James’s Gazette*, *Macmillan’s Magazine* and *The Standard* from a conservative imperialist viewpoint. After he produced a sweeping analysis of corruption in *The Native Press of India* (1888), the Anglo-Marathi weekly *Native Opinion* responded: “He seems only to be a fault-finder, a person naturally unfitted to see any other than the seamy side of everything he observes . . . In pointing out defects, a real adviser does it in an encouraging manner, but Mr. Wheeler does nothing of the kind.”¹⁰

Kipling might have felt some sympathy with that characterisation of his former boss. When Wheeler contacted him years later, in a reversal of their previous roles, to ask for the now-famous author’s support in an application for a librarianship, Kipling replied sweetly: “It seems to me that of all men I am peculiarly fitted to speak of your qualifications as a librarian because I remember an awful siege when you put the old C[ivil] and M[military] books in order, with me as a perspiring and inaccurate assistant. What I *do* know, and can swear to, is that you are ultra-rigidly accurate (as alas I am not) with a cast-steel memory, and a store of Oriental knowledge that most ‘Orientalists’ haven’t got.”¹¹

Wheeler’s Indian expertise became less relevant with the passing of time and his later years were ones of increasing obscurity and hardship. The closure of the *Standard* in 1915 brought his journalistic career to a close.¹² He devoted himself to the library of the Oriental Club in Hanover Square and to his life’s work of editing the voluminous writings of the poet and controversialist Walter Savage Landor and in 1927 he was awarded a Civil List pension of £75 in recognition of his services to literature. A road accident in 1931, when he was knocked under the wheels of a car in Oxford Street by an errand boy on a bicycle, left him badly crippled, and he was cared for by his daughter, who was awarded a continuance of the pension after his death in December 1936.¹³ His crowning achievement came shortly after his death with the publication of the 3-volume edition of Landor’s *Poetical Works* for the Clarendon Press, described by one reviewer as “meticulous” but with scope for more personal information.¹⁴

The *CMG* eulogised Wheeler as a “quiet, pale and reticent scholar with [a] sad-sweet smile . . . a fine judge of literature, English and Persian . . . a devoted Landorian to whom we owe a lasting debt.” They added that he resolutely refused to cash in on his memories of Kipling, despite offers from newspapers and publishers: “A single cheque from one of those book-firms or paper-churns would have kept him for a year or so, but as with Cervantes, his poverty was a quiet lake nestling at the foot of his mountainous pride.”¹⁵ It may be that for Wheeler it was a matter of principle as well as pride; in his preface to the *Poetical Works*, he repeated Landor’s view that “Only the wretchedest of poets . . . would wish everything they ever wrote to be remembered. . . He hoped that much of what he had written in youth or with equal idleness afterwards might never be raked together for publication.”¹⁶ Wheeler apparently applied the same philosophy to his memories of Kipling. His sole public reminiscence comes at the end of a note declining an invitation to the annual luncheon of the Kipling Society in 1930: “I can recall Rudyard Kipling in the days when we both worked in the Civil and Military Gazette office – slaves in the same galley *vide* his poems. I rather think I saw him first when his parents brought him home. Mrs. Lockwood Kipling, his mother, had been a friend of an aunt of mine and went to see her at Clifton when I happened to be visiting the same aunt. I saw him again in London about 1882 when I was in England on leave; and when he came to Lahore his father and I met him at the railway station. Not very important facts, but enough to show that it is long since he and I got to know one another.”¹⁷ Kipling’s sister Trix claimed in 1937 (with the benefit of fifty years of hindsight) that as editor of the *CMG*, Wheeler had several times referred to her brother as “a clever young dog”.¹⁸ Most intriguing is a footnote by Professor Pinney revealing that Wheeler had written to a would-be Kipling bibliographer in 1899, “I am afraid I do not share your views on his place in literature”, which could either be a way of avoiding an intrusive correspondence or an expression of his true opinion.¹⁹

