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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. Copyright of material published in the *Kipling Journal* remains with the author.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF THE KIPLING SOCIETY

Wednesday 18 September at 6 pm Online only: a filmed tour of the grounds of Bateman's and of Burwash village, followed by the opportunity for discussion.

Wednesday 27 November 5.30 for 6 pm in the Army and Navy Club and **6 pm online: Professor Janet Montefiore** speaking on "The Finest Story in the World": Who is Charlie?"

Wednesday 5 February 2025 5.30 for 6 pm in the Army and Navy Club and **6 pm online:** Speaker to be arranged

Please can members intending to attend meetings in person at the Army and Navy Club provide their names to the Secretary at least three days beforehand for security purposes. The Secretary's contact details are given at the front of this journal.

Sept 2024

Alex Bubb
(*Meetings Secretary*)

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EDITORIAL AND NEWS

In this issue of the *Kipling Journal* themed on ‘Kipling and the Classics’, articles on Kipling and his engagement with classical literature are interleaved with Kipling’s own writing, beginning with *The Pleasure Cruise* (1933). In this pastiche of the Greek writer Lucian’s comic dialogues (not really a parody, because its mockery is directed not at Lucian but at contemporary attitudes), the ghosts of soldiers killed in the Great War are taken on a day trip to London: an excursion which, notwithstanding the cheerful title, proves to be a disillusioning experience for the dead and a sombre warning for the living. Susan Treggiari’s fascinatingly detailed article on Kipling’s lifelong love of the poet Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) examines the verse translations with which he annotated his own copy of Horace’s *Odes*. Her article gives generous selections from Kipling’s uncollected marginalia, while her Notes provide a comprehensive and learned account of the Horatian originals which Kipling’s verses parodied and/or alluded to.

Next comes ‘Kipling on Roman Provinces’, a selection from Kipling’s tales set in the ancient world: a secure rural childhood, city life in peaceful Aquae Sulis where you meet ‘everybody interesting,’ and in Antioch, whose surface calm belies murderous ethnic tensions, and virtuoso descriptions of north Britain’s frontier territory and a sleepy Mediterranean port. Kipling vividly conveys both Roman pieties and civil life, the great geographical range of the *Pax Romana* from Scotland to modern Turkey, and its underlying violence (including the gladiatorial ‘Games’). In contrast to this emphasis on Rome, my own article ‘Kipling and Ancient Greece’ focuses on the youthful Kipling’s irreverent treatment of classics in three early poems, and more briefly on his later engagement with the Greek Anthology.

Another selection, ‘Kipling and the Roman Army’, shows Parnesius following Maximus the military genius and over-reacher, and serving an imperilled strong Empire both as a young, untried officer and as an experienced defender against alarming odds. Finally, Harry Ricketts complements Susan Treggiari with a different angle on Kipling and Horace, focusing on the Roman poet first in the comic Stalky story ‘Regulus’, and then in the late ‘imitations’ of Horace, particularly those complementing the stories in *Debts and Credits* (1926). He shows how Kipling goes well beyond parody in these lapidary poems, to achieve a true lyric intensity.

BOOK SALE ALERT

Our Librarian John Walker would like to remind members to look out for an email in late September listing the Library’s Surplus Sale, as advertised in the Kipling Society’s Newsletter.

THE PLEASURE CRUISE

(with apologies to Lucian)

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

Annotated and with an Afterword by the Editor

Morning Post, 11 November 1933

CHARON, HERMES, ATKEINOS, CHRYSIPPUS, DAMASIUS, AN OFFICER, A PHILOSOPHER, and very many DEAD MEN.

CHARON (*in the uniform of the Captain of a Pleasure Cruiser*). Steady, you fellows! Though my boat has been changed to this tall-sterned sea-castle, I am still responsible for the full tale of you.

THE DEAD MEN. But we have leave to see again the land of our birth. Tie up, and let us go ashore!

CHARON. Willingly, though I warn you, you will twice as willing return. In case, however, any should forget the other half of his ticket, Hermes here will conduct you. Lock up the bar! They do not draw their extra Lethe till they come back.

HERMES (*in the uniform of a Platoon-Sergeant*). At your service, gentlemen. What are your destinations and desires?

THE DEAD MEN (*confusedly*). I will go first to see all my children still weeping for me.... And I to console my widow in her dreams.... And I to press a thin kiss upon the shoulders of my sweetheart.... And I to snuff the scent of the liquors of upper Lethe that I loved so to drink.

HERMES. That is the only sensible fellow in the batch. But be off on your supposed businesses. When you are satisfied, meet me at the Statue of Achilles.¹ I shall walk there with these others who pull such long faces over what can't be helped. (The DEAD MEN *disperse about the Island*.) Tell me now, Damasius, as we journey to the City, how came you to be pitched into Charon's boat so early in the War? — for I understand you were no mean athlete.

DAMASIUS. I fell over a hole hidden by bushes; breaking both my legs ere I had accomplished anything.

HERMES. Such obstacles can be avoided by one who sees clearly.

DAMASIUS. You forget that I had been trained for fifteen seasons upon ground not only flat, but daily flattened by means of rollers.

HERMES. I see. Then that rough ground gave you Hades. And you, Chrysippus, whom I picked up in such a filthy condition?

CHRYSIPPUS. I had been instructed since my seventh year by the Philosophers of the Pavilion to fix my mind upon figures clad in pure white, moving over grass at fore-ordained distances.

HERMES. This after you were of full age?

CHRYSIPPUS. More particularly so, because it then became my vocation. Had the figures continued white and near, I should have won victories, but they being remote and earth-coloured, I ... [missing].

HERMES. Certainly, your own Mother would not know you now. And you, you unphilosophical lout, Atkeinos,² how did you put [your] foot in it?

ATKEINOS. We were despatched thrice against unbroken iron fences on which we hung like flies in frost.

HERMES. What, then, of the catapults whose bolts, in war, batter down expressly such things?

ATKEINOS. They were few at the first and their bolts so hard to procure that we were restricted to six casts in the day.

HERMES. But, later, surely, there were many?

ATKEINOS. Many indeed and those of the best. But, by that time, many indeed of the men were dead, and those of the best.

HERMES. And you, yonder, with the blue gums and the shrunk belly, how did you manage your transfer?

A DEAD MAN. By drinking water with which mules and dead men had had to do.

HERMES. Incontinent! You should have waited for waters purified by art.

A DEAD MAN. In all that country over against the shore of India there was not then one such pailful. So we died on those barges in our own dung and flux.³ A man must drink, Hermes.

HERMES. Some of you seem to have been at the liquor already. Whom do you ghosts pommel and drag by the hair here? Let go, dogs, and tell me your grievance against him.

A DEAD MAN. We were one hundred and forty entitled to live out our days.

HERMES. That lies with Atropos.⁴ What followed?

A DEAD MAN. This widow-maker with half a skull led us to perdition through dreadful night.

HERMES. You battling meantime, like heroes?

A DEAD MAN. We could not see. We knew not our right from our left beneath those lights. So forty [of us] were slain at a blast.

HERMES. You make more noise over it than over eight hundred and eighty thousand [dead]. (To OFFICER.) And what have you to say for yourself?

THE OFFICER. Look at the remains of my face. My own hand did it.

HERMES. Since death was so certain at that time, what made you kill yourself?

THE OFFICER. I was commanded to lead these uneasy children not in the least trained for war, to discover an enemy. But the enemy

discovering us first, my men howled and fled. I, seeing this, turned my weapon against myself.

HERMES. Little you gained! Those who ran fastest united to swear that you were in all respects incompetent.

THE OFFICER. I knew that tale would arise [as their defence], so I crooked my finger more firmly.

HERMES. What odds? You were not the only one, but all is forgotten now. (To DEAD MEN.) There is no need to spoil this fine day with brawling. Behold the City! We can moll about just as we please, for I assure you, we shall not be jostled by admirers.

THE DEAD MEN. Aie! Aie! Aie! Aie! The pleasant places where we were once so satisfied in the flesh!

HERMES. Remember you do not feel hunger or thirst, and fancy, if you like, that your lives were given for the good of this very State.

DAMASIUS. I see no change in the State — least of all in the amusements.

HERMES. You cast no shadows now, but when you did were you ever able to step off your shadows?

CHRYSIPPUS. To me my death was so terrible that I imagined all would take warning by it.

HERMES. One must cry very loud to be heard above the flute-players. What a pity you cannot address them in orations!

DAMASIUS. Surely they know by now that war is not of words but for the life.

HERMES. Was there not in your day one of your Generals, a man entitled to consideration, telling you that very thing? How did you take it?

CHRYSIPPUS. Most of us mocked at his white hairs. Some, however, went politely about our pleasures, which he as mildly as possible wished us to diminish a little, in order that we might learn to man the walls.

DAMASIUS. Since we are dead let us be just. We ourselves in those days were hostile witnesses at home, for we asserted that all virtue lay in the games.

CHRYSIPPUS. Then you, like a snapped stick, broke because the ground was a little broken!

DAMASIUS. Were you any better with your white-and-green ball-parlours?

CHRYSIPPUS. Yet bear witness, ye Gods, we stood to it — suffered and perished; though it was all in vain....

THE DEAD MEN. Vain as the Sun on the dead. But this Philosopher-fellow here, who smiles upon us, took no hand in the War except to talk comfortingly to the enemy out of side-doors and from back-gates.⁵

HERMES. Hands off him! Do not bandy reproach with a prophet. He seems in good fettle. (To PHILOSOPHER) How was it, my friend, that you escaped so comfortably?

PHILOSOPHER. Justice protected me when I swore that my actions were directed towards my own salvation.

HERMES. Well, you cannot deny that that has been settled. But it is the sleekness of your carcass which I [take the liberty to] admire.

PHILOSOPHER. Naturally I ate and drank. A man must live, Hermes.

THE DEAD MEN. But — but — but — but —

HERMES. Stop quacking while I question this bird. (To PHILOSOPHER) For how long did you eat?

PHILOSOPHER. Through fifteen hundred days.

HERMES. Multiply that by three, some of you Quarter-Master Sergeants. We think in millions here.

THE DEAD MEN. It makes four thousand five hundred full meals, but — but — listen, Hermes! The bread and the wine for each meal was brought to his mouth by the blood or the lives of fifteen thousand men who died in that single service.

HERMES. Except that he has already been judged, I would call him a somewhat gluttonous devourer of his own damnation.

PHILOSOPHER. That is only a matter of opinion in which I am now justified, for I hear that the head of my School [of thought] has become head of all [the State] here.⁶

HERMES. It is true. Stop cursing, you dead! Yonder is the Statue of Achilles and here are the fortunate ones who have just visited their families.

THE DEAD MEN (*by the Statue of Achilles*). We have seen our wives and mistresses. They do not desire us, even in their dreams!

HERMES. I suppose, then, you were in the habit of maintaining twenty years' lamentation for men who fell in those old wars in which you took no interest. And what else did you find out?