Kipling’s relationship with Stephen Wheeler was clearly never close but in December 1888 his former editor was one of a number of London contacts he wrote to from India in hopes of furthering his planned career as a writer in England:

Dear Wheeler,

After these many months, Salaam. I fancied I recognised your sweet roman hand in the review of the St. James’s on my verses. Can you do me another favour. I am sending to the St. James’s by this mail two small volumes of this accursed land’s manufacture (*Soldiers Three* and *The Story of the Gadsbys*). One seems to me unwholesome; the other isn’t, but I tried to put good work into both. Can

you lend them a fostering hand? *Don't* review 'em. You know too much or if you do, let me down lightly and your petitioner will ever pray etc.

They are selling well out here, and the Barrack room book might take at home.

Yours,

Ruddy.²⁰

Wheeler duly lent the fostering hand by passing the Indian Railway stories to Sidney Low, the editor of the *Gazette*, where they were reviewed in July 1889; and when Kipling arrived in London in 1890, Wheeler arranged a meeting with him at Low's request, resulting in an enthusiastic offer to publish his material.²¹

Kipling's remark, "I fancied I recognised your sweet roman hand in the review of my verses" is ambiguous as well as intriguing; it could mean that he assumed the review to have been by Wheeler from its style or that he'd received definite confirmation that it was by him. Either way, it was clearly intended as a compliment to enlist his further support. Professor Pinney does not identify the piece but an online search of *St James's Gazette* turns up only one possible candidate, an unsigned review of *Departmental Ditties* published in August 1888. Both Kipling's letter and internal evidence strongly suggest that Wheeler was the author.

The former editor was a serious man, described by Kipling to his aunt Edith as "eminently respectable and horrid dull with a *penchant* for most of the aged frauds in the Punjab commission,"²² so it is interesting to see how he deals with his one-time assistant's light satires on the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. It's quite a generous review, certainly not tetchy or "horrid dull", and I think it's fair to say that he tries to see the jokes and be appreciative of the humour, but this doesn't come completely naturally to him. His own occasional efforts at a light-hearted style are rather laborious. and in places he seems to imply that the social and romantic satire could usefully be focused on more serious themes. He shows most appreciation for the verses that deal with sickness and death and oppressive heat, mirroring his own experiences in India, and his chosen favourite "In Spring Time" is a romanticised view of an Anglo-Indian exile's longing for home. His judgment that Kipling was homesick may well have been true, but the review printed below tells almost as much about Stephen Wheeler himself as it does about *Departmental Ditties*.

AN ANGLO-INDIAN POET [*St James's Gazette*, Thursday
16th August, 1888]

Is Anglo-Indian Society as black as it is painted by the clever young poet who sings so pleasantly of unpleasant people in his "Departmental Ditties?" If so, O Anglo-India, you have amidst you a young poet gifted with humour, observation, and a rich command of flowing metres, and for metre making argument you can give him only the loves of Delilah, the tragic fate of a modern Uriah, and the successes of Potiphar's wife. The material given him being of such a sort, the poet has done his best with it; and his best is very good. Potiphar Gubbins, C.E., Ahasuerus Jenkins, and even Delilah Aberyswyth, and most "mean Ulysses Gunne," move us to laughter in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's verse: though in real life they might stir us to wasteful anger; for it is sheer waste to spend honest wrath on occasions when ridicule can kill. Now and again, too, the young Anglo-Indian poet has weightier weapons than light laughter at his command. The story of how Jack Barrett went to Quetta, and died there (in obedience to official orders, given in forgetfulness of the example of King David and of the tenth commandment), winds up with impressive simplicity:—

Jack Barrett's bones at Quetta enjoy profound repose;
But I shouldn't be astonished if *now* his spirit knows
The reason for his transfer from the Himalayan snows.