A DEAD MAN. Most of the living here are persuaded that except through the sin of their own rulers there would be no more war; and they say they will never suffer any war to be waged.

HERMES. That, as I understand it, is a counsel to which the enemy must also agree.

THE DEAD MEN. By no means, for the rulers and the demos and many women and especially the Priests asseverate that it needs always two persons to make war.

HERMES. By no means if the one possess naught but riches and the other a sharpened sword. However, as your guide, I am glad you were amused.

THE DEAD MEN. How can we, even in death, forbear to grieve when we see the land bared both of armed men and catapults? ... And more than half the ships of old are not! ... Nor can those that are left be got ready without borrowings and makeshifts.

HERMES. That is because the womenfolk and specially their handmaidens must nowadays have their hair weekly made as to ripple by the public tire-women.⁷

DAMASIUUS. How has a woman's headgear to do with the phalanxes?

CHRYSIPPUS. Or with the surge-dividing beaks?⁸

HERMES. Because all power is with the demos, of which to-day the greater part are women, or men who wait on their desires or fears or, expenses.

DAMASIUUS. But the power of women in themselves is dreadfully sufficient.

HERMES. Not for these new women. Lacking men, since so many of you stout fellows shipped with Charon, they have taken, as it were, the State for bed-fellow, and conceive strange things.

THE DEAD MEN. There is but one conceivable end to the matter. The land lies naked to the covert strife of vengeance. How shall it endure?

HERMES. As it is now, for a certain time during which the demagogues will deliver up, by means of well-chosen words, all the arms, possessions, islands and commerce of the State, one by one or altogether, to the enemy, according to [their] fears or [his] threats.

CHRYSIPPUS. But after that, at any rate, the people will be left in peace?

HERMES. On the contrary. It is then that their bodies will pay the debt of shame. To be utterly defenceless wakens in the victor the strong lust of killing for pleasure and of enslaving for profit, as indeed is already practised among the Scythians.

DAMASIUUS. So the island now stands again with shut eyes on the brink of Fate?

HERMES. Their eyes, they assert, are now opened.

CHRYSIPPUS. I have looked into the eyes of the very newly dead. Why is it, O Compeller of Shades, that they are always filled with such questioning surprise?

HERMES. By my Wand of Office, I have been too busy to consider such trifles! Nor, indeed, need you. When we return to the Ship you will each drink down the special long glass of Lethe, to which, by pity, you are entitled. It is made of triple strength for just such cases as yours.

***Afterword** This is a comic dialogue in the manner of the writer Lucian, (115–200 AD), who invented this form, for which he is chiefly known. His numerous surviving writings (he was very popular) include Dialogues of the Dead, set in the world of Hades and featuring Hermes the conductor of souls, Charon the boatman who takes them across the river Lethe, and dead men including the philosophers Menippus and Diogenes, and heroes such as Alexander the Great and Heracles and Socrates.⁹ According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, 'the writings of*

*Lucian are outstanding for their mordant and malicious wit, embodying a sophisticated and often embittered critique of the shams and follies of the literature, philosophy, and intellectual life of his day ... One of his favourite topics is the human failure to realize the transience of greatness and wealth.*¹⁰

'The Pleasure Cruise' was published on Armistice Day 1933, in the Morning Post (whose readers, astonishingly in 2024, were evidently expected to take this topical parody of a little-known classical author in their stride). Kipling follows Lucian's tongue-in-cheek mockery of human illusions of grandeur, attacking first the British public's fading memories of the Great War, then [by implication] the leaders who ordered men to attack impossible objectives or left them to die of disease in Mesopotamia, then the selfishness of conscientious objectors (one man who refused to fight 'swore that my actions were directed towards my own salvation'), and the public's current obliviousness to the dead men, who are shocked to find that their widows 'do not desire us, even in their dreams!' Last and worst is Britain's failure to rearm in preparation for the threat of the next, because 'all power is with the demos, of which to-day the greater part are women, or men who wait on their desires or fears or, expenses.' This cynically despairing mood, only partially alleviated by Kipling's wit and skill, would be countered two days later by his much fiercer poem 'Bonfires on the Ice', Morning Post 13 November 1933. J.M.

NOTES

- 1 The Statue of Achilles in Hyde Park, inaugurated in 1822 in honour of the Duke of Wellington's victories, is otherwise known as the Wellington Monument. Readers in 1933 were expected to grasp the irony of the forgotten dead meeting at this memorial of the Napoleonic War.
- 2 Atkeinos: Atkins, Kipling's generic name for the common soldier
- 3 'water with which mules and dead men had to do': during the Mesopotamian campaign, thousands of troops (many Indian) died in atrocious conditions. For 'we died ... in our own dung and flux', see also the line in Kipling's poem 'Mesopotamia' about men left 'to die in their own dung' (Pinney, *Complete Poetry*, p 1100.)
- 4 Atropos: One of the Fates, traditionally represented as three old women spinning. Two of them spun the thread of life. Atropos cut it.
- 5 The most likely original for Kipling's 'Philosopher' looks like Bertrand Russell. But Russell was very much alive in 1933, and since 'philosopher' is the nearest word in ancient Greek to 'intellectual', this figure is probably a composite representing the anti-war intelligentsia. Kipling's anger against such men presumably explains why Hermes, describing the 'Philosopher' as a 'gluttonous eater of his own damnation' is bizarrely made to allude to the 'Exhortation' in the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) warning that unless we receive the sacrament 'worthily ... we eat and drink our own damnation' (*The Communion Service*, ed. Colenso, Cambridge, Macmillan 1855, p. 21.)

- 6 'The head of all [the State]': Kipling is referring to Ramsay Macdonald, Prime Minister 1931–1935, who had opposed the declaration of war in 1914.
- 7 'hair made to ripple by the public tire-women': this refers to the fashion in the 1930s for women of all classes to curl their hair in a 'permanent wave'.
- 8 'phalanxes...surge-dividing beaks': military formations for battle, bows of warships.
- 9 Information from Paul Harvey, *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* (1937), Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 247
- 10 Online *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://britannica.com>, accessed 6 May 2024

KIPLING'S ANNOTATED HORACE¹

BY SUSAN TREGGIARI

[Susan Treggiari is Professor Emeritus of Classics at the Universities of Stanford and Oxford. In addition to her articles on Kipling and the classics in the *Kipling Journal* from 1972 onwards, she contributed the magisterial 'General Essay on Kipling and the Classical World' to the online *New Reader's Guide* on the Kipling Society's website.

I thank Judith Hibbert, Secretary of the Horatian Society, for first showing me this essay, and the Horatian Society for giving permission to reprint this altered version. *Ed.*]

Kipling acquired a fine copy of Wickham's edition and commentary on Horace's *Odes* in May 1912.² On the flyleaf he wrote a succinct paraphrase, headed 'Envoi', of the first ode of Book 1:

To every Man his Game —
Sport, Politics, Finance,
Trade, Liquor, Law, the Chase,
And My Desire is Fame
Now in the Market Place
And afterwards in Rome's Remembrance
Which no Years shall efface.

In the margins he wrote elegant copies of verses of his own. The marginal verses were published in full by Charles Carrington in 1978, with three facsimile pages, illustrations, a perceptive introduction, and notes.³ They are now also available in Thomas Pinney ed., *The Cambridge Edition of the Poems of Rudyard Kipling* 3 2127–52.

Carrington called the marginalia 'epigrams' or 'glosses'.⁴ Pinney calls them 'translations (or paraphrases, or versions, or comments)'.⁵ The individual epigrams cannot usually be dated precisely.⁶ That on 1.24, a lament for a friend, was published as an epigraph to the uncollected article 'Mourning and rejoicing at Old St Paul's', Kipling's moving account of a service in honour of Canadian war-dead, published in the *Montreal Gazette* on May 14, 1915.⁷ The epigram on 1.22, which describes how the man of upright life is protected from all dangers, just as Horace was left intact by a boar when he was singing of Lalage, appears in a letter of April 10, 1918.⁸

It is clear that Kipling read Horace all through the war years, and after. As he said in his posthumous book on his literary life, 'C— [W. C. Crofts] taught me to loathe Horace for two years; to forget him for twenty, and then to love him for the rest of my days and through many sleepless nights.'⁹ The first two clauses there should be distrusted.¹⁰

The last stage of Kipling's relationship with Horace is marked by the production of imitation odes, many of them entirely serious. 'The Pro-consuls', in honour of Milner, had already appeared in the *Times* in 1905. This was in a grand style, with echoes of the Bible rather than of classical literature.¹¹ But Kipling by early 1918 had realised that it was by Horace:

I've got a new Fifth Booker¹² whereof Hankinson Ma.¹³ is preparing the translation.¹⁴ It came out in the *Times* ever so long ago under the title *The Pro-consuls* but I perceive now that Horace wrote it. Rather a big effort for him and on a higher plane than usual—unless he'd been deliberately flattering some friend in the Government. I'll send it along.¹⁵

'A Translation: Horace Bk. V. Ode 3' was published in 1917.¹⁶ 'The Craftsman', in Sapphics, about Shakespeare's inspiration, mentioned in Mrs Kipling's diary on March 11th 1918, came out in 1919.¹⁷ So did 'A Recantation / 1917 / (To Lyde of the music halls)'.¹⁸ 'Carmen Circulare / (Q. H. Flaccus)' probably antedates 1919. Other mock Horatian odes continued after 1920. Work on the spoof *Odes V*¹⁹ provided relief in wartime and after to Kipling, Charles Robert Leslie Fletcher of Eton,²⁰ his colleague Allen Beville Ramsay,²¹ Charles Larcomb Graves, who wrote for the *Spectator* and *Punch*,²² and Alfred Denis Godley,²³ John Undershell Powell,²⁴ and Ronald Arbuthnott Knox of Oxford.²⁵

This is the context in which Kipling wrote the marginalia. He sometimes attempted to translate Horace but reckoned that 'He was untranslatable. This thought cheers me when at odd times I try my hand on him – and fail damnably.'²⁶ The individual epigrams are paraphrases or comments. The categories overlap.