And when the Last Great Bugle-call adown the Hurnai throbs
When the last grim joke is entered in the big black Book of
Jobs
And Quetta graveyards give again their victims to the air,
I shouldn't like to be the man who sent Jack Barrett there.²³

The description of a night of Indian fever, too – with its visions of splendour and terrors and absurdity – is a vivid piece of realistic painting: how real only those who have had the privilege of viewing the original wild pictures can fully know. And better even than the painting of the vision pictures is the description of the fading of those tormenting splendours, with the coolness and soft light that precedes daybreak.

Dun and saffron-robed and splendid broke the solemn pitying
day
And I knew my pains were ended, and I turned, and tried to
pray;

But my speech was shattered wholly, and I wept, as children
weep,
Till the dawn-wind, softly, slowly, brought to burning eyelids
sleep.²⁴

Mr. Rudyard Kipling is most unmistakably a poet when he turns his back on Potiphar and Potiphar's wife and looks behind him to England in the Christmas season or the spring-time:—

But the rose has lost its fragrance, and the *koil's* note is strange;
I am sick of endless sunshine, sick of blossom-burdened bough.
Give me back the leafless woodlands where the winds of
springtime range,
Give me back one day in England: for it's spring in England
now.²⁵

And here we are at the root of the matter. The author of "Departmental Ditties" is a home-sick poet; and he has seen Anglo-India and Anglo-Indian society under the influences of home sickness. This does not mean that he has evolved Potiphar Gubbins, C.E., or Boanerges Blitz, out of his inner consciousness. The fortunate husband of lovely Mehitabel Lee, and the unfortunate Boanerges who made the mistake of writing to newspapers, are no doubt real people enough. So was the mouse real that pussy-cat of nursery rhyme-land saw beneath the royal chair when she went to court. But there were things better worth seeing, perhaps, could pussy-cat have forgotten her private tastes and made up her mind to look about her. Not that we are inclined to make a serious matter of "Departmental Ditties." To do that would be absurd. It is a collection of very humorous sketches in light and sparkling verse, with no ill-nature in it.

"Departmental Ditties and Other Verses." By Rudyard Kipling. W. Thacker & Co., 1888.

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- The Kipling Journal* (Archive on Kipling Society website)
- The Spectator* (Spectator Archive online)
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NOTES

- 1 “amber toad” – quoted in Allen p. 125; “severe taskmaster” – Pinney in *Kipling's India* p. 3; “tetchy and irritable” – Lockwood Kipling quoted in Carrington p. 48; “stiff and discouraging” – Pinney in *Letters Vol 1* page 27 fn.1.?
- 2 RK to E.K.Robinson 30 April 1886, *Letters, Vol 1* pp. 125–6.
- 3 RK *Something of Myself* p. 26.
- 4 Taken from an article by E.K.R in *McClure's Magazine vii* (1898) pp. 100–1, quoted by Cornell p. 43.
- 5 *Something of Myself* p. 40.
- 6 Further details of his background are given by Mike Kipling in *The Provost of Oriel* p. 10 and his appointment to *The Pioneer* was reported on November 2nd 1877 in the *London Standard*.
- 7 RK to E.K.Robinson, 30 April 1886 *Letters Vol 1* p. 126.
- 8 An extract from an interview RK gave to the *San Francisco Chronicle* on June 2nd 1889, quoted by Pinney in *Kipling's India* p. 5.
- 9 The entry for Wheeler in the index to Pinney's *Letters Vol 6* p. 528 lists 19 page references to illness and sick leave.
- 10 Wheeler's article on *The Native Press of India* appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* in September 1888. *The Voice of India*, a Mumbai English-language weekly which was later renamed *The Indian Spectator*, published reactions from a number of Indian newspapers on November 1st, 1888, including this one from *Native Opinion*.
- 11 RK to Stephen Wheeler February 1st 1897, *Letters, Vol 2* pp. 284–5.