They show Kipling in a sustained conversation with Horace, as if he had indeed survived into the twentieth century. Sometimes Kipling turns an ode on its head. Sometimes he speaks for Horace and sometimes to him, often critically, but always with affection. Though Kipling did not claim much for his own verses, he can speak as a fellow-craftsman and he looks for the passages where Horace uses his own experience and is in the hands of his own Daemon.²⁷

The verses can be succinct, for instance, the ode to Leuconoe on not seeking predictions of the future, which includes the famous words *carpe diem* ('pluck the day'):

Lucy, do not look ahead: We shall be a long time dead.
Take whatever you can see: And, incidentally, take me.²⁸

Kipling, like David West and Nisbet and Hubbard, but unlike the commentators of his own time, rightly takes this to be a love-poem,

along the lines of Marvell's 'To his coy mistress' and Herrick's 'To the Virgins, to make much of time'.²⁹

He would use the name Leuconoe for his wife Carrie in a passage of his autobiography in which he tells us how he bought life insurance soon after they settled in Vermont in 1892 (when Carrie was pregnant with their first child): 'I effected my first American Insurance, Leuconoe agreeing with Horace to trust the future as little as possible.'³⁰

Most of Horace's poems to young women elicit a facetious and often cynical, response, for instance the Pyrrha Ode:

What shady nook receives you —
 What trustful idiot's lap —
 I do not know — I leaves you
 And pities t'other chap!³¹

Or the song of the lover at his lady's locked door, *paraclausithyron*:

Lyce — Lyce!
 Won't you take me, *vice*
 Your lawful mate?
 I hate to wait —
 The weather's simply icy!³²

Horace's girls provided a problem to Kipling as he tried to fit them into the twentieth century. Call-girls summoned from Rome for celebrations at the Sabine farm (the high-class courtesans of whom Jasper Griffin wrote a superb description)³³ or slave-girls conveniently on the spot, could not easily be transformed into flighty society women or even housemaids.³⁴ But Kipling is conscious of their charm. He claimed not to like the 'upright man' poem (*Integer vitae*) which mentions his escape from a boar: 'I love it not' he said in a letter and then quoted his contradiction of its moralising:

The Pure and Perfect Bore
 Goes scatheless evermore
 Arrows and Poison never yet destroyed Him.
 Such is the Mantle thrown
 By Dullness o'er Her Own
 That, when he sings, the very Beasts avoid Him.
 So He pervades the Earth
 Absorbed in His Own Worth —
 No Tact restrains—no Grace —no Humour move him.
 And yet—Oh Womankind—
 This God's Own Ass can find
 Some long-enduring Lalage to love Him!³⁵

Years ago, Kipling had given Lalage new life in the marching song, 'Rimini' in *Puck of Pook's Hill*:

When I left Rome for Lalage's sake
 By the Legions' Road to Rimini,
 She vowed her heart was mine to take
 With me and my shield to Rimini —³⁶

Some of the epigrams are simply humorous spin-offs and recall *Odes* V. The philosophical Iccius, who in Horace's day was uncharacteristically going off to war in the East, abandons the Socratic school to fight in the Great War:

Icci was an Oxford don
 Far removed from bows or spears...
 Where has Mister Icci gone? ...
 Ask his men at Armentiers.

They are unenlightened clay,
 Naught of Socrates they know,
 But they worship and obey
 Major Icci, D.S.O.

While that man of classic works —
 Mucked and frozen to the knees —
 Ponders more on shields and dirks
 Than the 'clan of Socrates'.³⁷

These verses may be in part a tribute to Lieutenant Colonel Godley, O.B.E., who was a leading spirit in the Oxfordshire Volunteers, though he did not get to the trenches himself.³⁸

In 1918 there was a slangy summary of the ode to Pompeius, Brutus's officer and Horace's drinking companion:

Oh, caught with me in April's push,
 My beamish boy!
 Wash, shave, and dress,
 And let us rush
 To the Savoy!³⁹

Note how amusingly Kipling brings Horace into a twentieth century officer's experience, slang (Lewis Carroll's adjective), and assumptions ('dress', meaning white tie and tails). Horace speaks of how he and his friend were present at the blood-bath of Philippi, 'when manliness

was broken'.⁴⁰ Now the friend is back in Rome after continuing to fight in subsequent civil wars and Horace proposes a wild drinking party. 'April's push' refers to the time in 1918 when Ludendorff broke through at Armentières and, as Haig said, the British had their 'backs to the wall'.⁴¹

It is noticeable in these personal writings that Kipling enjoyed some types of ode more than others. There are a number of comments on the drinking parties, often very light-hearted.⁴² There is nothing on the odes about Augustus⁴³ or the guilt of civil war, or even what he called 'the great Cleopatra Ode'.⁴⁴ The Roman odes get no serious treatment.⁴⁵ I find it surprising that he did not comment on 2.14, about how fleeting is human life (*Eheu fugaces*).

Kipling takes against mythology. Horace in 2.13 humorously describes his narrow escape from a falling tree and goes on to describe the underworld which he nearly visited, with the expected allusions to Proserpina and Aeacus but also clever mention of the dead poets Sappho and Alcaeus in the abode of the blessed. Kipling moralises:

There was a Tree
Nigh fell on me,
And brought my wits to confusion:
For my first three stanzas
Ring like a man's, Sirs;
But the rest is classic allusion.⁴⁶

The gods leave Kipling cold. *Odes* 2.19 'I saw Bacchus' evokes

Conventions of another age
Fill us with boredom or with rage:
And that is just how later ages
Will look upon our dainty pages.
All the book-passions we were thrilled with:
All self-made wind that we were filled with:
Will whistle off: and men will say
(As I do, of this thrice-faked lay)
'Whatever made *him* write that way?'⁴⁷

But here Kipling is more sympathetic about the poet's circumstances and admits that posterity will feel the same way about his own work.

Another poem about Bacchus suggests a jollier set of verses:

I am (officially) screwed.
But not too screwed to speak.

For the whole of this riotous interlude
 I soberly cribbed from the Greek! —
 On tea and toast for a week —
 (With a ‘dikker’ to eke out my Greek)
 I laboured this Ode
 To be in the mode
 Which, just at this moment is Greek!⁴⁸

He teases Horace about his position as a client:

Having Maecenas to back us,
 Crispe Sallustus—
 Hark to the wisdom of Flaccus—
 Riches disgust us!⁴⁹

Or:

Just a line, Maecenas mine,
 To let you know my cellar’s low...
 Gods forbid that I suggest
 What from Yours would suit me best.⁵⁰

Or:

Whenever I sing to Maecenas (and my singing is fairly incessant)
 I tell him I never have been as well off as I am at the present
 I rail at all manner of riches But contrive in my railing to say
 That I’ve only one sound pair of breeches ... And he sends me a
 wardrobe next day!⁵¹

Often the gloss refers to only part of a poem or just a phrase. An example is the last three lines of the ode to Plancus, ‘Ye brave men who have often suffered worse than this at my side, now drive away cares with wine; tomorrow we shall cross the huge sea again’ [*cras ingens iterabimus aequor*].⁵² These are echoed, paraphrased, and modernised with equal brevity:

Our crew has come through worse than this —
 Set up the drinks again!
 Tomorrow our huge *engines* go *crashing* through the main!⁵³

I have italicised the onomatopoeia which picks up *cras*, ‘tomorrow’ and puns on *ingens*, ‘huge’, while imagining a steamship instead of a vessel propelled by wind and oars.

With equal brevity, when Horace invites Phyllis to help him celebrate Maecenas’s birthday, and calls her ‘the last of his loves’, although he knows she is trying to catch Telephus, Kipling comments:

Oh, that last love — the worse of Hells! —
 When she we love loves some-one else
 And we — so coldly runs our blood —
 Argue with her for her own good!⁵⁴

A poem from elsewhere provides a clue to Kipling's reactions to Horace and what he valued most highly. 'The Survival', which precedes his story about how Jane Austen formed a bond between soldiers in the trenches,⁵⁵ is a mock ode (allegedly 'Horace, Bk. V, Ode 22') in which Horace says that princes are no longer getting the praise poets had promised them and which alone secured their fame (as he had done in *Odes* 4.9) and, says Kipling, amplifies *Odes* 3.30, where he claims that the three books of *Odes* will outlast material monuments.⁵⁶ In the spoof, Horace abandons the praise of rulers and war and privileges ordinary human beings and nature:

Yet furthest times receive,
 And to fresh praise restore,
 Mere breath of flutes at eve,⁵⁷
 Mere seaweed on the shore.⁵⁸

A smoke of sacrifice,⁵⁹
 A chosen myrtle-wreath,⁶⁰
 An harlot's altered eyes,⁶¹
 A rage 'gainst love or death,⁶²

Glazed snow beneath the moon,⁶³
 The surge of storm-bowed trees—⁶⁴
 The Caesars perished soon,
 And Rome Herself: But these

Endure while Empires fall
 And Gods for Gods make room ...
 Which greater God than all
 Imposed the amazing doom?

All these tiny vignettes can be discovered in the *Odes* (see end-notes).

I return to the marginalia. Kipling is inspired by Horace's weather-forecast to Lamia, with its tiny and precise picture of how the storm sent down by the east wind will spread the wood with leaves and the shore with useless seaweed:

What profit in the poet's calling?...
 A Sabine squire sent a friend

A message that the glass was falling:
 And, after thirty generations
 That note holds good through all the nations —
 And will do, till the nations end.
 Why scoff at any poet's calling?⁶⁵

The precise descriptions of nature at the beginning of 4.7 must be one of the reasons why Kipling loved it:

If all that ever Man had sung
 In the audacious Latin Tongue
 Had been lost — and This remained
 All, through This might be regained.⁶⁶

There is similar enthusiasm for 'the drip of the water' of the Bandusian spring.⁶⁷ A description of nature and felicitous language and sound make him feel that Horace was inspired. So, he praises the preparation of the sacrifice to Venus in 1.19:

... and here the Power shines,
 In those last four clear-cut lines.⁶⁸

Kipling did not under-estimate the *Odes*. Horace had claimed in what he intended to be his last ode (the last one in the three books issued together in 23 B. C.) that he had completed a monument more lasting than bronze or the Pyramids. Kipling's summing-up is light in tone but seriously meant:

What I have done I have done.
 It is first-class work and I know it.
 And nothing under the sun
 Shall 'minish, or overthrow it.
 (Certified B.C. 21 Q.H. Flaccus Poet.)⁶⁹

Apart from descriptions of the natural world, Kipling gave a particular value to Horace's emphasis on humanity, friendship, love, and death. He makes this very clear in his cunningly tailored speech to boys at one house at Wellington in 1912:

I attach a certain amount of importance to the spirit of a few old Latin tags and quotations. Some of them, not more than three lines long, give one the very essence of what a man ought to try to do. Others, equally short, let you understand once and for all, the things that man should not do—under any circumstances. There are others—bits of

odes from Horace, they happen to be in my case— that make one realise in later life as no other words in any other tongue can, the brotherhood of mankind in time of sorrow or affliction.⁷⁰

He writes on the lament for Quintilius addressed to Virgil:

They pass, O God, and all
 Our grief, our tears,
 Achieve not their recall
 Nor reach their ears.
 Our lamentations leave
 But one thing sure,
 They perish and we grieve
 But we endure.⁷¹

The ode to Maecenas in which Horace swears that he will die before him gets a serious reaction too:

As watchers couched beneath a Bandine⁷² oak
 Hearing the dawn wind stir,
 Know that the instant power of Night is broke
 Though no dawn threaten her
 Till Dawn's appointed hour — so Virgil died
 Aware of Change at hand, and prophesied ...⁷³

Kipling later completed this fragment in a poem he called 'The last Ode. Nov. 27 B. C. 8 Horace, Bk. V. Ode 31', which follows the medi-aeval story, 'The Eye of Allah'. Because Kipling attached the fragment to Horace's 2.17 and because of the title we see that he is thinking of Horace's promise to accompany Maecenas in death. In the last stanza we therefore know that Horace is not going to dinner at Maecenas's palace on the Esquiline, but to his grave, to join dead Maecenas and dead Virgil.

... and prophesied
 Change upon all the Eternal Gods had made
 And on the Gods alike —
 Fated as dawn, but, as the dawn, delayed
 Till the just hour should strike —

A Star new-risen above the living and dead;
 And the lost shades that were our loves restored
 As lovers, and for ever. So he said;
 Having received the word ...

Maecenas waits me on the Esquiline:
 Thither tonight go I
 And shall this dawn restore us, Virgil mine,
 To dawn? Beneath what sky?⁷⁴

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NRG = *New Reader's Guide* on Kipling Society website
Odes V = *Q. Horati Flacci Carminum Liber Quintus (Q. Horati Flacci Carminum Librum Quintum a Rudyardo Kipling et Carolo Graves Anglice redditum et variorum notis adornatum ad fidem codicum MSS edidit Aluredus D. Godley)* (Oxford, 1920)
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NOTES

- 1 This paper was originally offered as an address at the Horatian Society's annual dinner in 2022. I thank the Horatian Society for the initial invitation, kind hospitality, and permission to reproduce it in a slightly different form for the *Kipling Journal*. I am ever grateful to Charles Carrington, who generously gave me a copy of *Kipling's Horace* when he published it. Five hundred copies were printed. It is sometimes possible to find a second-hand copy. George Webb, when editor of the *Kipling Journal*, had previously read the poem on the Bandusian Spring to the Horatian Society in 1991. I discussed the volume in earlier publications, with the aim of bringing it to attention, since it was not generally available ('On Kipling's Horace', *Classical Views/Echos du monde classique* 29 n.s. 4 [1985] 421–433, 'Kipling and the Classical World' in *NRG*). I am indebted throughout to *NRG* and to Pinney's notes. References to the *Odes* are given by their numbers only, to *Kipling's Horace* as *K.H* + page number.
- 2 Kipling's annotated edition of Horace's *Odes* is now at the University of Sussex Library Special Collections as Kipling Papers (KP) 31/1 (Pinney 3 2297).
- 3 The subtitle is *Carminibus nonnullis Q. Horatii Flacci adiunximus quae ad illius exemplar poeta nostras Rudyard Kipling anglice vel convertit vel imitatus est* (To certain odes of Quintus Horatius Flaccus we have added certain verses which, following his example, our native poet Rudyard Kipling turned or imitated.) *Convertere* not only means 'translate' but 'turn, change, transform', all of which are appropriate here. The epigrams have been republished in Pinney 3 2127–52 with notes. They are not at present in the Poems on the Kipling Society website.
- 4 *K's H* p. vii, 19, 75.
- 5 Pinney 3 2297.
- 6 'No doubt these things were written at widely different times' (Pinney 3.2297). Thirteen (on *Odes* 1.5, 13, 22, 24; 2.8, 10; 3.7, 13, 16, 17; 4.12, 13; 2.20/3.30) were published as 'Selections from the Freer Verse Horace' in the *Magdalene College Magazine* X.2 39–42 in June 1932 (immediately after Kipling's election to an Honorary Fellowship), which gives a *terminus ante quem*. These thirteen appear in *Selections from the Freer Verse Horace*, privately printed for Roger Lancelyn Green (1965), with the addition of *Odes* 1.9 from Carrington, *Kipling* p. 482. *Kipling's Horace* included twelve of the thirteen, omitting one on 3.13 (below n. 67) and added 41 unpublished items (p. vii). There are 59 separate glosses in the margins of Kipling's copy. Horace produced a total of 103 odes: 38 in the first papyrus roll, 20 in the second, 30 in the third, 'published' together in 23 BC (88 in total) and 15 in Book 4, issued near the end if his life.)
- 7 *Kipling's Horace* p. 53. Pinney 3 2298.
- 8 *K's H* p. 7; *Letters* 4 486–7 to Sir Andrew Mcphail, Professor of Medical History at McGill, pathologist, and writer (biographical details in *Letters* 3 277).
- 9 Kipling ed. Pinney *S of M* 22.
- 10 Pinney discusses omissions and distortions in Kipling's memoir in his preface, *S o M* pp. xi–xiv. See also the section headed 'Schooling and later exposure to the Graeco-Roman world' in Treggiari 'Kipling and the Classical World', *NRG*.
- 11 The title was originally 'Consuls'. R. Lancelyn Green, 'Kipling and Horace', *KJ* 1957 8–11 at 9 and Carrington, *KH* xix count it as Horatian. See Mary Hamer's excellent article in *NRG*. It was collected in *The Years Between* (1919).

- 12 He means an item allegedly from the fictitious fifth book of Horace's *Odes*.
- 13 Ma.: Major.
- 14 A literal prose translation by this fictitious schoolboy (or 'a scholiast of an unknown period', *incertae aetatis scholiasta*, as *Odes V* puts it) appears in *Odes V* pp. 33–4.
- 15 Kipling *Letters* 4 p. 480.
- 16 'There are those whose study is of smells', after 'Regulus' in *A Diversity of Creatures* (Pinney 2 962). Carrington (xix). says there is evidence that it was shown to friends earlier, but does not cite it. The next story, 'The Edge of the Evening (1913)' has an epigraph which is clearly meant to be Horatian: 'Ah! What avails the classic bent, / And what the cultured word, / Against the undoctored incident / That actually occurred? / And what is Art whereto we press / Through paint and prose and rhyme— / When Nature in her nakedness / Defeats us every time?' These two stanzas (italicized and at the beginning of the poem) were later incorporated in 'The Benefactors', about the development of weaponry, published in *The Years Between* in 1919 (Pinney 2 1120–1). Two other italicized stanzas balance them at the end. The rest of the poem is less Horatian.
- 17 Pinney 2 1116–7: 'Once, after long-drawn revel at The Mermaid, / He to the over-bearing Boanerges, / Jonson, uttered (if half of it were liquor, / Blessed be the vintage!) // Saying how, at an alehouse under Cotswold, / He had made sure of his very Cleopatra, / Drunk with enormous, salvation-contemning / Love for a tinker' and so on. Cf. A. and S. Treggiari, 'The Craftsman', *KJ* 196 (1975) 4–6.
- 18 *Carrie's Diaries* 1918, Pinney 2 1096–7.
- 19 Cf. Stephen Medcalf, 'Horace's Kipling' in C. Martindale and D. Hopkins (eds.), *Horace made new* (Cambridge, 1993), David Page, 'Graves, Kipling, Knox, Godley and All', *KJ* 306 (June 2003) 6–8, 65. David Butterfield spoke to the Horatian Society on *Odes V* in 2015.
- 20 C.R.L. Fletcher 1857–1934. Historian, Fellow of All Souls (1881), Tutor and Fellow of Magdalen (1883–1906) who resigned his fellowship in order to concentrate on writing. Kipling wrote the poems in his *School History of England* (1911) and a parody of Bunyan (*Letters* 4 304–7, May 1915) which became a preface to Fletcher, *A Handy Guide to Oxford specially written for the Wounded*. Fletcher taught at Eton 1914–15 and 1917–19. Kipling saw him in Oxford on May 22 1919 (*CD*). Kipling bounced ideas on 'Odes V' off him and clearly received encouragement to continue the learned joke (*Letters* 4 439–40, 21 April 1917, 442–3, 24 April 1917, 443–5, 29 April 1917, 476–7, 2 Jan. 1918, 479–80, 12 Jan. 1918, 483–5, 17 Feb. 1918). He offered some renderings into Latin (*Letters* 4 476–7, 2 Jan. 1918, 479–80, 12 Jan. 1918) and Kipling credits him with having suggested the publication of a whole book, designed to look like an Oxford Classical Text (*Letters* 4 476–7, 2 Jan. 1918, 483–5, 17 Feb. 1918). Kipling then put the project to Graves (*Letters* 4 483–5, 17 Feb. 1918), whose account of its genesis does not mention Fletcher (Letter from S. A. Courtauld, *KJ* 76 Dec. 1945 21, Pinney at *Letters* 4 477 Note 1). Kipling was equally helpful in the development of Fletcher's ideas (*Letters* 4 358–9, 9 Feb. 1916, 556–7, 5 June 1919). (Other letters to Fletcher around this time are 4.464–5, 4 June 1917, 475–6, 18 Dec. 1917.) Fletcher's importance to the 'Odes V' project is often neglected.
- 21 A. B. Ramsay 1872–1955. Eton and King's College, Cambridge. He taught at Eton 1895–1925, edited Catullus, and was a prolific author of Latin verses, including *Inter*

- lilia* ('Among lilies') (Cambridge U. P., 1920), and a spoof, *C. Licini Calvi poemata nuperrime inventa* ('Newly discovered poems of Gaius Licinius Calvus' [1954]). Master of Magdalene 1925–47. He supplied a translation of 'The Proconsuls' (*Letters* 4 483–4 to Fletcher 17 Feb. 1918) and supplied the 'original Latin' for all three Kipling 'translations' in the published book: 'There are those whose study is of smells' (*Odes* V.1), 'The Proconsuls' (*Odes* V.6), and 'Why gird at Lollius' (*Odes* V.13) (Lancelyn Green *KJ* 124 Dec. 1957 11, Pinney's note). Jeffery D. Lewins, *The Ramsay-Mrs Kipling letters: correspondence of the widow of Rudyard Kipling and A.B. Ramsay, Master of Magdalene* (Cambridge: Magdalene College, c. 2001) must be of interest.
- 22 C.L. Graves 1856–1944. Author of *The Hawarden Horace* (1894), *More Hawarden Horace* (1896): renderings of some of Horace's *Odes* into English verse put into the mouth of Gladstone, and so slightly foreshadowing *Odes V, Lauds and libels* (1918), *Mr Punch's History of the Great War* (1919, *More Lauds and Libels* (?1924), *New Times* (1921), etc.
- 23 A.D. Godley 1856–1925. Fellow and Tutor of Magdalen 1883–1912, Public Orator of the University 1910–25, and a prolific author of humorous verse in English, Latin, and Greek. He had written spoofs of his own (e.g., in Latin '*P. Vergili Maronis fragmentum nuper repertum*' 'A recently discovered fragment of P. Vergilius Maro'; in English, 'Football and rowing—an Eclogue' (*Verses to order* [London, 1892] 34–5, 46–7). There was a Horatian Ode, 'After Horace' (*Lyra frivola* [London, 1900] 1–3. Surely Kipling knew this, since it contained these two stanzas: '... The Bard subsists on simpler food: / A dinner, not severely plain, / A pint or so of really good / Champagne— / Grant him but these, no care he'll take / Though Laureates bask in Fortune's smile, / Though Kiplings and Corellis make / Their pile: ...' He addresses two poems to Fletcher, in 1913 and 1914 (Godley, *Reliquiae* 1.290–93) and a letter in 1922 (*Reliquiae* 1.334). He addressed verses to Ramsay in 1923 and 1925 (Godley, *Reliquiae* 1.338, 343). to Ramsay in 1923 (*Reliquiae* 1.338, 343). His rhyming review of Graves, *Lauds and Libels* was published in 1918 (*Reliquiae* 1.128–9). There are letters to Graves in 1924 (*Reliquiae* 1.129) and to Powell in 1912 (*Reliquiae* 1.282). Powell and he exchanged suggestions and poems in 1916, 1917, 1922, ?1923 (*Reliquiae* 1.318–20, 320–22, 335–6, 339–40). He joked (in Latin verse) to Powell in 1922 that he would publish a fifth book of his verses, as Horace had done (*Reliquiae* 1.335–36). For Kipling's views on his 'many-sidedness', 'workmanship', and 'fearlessness' see *Letters* 5 321–2 to Fletcher, Dec. 9 1926.
- 24 J. U. Powell Born 1865. Scholar of Balliol. Fellow of St John's. He asked Kipling if he might translate Kipling's poem 'Justice / October 1918' (*The Times* 24 Oct. 1918, *The Years Between* 156–9, Pinney 2 1152–3) into Greek (*Letters* 4 519 to Powell, 7 Nov. 1918) and Kipling said it would be an honour. Later, Kipling authorised Powell to use it as a Christmas card (Pinney note 2). He and Godley exchanged Latin poems (Godley, *Reliquiae* 1.318–19, 39–40).
- 25 R.A. Knox 1888–1957. Eton and Balliol. Chaplain of Trinity College, Oxford (1912–17). Author of English verses, including *Absolute and Abitofhell* (1915). Roman Catholic chaplain to the University (1926–39). He wrote theological works and detective stories.
- 26 Kipling, *Letters* 5.555–6 to S. A. Courtauld. 19 June 1930 and note. Cf. *A Book of Words* 90: 'one cannot re-express an idea that has been perfectly set forth'.