- 12 *The Standard*, which closed at the end of 1915, was the morning edition of the *London Evening Standard*.
- 13 Despite his ill-health, Wheeler outlived his former assistant by nearly a year; he died, aged 83, at his home in Streatham on December 26th 1936. Details of his career were given in “Memories of Stephen Wheeler” in the *CMG* on January 12th 1937. *The Times* reported the Civil List pensions on July 19th 1927 and April 16th 1938.
- 14 Stephen Spender, review in *The Spectator* June 11th 1937.
- 15 Quotations from the *CMG* January 12th 1937 and March 31st 1938. (The publication in 1937 of RK’s tribute to Wheeler in *Something of Myself* had aroused renewed interest in the former editor).
- 16 Landor *Poetical Works Vol 1*, Preface page v.
- 17 *Kipling Journal* no 15 October 1930 p. 86.
- 18 At a meeting of the Kipling Society on October 27th 1937, Trix Kipling (Mrs A.M.Fleming) gave a talk “Some Reminiscences of My Brother”, which was reported in detail in *Kipling Journal* no 44 (December 1937) and in the *CMG* for Saturday November 1st 1937 (quick reactions in Lahore!) The newspaper’s correspondent reported that, when he spoke to Mrs Fleming after the talk, she asked about Wheeler and mentioned his “clever young dog” remark.
- 19 *Letters Vol 1* page 27, fn. 1.
- 20 RK to Stephen Wheeler December 12th 1888, *Letters Vol 1* p. 271.
- 21 Carrington, pp. 134 – 5.
- 22 RK to Edith Macdonald December 4–5 1886 *Letters Vol 1* p. 141.
- 23 “The Story of Uriah”. Reprinted in RK *Definitive Edition* p. 10.
- 24 “La Nuit Blanche”. Reprinted in RK *Definitive Edition* p. 28.
- 25 “In Spring Time”. Reprinted in RK *Definitive Edition* p. 78. A footnote to the *Definitive Edition* describes the *koil* as an Indian starling but *Hobson Jobson* (2nd edition, p. 490) lists it as the ‘Koel’ and says it belongs to the cuckoo family: “The name *koil* is taken from its cry during the breeding season, *ku-il,ku-il*, increasing in vigour and intensity as it goes on. The male bird has also another note, which Blyth syllables as *Ho-whee-ho*, or *Ho-a-o*, or *Ho-y-o*. When it takes flight it has yet another somewhat melodious and rich liquid call; all thoroughly cuculine.” A real virtuoso!

FRANCE AT WAR

BY RUDYARD KIPLING.

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY JOHN RADCLIFFE

On the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, the German army invaded France, using an operation plan made nine years before, to attack through Belgium and reach Paris in six weeks. After hard fighting they were held up by the French and British armies and there followed years of horrendous trench warfare, with each side failing to break through, and very heavy loss of life.

In August 1915, Kipling went to France and visited first Paris and then the battle-front of some of the French forces in Northern France. His report of what he had seen was published in six articles in the Daily Telegraph and the New York Sun, between 6th and 17th September 1915. The texts of all six can be found at www.kiplingsociety.co.uk. On 27th Kipling's son John was killed in his first battle.

The extracts printed below are from the first article, "On the Frontier of Civilisation". This was partly based on the letters Kipling wrote daily to his wife and daughter from France, printed in Thomas Pinney (ed.) Letters of Rudyard Kipling vol 4 1911-1919, pp. 312-333. Here Kipling described to Carrie and Elsie Kipling the things he had seen and the people he had met, so minutely (and vividly) that his letters home became a kind of epistolary diary. He evidently used them for his newspaper reports, since many of the details and even phrases from the letters reappeared, sometimes verbatim, in the printed texts. J.R.

THE BARBARIAN

Again a big plume rose; and again the lighter shells broke at their appointed distance beyond it.¹ The smoke died away on that stretch of trench, as the foam of a swell dies in the angle of a harbour wall, and broke out afresh half a mile lower down.² In its apparent laziness, in its awful deliberation, and its quick spasms of wrath, it was more like the work of waves than of men; and our high platform's gentle sway and glide³ was exactly the motion of a ship drifting with us toward that shore.