- 27 For Horace's Daemon see p. 67 on 4.13. For Kipling's belief in his own Daemon see, e.g., *S of M* 43, 68, 77, 109–10, 121–3, 124, 126, 127, 134.
- 28 *K's H* p 3; *Odes* 1, 1. Graves produced a sequel in *Odes* V.8: 'Leuconoe, I warned you, in tranquil days of yore / To curb your impious craving for Babylonian lore'
- 29 David, West, *Reading Horace* 58–64 (pointing out that the metaphor is from viticulture), Nisbet and Hubbard, *Odes I* 134–5. Wickham and Thomas Ethelbert Page, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum libri IV* (1883) miss this, and much else.
- 30 Kipling, *S of M* 67.
- 31 *Odes* 1.5, p. 9. Pinney 3 2127 has 'cell', not 'nook'.
- 32 *K's H* p. 19 for *Odes* 3.10. As often, we must remember to use the old pronunciation (of Lyce).
- 33 Griffin, *Latin poets and Roman life* (London, 1985) 1–31, especially 15–22.
- 34 'Don't be ashamed of your housemaid', *K's H* p 11 for *Odes* 2.4.
- 35 Kipling, *Letters* 4 486, p. 7 on 1.22. *The Freer Verse Horace* and Pinney 3 2128 read 'have not yet destroyed Him' and 'Thus he encumbers earth'.
- 36 Kipling 'Rimini' (1906), also published, with three additional stanzas, in *Songs from Books* (1912, Pinney 2. 726–7). Kipling does not deny the attractions of Barine either (*K's H* p 17 on *Odes* 2.8).
- 37 *K's H* p. 41 on *Odes* 1.29. 'The clan of Socrates' recalls the Socratic school which, along with the books on duty of the 2nd c. B. C. Stoic Panaetius, Iccius had exchanged (i.e. abandoned) for a breastplate of Spanish steel.
- 38 For Godley's military work see Fletcher's brief 'Memoir' (Godley, *Reliquiae* 1.3) and Godley, 'History of the Oxfordshire Regiment of Volunteers, 1914–1919' (*Reliquiae* 2.333–52). Cf. Kipling, 'The scholars / 1919', Pinney 2 1386–8) on naval officers at Cambridge, 'The clerks and the bells / Oxford in 1920', sent to press 1919, Pinney 2 1395–6) on returning undergraduates at Oxford.
- 39 *K's H* p. 43 on *Odes* 2.7.
- 40 Nisbet and Hubbard, *Odes II* 109 comment 'it is disconcerting to find him describing so terrible an experience with discreet jokes and elegant allusions'. I am not sure that Kipling would agree. Nor would I confine 'manly virtue' to Brutus's Stoic beliefs, as Nisbet and Hubbard do (114).
- 41 Order to troops, 12 April 1918, *Times* 13 Apr.: 'With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight to the end.' 'Push' here means 'a concerted military advance' (*OED* 1.b). *Mr Punch's History of the Great War* 112 refers to 'the Big Push' 'on the Somme of 1916, by the British Expeditionary Force 'in its pushful mood'. While Italy had 'her Big Push' on the Isonzo (113).
- 42 *K's H* p. 27 on *Odes* 3.8, p. 29 on *Odes* 1.27 and 3.28, p. 33 on *Odes* 3.25, p. 37 on *Odes* 3.19, p. 39 on *Odes* 3.21, p. 71 on *Odes* 1.9, p. 81 on *Odes* 4.12. I take 'caught' to mean 'inextricably involved', not implying that the addressee and Kipling became P.O.W.s, however briefly.
- 43 Except *Odes* 3.3, *K's H* p. 49, headed by Carrington 'To Augustus' (because the ode mentions Augustus as a candidate for deification, not because he is the formal addressee) where Kipling's satirical comment is nothing to do with Augustus.
- 44 Kipling, *S of M* 21.
- 45 Ricketts 'Kipling, Horace, and literary parenthood', *NRG* under 'General Articles by many hands', (2004, accessed 31 March 2022), T. J. Leary, 'Kipling, Stalky,

- Regulus & Co.: a reading of Horace “Odes” 3.5, *Greece & Rome* 55 (2008) 247–262.
- 46 *K’s H* p. 57 on *Odes* 2.13. Cf. p. 19 on *Odes* 1.19, where Venus cruelly torments Horace with love for Glycera and he plans to propitiate her by a sacrifice: ‘In the stale old classic fashion — / Words without one touch of passion —.’
- 47 *K’s H* p. 35 on *Odes* 2.19. An ode to Diana, *Odes* 3.22, is cursorily dismissed too: ‘Oh Chaperone / Of Ladies big / With child I’ve slone [*sic*] / For you a pig! / And I have wondered oft and long / Horace, whatever made *you* write this sort of song’ (p. 13).
- 48 *K’s H* p. 33 on *Odes* 3.25.
- 49 *K’s H* p. 23, *Odes* 3.29. The addressee’s name should be Sallustius Crispus. Compare *The Freer Verse Horace* for a comment on 3.16: ‘Every time that I am short, / Hear me raise the lofty strain; / Telling people that they ought / Not to care for gold or gain. / Well I know Maecenas will / Read the lay—and foot the bill!’ (This is not in *K’s H*.)
- 50 *K’s H* p. 23 on *Odes* 1.20.
- 51 *K’s H* p. on *Odes* 3.29. The punctuation is as Kipling left it.
- 52 *K’s H* p. 6 on *Odes* 1.7. [The Latin phrase is quoted by Mr. King at the beginning of ‘Regulus’ (*A Diversity of Creatures*, Macmillan 1917, p. 230. *Ed.*)]
- 53 *Ibid.*, emphasis mine.
- 54 *K’s H* p. 21 on 4.11.
- 55 ‘The Janeites’ in *Debits and Credits* (1926). See p. 107 in the section on Kipling’s imitations of Horace, Pinney 2 1006.
- 56 Kipling, *Letters* 5 263–5 to C. R. L. Fletcher, 21 Sept. 1925 quotes ‘Mere smoke ... doom’, in discussing Godley’s Latin version, found after his death (27 June 1925) among his unpublished papers. Kipling gives the first two words of Godley’s version: *Secura tellus*. We know the first line ran: *Secura tellus cum foret hostium*, which Pinney cites from Fletcher’s note on Kipling’s letter. Kipling also quotes *Pro mentium aegrorum medela / tam placuit meminisse* [*sic*: it ought to be *meminisse*] *nostrum*, ‘For the healing of the minds of the sick it was decided so far to remember us’, *funus carentem*, ‘lacking a funeral’ [less probably, ‘lacking death’], and *ubicunq; lapsus*, ‘wherever fallen [masculine singular]’. There was also a reference to *caerulei*. ‘blue people’, which Kipling explains as referring to ‘Britons, whom he knew only as savages blue with cold or painted with woad’. Only the first line can be closely related to Kipling’s ‘Securely, after days unnumbered’. Unfortunately, Fletcher did not publish this ode in his edition of a selection of Godley’s unpublished papers (A. D. Godley, *Reliquiae* ed. Fletcher, [Oxford, 1926]). I hope to analyse this material elsewhere.
- 57 This is Pinney’s version of the line. *Debits and Credits* reads ‘Mere flutes that breathe at eve’. The pipe or flute, *tibia*, theoretically accompanied all the *Odes* (1.1.32, 1.12.2, 3.4.1, 4.1.23) but I think Kipling is remembering *Odes* 3.7.29–30, where in the evening Asterie is to avoid looking out of the window when serenaded: *neque in vias / sub cantu querulae despicie tibiae*..., ‘do not look down into the streets at the sound of the plaintive pipe...’.
- 58 *Odes* 3.17.9–12: *cras foliis nemus / multis et alga litus inutili / demissa tempestas ab Euro / sternet*, ‘tomorrow the wood will be strewn with many leaves and the shore with useless seaweed by the storm sent down by the east wind’. Horace (*Satires* 2.5.8: *vilior alga est*, ‘it is cheaper than seaweed’) had used seaweed to typify a

- worthless object. I note that Virgil, who mentions seaweed twice, also implies that it was ‘cheap’ when cast up on the beach: *Ecl.* 7.42: *proiecta vilior alga*, ‘it is cheaper than cast-up seaweed’. (Cf. *Aen.* 7.590: *refunditur alga*, ‘the seaweed flows back’.)
- 59 *Odes* 3.18.7–8: *vetus ara multo / fumat odore*, ‘the old altar smokes with heavy scent’.
- 60 Kipling is probably thinking chiefly of *Odes* 1.38.5–8: *simplici myrto nihil allabores / sedulus curo: neque te ministrum / dedecet myrtus neque me sub arta / vite bibentem*, ‘I care nothing that you zealously make an effort to add [other greenery or flowers] to simple myrtle. Myrtle does not disgrace you as my attendant or me as I drink beneath the shady vine’. But Horace often refers to wreaths of myrtle (sacred to Venus): *Odes* 1.4.9: *nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedit myrto*, ‘now is it fitting to deck the glossy head either with myrtle...’, *Odes* 2.7.23–5: *quis udo / deproperare apio coronas / curatve myrto?* ‘who will take care of hastening garlands of damp celery or myrtle?’, *Odes* 3.23 (Phidyle): *parvos coronantem marino / rore deos fragilique myrto*, ‘garlanding her little gods with rosemary and delicate myrtle’. Horace was covered by bay and myrtle leaves by the wood pigeons when he went to sleep on the mountain as a child (*Odes* 3.4.9–20).
- 61 I think this is Licymnia in *Odes* 2.12.13–16: *me dulces dominae Musa Licymniae / cantus, me voluit dicere lucidum / fulgentes oculos et bene mutuis / fidum pectus amoribus*. ‘The Muse wanted me to speak of the sweet singing of the lady Licymnia. She wanted me to speak of her brightly shining eyes and her breast truly faithful to reciprocal love.’ Kipling was perhaps misled by Wickham calling her Maecenas’s mistress.
- 62 ‘This would suit many of Horace’s *Odes*.’ (Lisa Lewis and Treggiari in *NRG*.) But perhaps for love *Odes* 1.5, 19, 27, 33, 2.8, 3.26, 4.1, 13, and for death *Odes* 1.24, 2.14, 2.18, 4.7.
- 63 *Odes* 3.10.7–8: *... positas ut glaciem nives / puro numine Iuppiter*. ‘and how the lying snows are iced by Jupiter with his cloudless divinity’. Note how ‘glazed’ picks up *glaciet*. Carrington p. 107 adduces the Soracte ode (*Odes* 1.9), which describes similar weather: ‘You see how Mount Soracte stands white with deep snow ... and the streams have ceased to flow with sharp frost’.
- 64 *Odes* 1.9.11–12: *nec cupressi / nec veteres agitantur orni*. ‘and the cypresses and the old manna-ash trees are not tossed’; perhaps 2.10.9–10: *saepius ventis agitur ingens / pinus*. ‘more often is the huge pine tossed by the winds’.
- 65 *K’s H* p. 83 on 3.17. There is another version of this: ‘What need of any poet’s measure? / A Sabine squire made a list / Of Christmas—in—the-country pleasure / And nineteen hundred Christmas tides / Have perished but that list abides / And will — so long as words exist, / Take heed of every poet’s measure!’ Kipling here presumably mentions Christmas because he thinks Lamia will be eating and drinking with his slaves because it is the Saturnalia, but it is because of the wet weather. He focuses on lines 9–13: *... cras foliis nemus / multis et alga litus inutili / demissa tempestas ab Euro / sternet, aquae nisi fallit augur / annosa cornix*, ‘tomorrow the wood will be strewn with many leaves and the shore with useless seaweed by the storm sent down from the east wind, unless the aged crow is a deceptive forecaster.’
- 66 *K’s H* p. 75. This is the one Housman translated: ‘The snows are fled away...’ (*More Poems* 5).
- 67 *K’s H* p. 73 on *Odes* 3.13: ‘A singer sang of a way-side well / Or ever Our Lord was born. / And God made Heaven / And Man made Hell / But never a word of the

- singer's spell, / Was lost or changed or worn. / Through the thousand years — / and the thousand years — / Of blood and battle and flame and tears / Since ever Our Lord was born! / For the drip of the water pleased his ears / Or ever Our Lord was born!' *The Freer Verse Horace* and Pinney 3, 2131 have 'A singer spoke to', 'And the Powers and Kingdoms rose and fell', 'altered or worn/ Through the thousand years, and the thousand years / Since the drip of the water pleased his ears (Oh the Makings and the Breakings and the Glories and the Fears!) / Or ever Our Lord was born.' Horace had not mentioned the sound, but said that the water sparkled in the sunlight: *O fons Bandusiae, splendidior vitro*, 'O spring of Bandusia, more glittering than glass'.... If Kipling ever visited the supposed site of Horace's Sabine villa near Vicovaro and the supposed spring, he will have seen the tall goblet-shaped fountain from which the water now drips. He certainly saw Soracte and Tibur/Tivoli in 1909, both connected with Horace (Treggiari). He could have got to the villa from Tivoli.
- 68 *K's H* p. 19 on *Odes* 1.19.13–16, the ode about Venus making Horace fall in love again: *hic vivum mihi caespitem, hic / verbenas, pueri, ponite thuraque / bimi cum patera meri: / mactata veniet lenior hostia*, 'Here place for me living turves, here, boys, put fragrant branches and incense, with a bowl of undiluted two-year-old wine: when a victim has been sacrificed she [Venus] will come in a gentler mood'. The turves were built up into an altar, which the branches of myrtle or some other sweet-scented shrub would garland. The wine would be poured as a libation. An animal would be killed as an offering. Horace would be among those eating the meat.
- 69 *K's H* p. 95 on *Odes* 3.30. Pinney 3, 2135 and *Freer Verse Horace* have an introductory stanza: 'Gods! What a breath I have blown / Through the wide world for all ages. / Praise me or damn me or let me alone / What does it matter? My soul is my own / And *that* is my work and my wages! /'. They have 'stuff' instead of 'work' and omit 'And' in the penultimate line. (Kipling might have applied this to himself. Cf. 'Seek not to question other than / the books I leave behind.' ['The Appeal', Pinney 2 1461.]
- 70 'The Uses of Reading' (*A Book of Words* 77–96) at 89–90.
- 71 *K's H* p. 53 on *Odes* 1.24. West quotes it (*Odes* I p. 115) and emphasises 'the depth of his [Kipling's] response', to prove 'the power of Horace's poetry'. *The Freer Verse Horace* and Pinney 3 2128 have has 'And we endure'
- 72 Changed to Bantine in the published version (*Debits and Credits* [1926] 395, p. 108 on 2.17). Cf. *Odes* 3.4.13–16: *mirum quod foret omnibus, / quicumque celsae nidum Acherontiae / saltusque Bantinos et arvum / pingue tenent humilis Forenti*, 'which was a marvel to all who occupy the nest of lofty Acherontia and the Bantine glens and the rich ploughland of low-lying Forentum'.
- 73 *K's H* p. 27 on *Odes* 2.17. The misspelling is Kipling's.
- 74 The black Esquiline Hill, outside the city walls, had been a place of graves, notably the pits of the poor, of slaves, and of plague-victims (Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.6–16, 2.6.32–3). The cemetery had been covered with earth and converted to other uses. The new house and gardens of Maecenas (*horti*) were above part of the old cemetery and on top of the old city wall. Kipling does not imply that Maecenas is waiting for Horace to come to dinner in his luxurious house, but that Maecenas is already dead (though Horace had promised to die first). Horace in fact died on 8 Dec. 8 B. C., 59 days after Maecenas. He was buried near Maecenas's tomb on the further part of the Esquiline (Suetonius *Horace*). Virgil had died Sept. 21 19 B. C.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

September 2024

NEW MEMBERS

It is my great pleasure to publicly welcome and introduce the following members who have joined or rejoined the Kipling Society:

Ms. Sara BOYD (*Colorado, USA*)
Sir Colin BUDD (*London, UK*)
Ms. Deborah DUERKSEN (*New York, USA*)
Ms. Elizabeth DUNDAS (*Hertfordshire, UK*)
Ms. Mary FAGAN (*Dublin, Ireland*)
Mr. Michael LISTON (*Illinois, USA*)
Rev. Harry POTTER (*London, UK*)
Mr. David RUBIN (*New York, USA*)
Mr. Michael RUDKO (*New York, USA*)
Ms. Serena STADEROLI (*Livorno, Italy*)
Mr. Morten SCHOLER (*Coppet, Switzerland*)
Ms. Qing WANG (*Vancouver, Canada*)
Mr. Richard WILLIAMS (*Essex, UK*)

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Members are reminded that the annual subscription rates for membership of the Society have gone up as of January this year. Details are printed on the back cover of the *Kipling Journal* from January 2024 onwards, and can also be viewed on the Society's website. The PayPal function on our website has been updated to reflect the new rates. Members who pay by cheque/check and bank transfer are kindly requested to ensure they are paying the new rate. UK-based members who already pay by standing order will be contacted with information about updating their payments. Members wishing to pay by standing order or to move to online membership should contact me at the email address below.

LEAVING THE SOCIETY

If your subscription will not be renewed, please let me know by post (Keylands, Burwash, East Sussex TN19 7HP, UK) or via email (ksmemsec@outlook.com).

Fiona Renshaw
Membership Secretary

KIPLING ON ROMAN PROVINCES

VECTIS (ISLE OF WIGHT)

‘Our Villa’s on the South edge of the Island, by the Broken Cliffs. Most of it is three hundred years old, but the cow-stables, where our first ancestor lived, must be a hundred years older. Oh, quite that, because the founder of our family had his land given him by Agricola at the Settlement. It’s not a bad little place for its size. In spring-time violets grow down to the very beach. I’ve gathered sea-weeds for myself and violets for my Mother many a time with our old nurse.’

‘Was your nurse a—a Romaness too?’

‘No, a Numidian. Gods be good to her! A dear, fat, brown thing with a tongue like a cowbell. She was a free woman. By the way, are you free, maiden?’

‘Oh, quite,’ said Una. ‘At least, till tea-time; and in summer our governess doesn’t say much if we’re late.’

The young man laughed again—a proper understanding laugh.

‘I see,’ said he. ‘That accounts for your being in the wood. *We* hid among the cliffs.’

‘Did you have a governess, then?’

‘Did we not? A Greek, too. She had a way of clutching her dress when she hunted us among the gorse-bushes that made us laugh. Then she’d say she’d get us whipped. She never did, though, bless her! Aglaia was a thorough sportswoman, for all her learning.’

‘But what lessons did you do—when—when you were little?’

‘Ancient history, the Classics, arithmetic, and so on,’ he answered. ‘My sister and I were thickheads, but my two brothers (I’m the middle one) liked those things, and, of course, Mother was clever enough for any six. She was nearly as tall as I am, and she looked like the new statue on the Western Road—the Demeter of the Baskets, you know. And funny! Roma Dea! How Mother could make us laugh!’

‘What at?’

‘Little jokes and sayings that every family has. Don’t you know?’

‘I know *we* have, but I didn’t know other people had them too,’ said Una. ‘Tell me about all your family, please.’

‘Good families are very much alike. Mother would sit spinning of evenings while Aglaia read in her corner, and Father did accounts, and we four romped about the passages. When our noise grew too loud the Pater would say, “Less tumult! Less tumult! Have you never heard of a Father’s right over his children? He can slay them, my loves—slay them dead, and the Gods highly approve of the action!” Then Mother would prim up her dear mouth over the wheel and answer: “H’m! I’m afraid there can’t be much of the Roman Father about you!” Then the

Pater would roll up his accounts, and say, "I'll show you!" and then—then, he'd be worse than any of us!"