"The usual work. Only the usual work," the officer explained. "Sometimes it is here. Sometimes above or below us. I have been here since May."

A little sunshine flooded the stricken landscape and made its chemical yellow look more foul. A detachment of men moved out on a road which ran toward the French trenches, and then vanished at the foot of a little rise. Other men appeared moving toward us with that concentration of purpose and bearing shown in both Armies when—dinner is at hand. They looked like people who had been digging hard.

“The same work. Always the same work!” the officer said. “And you could walk from here to the sea or to Switzerland in that ditch—and you’ll find the same work going on everywhere. It isn’t war.”

“It’s better than that,” said another. “It’s the eating-up of a people. They come and they fill the trenches and they die, and they die; and they send more and *those* die. We do the same, of course, but—look!”

He pointed to the large deliberate smoke-heads renewing themselves along that yellowed beach. “That is the frontier of civilization. They have all civilization against them—those brutes yonder. It’s not the local victories of the old wars that we’re after. It’s the barbarian—all the barbarian. Now, you’ve seen the whole thing in little. Come and look at our children.”

SOLDIERS IN CAVES

We left that tall tree⁴ whose fruits are death ripened and distributed at the tingle of small bells. The observer returned to his maps and calculations; the telephone-boy stiffened up beside his exchange as the amateurs went out of his life. Someone called down through the branches to ask who was attending to—Belial,⁵ let us say, for I could not catch the gun’s name. It seemed to belong to that terrific new voice which had lifted itself for the second or third time. It appeared from the reply that if Belial talked too long, he would be dealt with from another point miles away.

The troops we came down to see were at rest in a chain of caves which had begun life as quarries and had been fitted up by the army for its own uses.⁶ There were underground corridors, ante-chambers, rotundas, and ventilating shafts with a bewildering play of cross lights, so that wherever you looked you saw Goya’s pictures of men-at-arms.⁷

Every soldier has some of the old maid in him, and rejoices in all the gadgets and devices of his own invention. Death and wounding come by nature, but to lie dry, sleep soft, and keep yourself clean by forethought and contrivance is art, and in all things the Frenchman is gloriously an artist.

Moreover, the French officers seem as mother-keen on their men as their men are brother-fond of them. Maybe the possessive form of address: “Mon general,” “mon capitaine,” helps the idea, which our

men cloke in other and curter phrases. And those soldiers, like ours, had been welded for months in one furnace. As an officer said: "Half our orders now need not be given. Experience makes us think together." I believe, too, that if a French private has an idea—and they are full of ideas—it reaches his C.O. quicker than it does with us.

A WRECKED TOWN⁸

The stillness was as terrible as the spread of the quick busy weeds between the paving-stones; the air smelt of pounded mortar and crushed stone; the sound of a footfall echoed like the drop of a pebble in a well. At first the horror of wrecked apartment-houses and big shops laid open makes one waste energy in anger. It is not seemly that rooms should be torn out of the sides of buildings as one tears the soft heart out of English bread; that villa roofs should lie across iron gates of private garages, or that drawing-room doors should flap alone and disconnected between two emptinesses of twisted girders. The eye wearies of the repeated pattern that burst shells make on stone walls, as the mouth sickens of the taste of mortar and charred timber. One quarter of the place had been shelled nearly level; the facades of the houses stood doorless, roofless, and windowless like stage scenery. This was near the cathedral, which is always a favourite mark for the heathen. They had gashed and ripped the sides of the cathedral itself, so that the birds flew in and out at will; they had smashed holes in the roof; knocked huge cantles out of the buttresses, and pitted and starred the paved square outside. They were at work, too, that very afternoon, though I do not think the cathedral was their objective for the moment. We walked to and fro in the silence of the streets and beneath the whirring wings overhead. Presently, a young woman, keeping to the wall, crossed a corner. An old woman opened a shutter (how it jarred!), and spoke to her. The silence closed again, but it seemed to me that I heard a sound of singing—the sort of chant one hears in nightmare-cities of voices crying from underground.