A Centurion of the Thirtieth

ANTIOCH, SYRIA (ANTAKYA, TURKEY)

Next morning, and for many weeks after, Valens found himself on Market-inspection duty with a fat Aedile, who flew into rages because the stalls were not flushed down at the proper hour. A couple of his uncle's men were told off to him, and, of course, introduced him to the thieves' and prostitutes' quarters, to the leading gladiators, and so forth.

One day, behind the Little Circus, near Singon Street, he ran into a mob, where a race-course gang were trying to collect, or evade, some bets on recent chariot-races. The Aedile said it was none of his affair and turned back. The lictors closed up behind Valens, but left the situation in his charge. Then a small hard man with eyebrows was punted on to his chest, amid howls from all around that he was the ringleader of a conspiracy. 'Yes,' said Valens, 'that was an old trick in Byzant; but I think we'll take *you*, my friend.' Turning the small man loose, he gathered in the loudest of his accusers to appear before his uncle.

'You were quite right,' said Serga next day. 'That gentleman was put up to the job—by someone else. I ordered him one Roman dozen. Did you get the name of the man they were trying to push off on you?'

'Yes. Gaius Julius Paulus. Why?'

'I guessed as much. He's an old acquaintance of mine, a Cilician from Tarsus. Well-born—a citizen by descent, and well-educated, but his people have disowned him. So he works for his living.'

* * * *

'They were singing it on the city-front yesterday, Valens. Did you notice?'

'If it was "Pickled Fish", sir, they were. Will it make trouble?'

'A surely as these fish'—a jar of them stood on the table—'make one thirsty. How does it go?' Serga hummed.

'Oie-eeah!

*From the Shark to the Sardine—the clean and the unclean
To the Pickled Fish of Galilee, said Petrus, shall be mine.'*

He twanged it off to the proper gutter-drawl.

'(Ha-ow?)

*In the nets or on the line,
Till the Gods Themselves decline.*

(*Whe-en?*)

When the Pickled Fish of Galilee ascend the Esquiline!

That'll be something of a flood – worse than live fish in trees!

* * * *

There filed out from behind the Little Circus four blaring trumpets, a standard, and a dozen Mounted Police. Their wise little grey Arabs sidled, passaged, shouldered, and nosed softly into the mob, as though they wanted petting, while the trumpets deafened the narrow street. An open square, near by, eased the pressure before long. Here the Patrol broke into fours, and gridironed it, saluting the images of the Gods at each corner and in the centre. People stopped, as usual, to watch how cleverly the incense was cast down over the withers into the spouting cressets; children reached up to pat horses which they said they knew; family groups re-found each other in the smoky dusk; hawkers offered cooked suppers; and soon the crowd melted into the main traffic avenues [...]

The street was empty, and Valens took a short cut through an alley, where light ladies leaned out of windows and laughed. The three strolled easily together, the lictors behind them, and far off they heard the trumpets of the Night Horse saluting some statue of a Caesar, which marked the end of their round. Paulus was telling Valens how the whole Roman Empire would be changed by what the Christians had agreed to about their love-feasts, when an impudent little Jew boy stole up behind them, playing 'Pickled Fish' on some sort of desert bag-pipe.

'Can't you stop that young pest, one of you?' Valens asked laughing. 'You shan't be mocked on this great night of yours, Paulus.'

The lictors turned back a few paces, and shook a torch at the brat, but he retreated and drew them on. Then they heard Paulus shout, and when they hurried back, found Valens prostrate and coughing—his blood on the fringe of the kneeling Paul's robe. Petrus stooped, waving a helpless hand above them.

'Someone ran out from behind that well-head. He stabbed him as he ran, and ran on. Listen!' said Paulus.

The Church That was at Antioch

AQUAE SULIS (BATH)

'When I was about sixteen or seventeen, the Father felt gouty, and we all went to the Waters.'

'What waters?'

'At Aquae Sulis. Everyone goes there. You ought to get your Father to take you some day.'

‘But where? I don’t know,’ said Una.

The young man looked astonished for a moment. ‘*Aquae Sulis*,’ he repeated. ‘The best baths in Britain. Just as good, I’m told, as Rome. All the old gluttons sit in hot water, and talk scandal and politics. And the Generals come through the streets with their guards behind them; and the magistrates come in their chairs with their stiff guards behind them; and you meet fortune-tellers, and goldsmiths, and merchants, and philosophers, and feather-sellers, and ultra-Roman Britons, and ultra-British Romans, and tame tribesmen pretending to be civilised, and Jew lecturers, and—oh, everybody interesting.’

A Centurion of the Thirtieth

MEDITERRANEAN PORT (MARSEILLES)

Her cinnabar-tinted topsail, nicking the hot blue horizon, showed she was a Spanish wheat-boat hours before she reached Marseilles mole. There, her mainsail brailed itself, a spritsail broke out forward, and a handy driver aft; and she threaded her way through the shipping to her berth at the quay as quietly as a veiled woman slips through a bazaar. The blare of her horns told her name to the port. An elderly hook-nosed Inspector came aboard to see if her cargo had suffered in the run from the South, and the senior ship-cat purred round her captain’s legs as the after-hatch was opened.

‘If the rest is like this—’ the Inspector sniffed—‘you had better run out again to the mole and dump it.’

‘That’s nothing,’ the captain replied. ‘All Spanish wheat heats a little. They reap it very dry.’

‘Pity you don’t keep it so, then. What would you call *that*—crop or pasture?’

The Inspector pointed downwards. The grain was in bulk, and deck-leakage, combined with warm weather, had sprouted it here and there in sickly green films. [...]

‘What’s brought the girls out so early? Oh, I remember!’

There was music up the quay, and a wreathed shore-boat put forth full of Arlesian women. A long-snouted three-banker was hauling from a slip till her trumpets warned the benches to take hold. As they gave way, the *hrmph-hrmph* of the oars in the oar-ports reminded Sulinor, he said, of an elephant choosing his man in the Circus.

‘She has been here re-masting. They’ve no good rough-tree at Forum Julii,’ Quabil explained to Baeticus. ‘The girls are singing her out.’

The shallop ranged alongside her, and the banks held water, while a girl’s voice came across the clock-calm harbour-face:

*'Ah, would swift ships had never been about the seas to rove!
For then these eyes had never seen nor ever wept their love.
Over the ocean-rim he came—beyond that verge he passed,
And I who never knew his name must mourn him to the last!'*

'And you'd think they meant it,' said Baeticus, half to himself.

'That's a pretty stick,' was Quabil's comment as the man-of-war opened the island athwart the harbour. 'But she's overmasted by ten foot. A trireme's only a bird-cage.'

'Luck of the Gods I'm not singing in one now,' Sulinor muttered. They heard the yelp of a bank being speeded up to the short sea-stroke.

The Manner of Men

MARCHING TO HADRIAN'S WALL

'Of course, the farther North you go the emptier are the roads. At last you fetch clear of the forests and climb bare hills, where wolves howl in the ruins of our cities that have been. No more pretty girls; no more jolly magistrates who knew your Father when he was young, and invite you to stay with them; no news at the temples and waystations except bad news of wild beasts. There's where you meet hunters, and trappers for the Circuses, prodding along chained bears and muzzled wolves. Your pony shies at them, and your men laugh.

'The houses change from gardened villas to shut forts with watch-towers of grey stone, and great stone-walled sheepfolds, guarded by armed Britons of the North Shore. In the naked hills beyond the naked houses, where the shadows of the clouds play like cavalry charging, you see puffs of black smoke from the mines. The hard road goes on and on—and the wind sings through your helmet-plume—past altars to Legions and Generals forgotten, and broken statues of Gods and Heroes, and thousands of graves where the mountain foxes and hares peep at you. Red-hot in summer, freezing in winter, is that big, purple heather country of broken stone.

'Just when you think you are at the world's end, you see a smoke from East to West as far as the eye can turn, and then, under it, also as far as the eye can stretch, houses and temples, shops and theatres, barracks and granaries, trickling along like dice behind—always behind—one long, low, rising and falling, and hiding and showing line of towers. And that is the Wall!'

'Ah!' said the children, taking breath.

'You may well,' said Parnesius. 'Old men who have followed the Eagles since boyhood say nothing in the Empire is more wonderful than first sight of the Wall!'

'Is it just *a* Wall? Like the one round the kitchen-garden?' said Dan.

'No, no! It is *the* Wall. Along the top are towers with guard-houses,

small towers, between. Even on the narrowest part of it three men with shields can walk abreast, from guard-house to guard-house. A little curtain wall, no higher than a man's neck, runs along the top of the thick wall, so that from a distance you see the helmets of the sentries sliding back and forth like beads. Thirty feet high is the Wall, and on the Picts' side, the North, is a ditch, strewn with blades of old swords and spear-heads set in wood, and tyres of wheels joined by chains. The Little People come there to steal iron for their arrow-heads.

'But the Wall itself is not more wonderful than the town behind it. Long ago there were great ramparts and ditches on the South side, and no-one was allowed to build there. Now the ramparts are partly pulled down and built over, from end to end of the Wall; making a thin town eighty miles long. Think of it! One roaring, rioting, cock-fighting, wolf-baiting, horse-racing town, from Ituna on the West to Segedunum on the cold eastern beach! On one side heather, woods and ruins where Picts hide, and on the other, a vast town — long like a snake, and wicked like a snake. Yes, a snake basking beside a warm wall!' *On the Great Wall*

KIPLING AND ANCIENT GREECE

BY JANET MONTEFIORE

[Janet Montefiore, Editor of the *Kipling Journal* since 2013, is the author of *Rudyard Kipling* (2007), and has edited *In Time's Eye: Essays on Rudyard Kipling* (2013) and, with Harish Trivedi, *Kipling in India: India in Kipling* (2020). Her most recent article for the *Kipling Journal* is "'The Debt', the Mayo Assassination and the War Graves," *KJ* 391 (June 2022).

I want you to go on with your Greek. I think you'll agree with me that it's the best thing to do, for you'll need it if you go to a University, and from *any* point of view knowledge of Greek is worth gold and diamonds.