IN THE CATHEDRAL

"Nonsense," said an officer. "Who should be singing here?" We circled the cathedral again, and saw what pavement-stones can do against their own city, when the shell jerks them upward. But there *was* singing after all—on the other side of a little door in the flank of the cathedral. We looked in, doubting, and saw at least a hundred folk, mostly women, who knelt before the altar of an unwrecked chapel. We withdrew quietly from that holy ground, and it was not only the eyes of the French officers that filled with tears.⁹ Then there came an old, old thing with a prayer-book in her hand, pattering across the square, evidently late for service.

“And who are those women?” I asked.

“Some are caretakers; people who have still little shops here. (There is one quarter where you can buy things.) There are many old people, too, who will not go away. They are of the place, you see.”

“And this bombardment happens often?” I said.

“It happens always. Would you like to look at the railway station? Of course, it has not been so bombarded as the cathedral.”

We went through the gross nakedness of streets without people, till we reached the railway station, which was very fairly knocked about, but, as my friends said, nothing like as much as the cathedral. Then we had to cross the end of a long street down which the Boche could see clearly. As one glanced up it, one perceived how the weeds, to whom men’s war is the truce of God, had come back and were well established the whole length of it, watched by the long perspective of open, empty windows.

NOTES

- 1 **‘The Barbarian’**: this report was from an estate near Compiègne, some 120 km north of Paris, the first stop on Kipling’s visits to the front.
- 2 **The smoke dies away ... as the swell subsides** Kipling had used the same figure to Carrie and Kipling: ‘clouds of white smoke precisely like the spouts of waves up a breakwater in the storm’. Letter to Caroline and Elsie Kipling 15 August 1915 in Thomas Pinney ed. *Letters of Rudyard Kipling vol 4 1911–1919*, p. 322
- 3 **Our high platform’s sway and glide** Kipling was watching the front from the officers’ observation platform, a ‘crow’s nest’ at the top of a 60-foot acacia tree, Pinney, *op. cit.*, pp. 321–2.
- 4 **The tall tree of death**: Kipling’s metaphor for the plume of smoke rising from an exploded shell.
- 5 **Belial** A fallen angel. He appears as Satan’s counsellor in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Books 1 and 2.
- 6 Kipling had described these cavesto Carrie and Elsie: Pinney, *op. cit.* p. 322
- 7 **Goya** Francisco Goya (1746–1828) the famous Spanish court painter. Kipling probably has in mind Goya’s horrific series of etchings *The Disasters of War*, drawn in response to the Peninsula War, 1808–1814. He had written on 15 August that ‘the light and shade effects of the blue clad troops in the queer irregular caverns and the shafts of light were indescribable’ (Pinney, *ibid.*), so he must have thought of Goya afterwards.
- 8 **A wrecked town** Soissons, whose eerie stillness and ‘wrecked houses’ Kipling had described in his letter home of 16–17 August (Pinney ed. *Letters 4* pp. 322–3). The same letter relates his surprise at hearing song in the ruined cathedral, initially dismissed as ‘nonsense’ by the French officer, which turned out to be ‘100 people, mainly women’, gathered for Mass. ‘There used to be 20,00 people in Soissons. There are now 600 and of these a quarter were in the chapel.’ (Pinney *ibid.* p. 323).
- 9 See *Letters 4* p. 323 for a description of the singing and the officer’s response.

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The Kipling Society is for anyone interested in the prose and verse, and the life and times, of Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). It is one of the most active and enduring literary societies in Britain and, as the only one which focuses on Kipling and his place in English Literature, attracts a world-wide membership. (Details and membership forms are available on the Society's web-site, or from the **Membership Secretary Fiona Renshaw, Keylands, Burwash, East Sussex, TN19 7HP, email ksmemsec@outlook.com**. The forms quote the minimum annual subscription rates. Some members contribute a little more.

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