'Aglaia never taught us the history of our own country. She was so full of her ancient Greeks.' *Rudyard Kipling*¹

'Small Latin and less Greek': Ben Jonson's ambivalent praise of Shakespeare's genius² might just as well apply to Rudyard Kipling – with the caveat that both men had had to acquire a very thorough grounding in Latin, probably at a standard at least equivalent to a modern A-level, during their respective schooldays in Stratford (Shakespeare) and United Services College (Kipling). But did Kipling know any Greek at all? In 1912, addressing the boys of Wellington College in 1912, he said not: 'I have no Greek. Mine stopped at a little Greek Testament on Monday mornings by gaslight before breakfast, and I depend for the rest of my knowledge on Bohn's cribs.' But even those Monday morning lessons imply a previous grounding in basic syntax and vocabulary. The New Testament, written in *koinē* Greek which was the *lingua franca* of the eastern Roman empire, is much easier reading than the classical authors, but it is not for total beginners. A more accurate statement would have been 'I have only a smattering.' Kipling was in fact rather better at languages in general than he is usually given credit for. The Latin he learned at school enabled his lifelong engagement with Horace's *Odes*, discussed by Susan Treggiari and Harry Ricketts in this issue, and his French was good enough for reading and listening. (In 1924, when the Kipling family was touring Northern France and their car skidded into deep mud and had to be dragged out by horses, it was their daughter Elsie who negotiated with local villagers about the arrangements for rescue, but Kipling's diary records conversing about the War with the two men and a boy who helped them, so clearly he understood French much better than he spoke it.)³ And although he could never have passed a written exam in Urdu or Hindi, Kipling's

grasp of the North Indian oral ‘vernacular’ was good enough for him to be able to butter up a Punjabi foreman, quoting flattering proverbs and praising him for ‘working like an elephant,’⁴ while during his visit to Rajasthan in 1887 he was able to get by in conversation with the people of Boondi, none of whom spoke English. Later he created the social world of *Kim*, of whose conversations in the ‘vernacular’ Harish Trivedi, otherwise a stern critic of Kipling’s linguistic howlers, writes that that ‘even where the words are all in English, the syntax, the collocation and the cadence are unmistakably Indian.’⁵

How much Greek literature Kipling had read is difficult to say. He told the boys of Wellington that he relied on ‘Bohn’s’ translations of the classics, and he later used the Loeb editions, available from 1910, in which the Greek and English texts are on facing pages, when preparing the mottoes in *A Book of Words*.⁶ In 1905 he corresponded with Gilbert Murray about the latter’s translation of Euripides’ *Electra*,⁷ so it seems likely that he had read other Greek tragedies as well. Geoffrey Plowden has recently argued that Kipling knew Aristotle’s *Poetics* well enough to write ‘Mrs Bathurst’ as a tragedy on the model laid down there, and may well have possessed a copy of the 1895 translation by H.S. Butcher.⁸ That Kipling had also read Homer in translation is suggested by an exchange between his schoolboy avatar ‘Beetle’ and the master King:

‘Beetle, the translation of *delubris*, please.’

Beetle raised his head from his shaking arm long enough to answer ‘Ruins, sir.’

There was an impressive pause while King checked odd crimes on his fingers. Then to Beetle the much-enduring man addressed winged words:

‘Guessing,’ said he. ‘Guessing, Beetle, as usual, from the look of *delubris* that it bore some relation to *diluvium* or deluge, you imparted the result of your half-baked lucubrations to Winton who seems to have been lost enough to accept it. Observing next your companion’s fall, from the presumed security of your undistinguished position in the rear-guard, you took another pot-shot. The turbid chaos of your mind threw up some memory of the word “dilapidations” which you have pitifully attempted to disguise under the synonym of “ruins.”’

As this was precisely what Beetle had done he looked hurt but forgiving⁹

The sentence which prefaces King’s rhetorical denunciation of Beetle’s ignorance is a loose paraphrase of a line from the *Odyssey* in the prose translation by Butcher and Lang (1879): ‘So she [Calypso] spoke, and

much-enduring goodly Odysseus shuddered, and addressed her with winged words.¹⁰ A direct Greek quotation, this time in the original, is thrown up in the later Masonic story 'In the Interests of the Brethren,' where the soldier 'Brothers' are naming their own home Lodges. Doctor Keede comments '*Hespera panta fereis*, isn't it? The Star brings 'em all home,'¹¹ combining an allusion to the 'Bright Star' which in Masonic ritual symbolises peace and salvation, with the opening of Sappho's invocation of the evening star, slightly misquoted (presumably from memory), as often in Kipling's work.¹² His pastiche of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* in the late 1933 sketch *The Pleasure Cruise*, reprinted in this issue, skilfully catches the tone of Lucian's irony and his semi-formal conversational exchanges, indicating that Kipling in his old age knew Lucian's dialogues well. He was also familiar with the Greek Anthology (which had been edited by his favourite cousin Margaret's husband John Mackail), and which he quoted or alluded to in several late works.

Kipling, always a 'Two-Sided man', was characteristically ambivalent about classical literature and Greek in particular. Snippets of Ancient Greek literature and culture are an off-and-on presence throughout his writing career: marginally of course, compared with his enduring love of Horace and Virgil, his three 'Parnesius' stories in *Puck of Pook's Hill* and his two stories about St Paul in the Roman Mediterranean in *Limits and Renewals*, but strong enough to prompt him at times to creative engagement, which in his early work was interestingly combative. In the 1890s he wrote three poems, one embedded in a story, which in different ways invoke the Ancient Greeks with striking energy and irreverent verve. Although, or perhaps because, Homer and the Greek tragic poets were in his day largely the preserve of scholars and gentlemen, Kipling uses them to speak of and for the people he called in his later poem 'A Charm' 'the mere uncounted folk/ Of whose life and death is none/ Report or lamentation.'¹³ Not that Kipling was, then or ever, a political radical; as Mark Paffard has argued, he held a 'belief in a hierarchy of race and class, with the white race generally superior to all others, and the middle class to the working class.'¹⁴ Yet Kipling's creative 'Daemon' had other ideas; from the beginning of his career he had a strong sympathy and respect for working men (in his early 'soldier stories, the tales dealing with Privates Ortheris, Mulvaney and Learoyd are far more complex and interesting than those of officers, whom Kipling tends to sentimentalise) and moreover for 'natives', as manifested in stories like 'Beyond the Pale' and 'Without Benefit of Clergy' – and later of course in *Kim*. In 1897, already seeing political storm clouds gathering over Britain, he wrote to a relative 'It'll be the common people – the third class carriages that'll save us.'¹⁵

The ‘Song of the Banjo’ (1895), makes the five-stringed, jangling instrument sing its own praises for accompanying, encouraging and consoling men of action, soldiers and adventurers all over the world. The banjo boasts how by spurring on the army’s ‘dusty column’, ‘I keep ’em moving forward till they drop’; how it gives men heart before battle, however unequal the odds; how it sings adventure to ‘the young Ulysses’ in the ‘new-raised tropic town’; and how it thrums through stormy seas and on railways in steep gorges between mountains stripped of their forest for timber ‘where the trestle groans and quivers in the snow’. Like the lyre played by the singer Timotheus in Dryden’s poem Alexander’s Feast which moves the king to rage, to desire, to pity, and finally to furious revenge,¹⁶ the sound of the banjo can rouse men to battle or reduce them to tears of regret and nostalgia (‘Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan/ I can rip your very heartstrings out with those’), chanting the music of the Common Man by the power of ‘the war-drum of the White Man round the World!’¹⁷ The banjo is in fact a descendant of the West African ‘banjar’ stringed gourd, played by Africans enslaved and exiled to North America and the Caribbean,¹⁸ but Kipling gives it an origin in Greek legend:

The grandam of my grandam was the Lyre –
 [Oh, the blue between the little fisher-huts!]
 That the Stealer stooping beachward filled with fire,
 Till she bore my iron head and ringing guts!
 By the wisdom of the centuries I speak –
 To the tune of yestermorn I set the truth –
 I, the joy of life unquestioned – I, the Greek-
 I, the everlasting Wonder-song of Youth!

With my ‘*Tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!*’

[What d’ye lack, my noble masters? What d’ye lack?]
 So I draw the world together link by link,
 Yea, from Delos up to Limerick and back!¹⁹

This climactic ending invokes the Greek myth that the lyre was invented by the baby god Hermes from the shell of a tortoise he had killed, after which (Hermes being even in infancy a notorious thief and trickster) he gave the lyre to his half-brother the god Apollo, in exchange for the fifty cattle he had stolen. After that, it became Apollo’s iconic instrument; hence the connection with the god’s birthplace Delos. ‘The Stealer’ seems to comprise both Hermes, patron of thieves, and Prometheus who stole fire from Zeus, enabling the forging of the metal instrument’s ‘iron head and ringing guts,’²⁰ while ‘What d’ye lack?’ recalls Autolycus, the dishonest but tuneful pedlar in Shakespeare’s play *The*

Winter's Tale. Both the rhyme-word 'guts' and the choice of Limerick, meaning both a short comic poem and an Irish city producing soldiers like Mulvaney, as the complementary pole to sacred Delos, signal the demotic and down-to-earth qualities of the banjo's music. In keeping with the poem's high-spirited tone, the punishment for stealing fire is passed over (though this is remembered much later in Kipling's wry war epitaph for a 'Native Water-Carrier (M.E.F.)': 'Prometheus brought down fire to men./ This brought up water./ The Gods are jealous, now as then./ Giving no quarter.')²¹ The banjo's popular music, and the common men who do the hard and dirty work of empire, are thus haloed with an idealised classical world of blue Mediterranean sea and lyre-playing.

More mischievous is the poem Kipling used as epigraph to the second series of 'Barrack Room Ballads' in *The Seven Seas* (1896):

*When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
'E 'eard men sing by land an' sea,
An' what 'e thought 'e might require,
'E went an' took – the same as me!*

*The market-girls an' fishermen,
The shepherds an' the sailors, too,
They 'eard old songs turn up again,
But kep' it quiet – same as you!*

*They knew 'e stole; 'e knew they knowed.
They didn't tell, nor make a fuss,
But winked at 'Omer down the road
An' 'e winked back -- the same as us!*²²

Homer's literary prestige is here cut down to size in vigorously demotic language, not contradicted but pointed up by the archaic Tennysonian 'smote' in the first line (the kind of thing that got Kipling branded by detractors as 'The Voice of the Hooligan.')²³ The poet tips his hat to the learned controversy known as the 'Homeric Question' of the authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The existence of Homer as a single originating author was first questioned by the German textual scholar Friedrich Wolf in *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795), which argued from the substantial linguistic and other differences evident in the texts, that these epics were not the work of a single poet, but were the product of an oral tradition reaching back many centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century, this argument had become familiar to the literary world, as in the cartoon of 'Homer, going his rounds', showing a white-robed lyre-player singing from ten open-mouthed faces on top of each other,

in Max Beerbohm's book *The Poets' Corner* (1904). The 'Homeric Question' had also been raised in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's long novel-poem *Aurora Leigh*, which Kipling knew well (he mentions reading it, together with Tennyson, as a teenager).²⁴ The heroine, poorly off and needing the money to travel to her motherland Italy, decides to raise cash by selling most of her library of classical literature, beginning with her luxury edition of Homer by Wolf, whom she regards as a 'kissing Judas ... Who builds us such a royal book as this/ To honour a chief poet, folio-built/ And writes above "The house of Nobody!"' Aurora by extension claims that 'Wolf's an atheist' because 'if the Iliad fell out, as he says, / By mere fortuitous concourse of old songs/ Conclude as much too for the universe';²⁵ so she would have been even more shocked by Kipling's version of Homer as a sly thief, helping himself to 'what 'e might require' out of old folk-songs. Both the slang and dropped aitches, and the poem's position as epigraph, indicate that Kipling's joke about Homer is not intended for scholars and gentlemen (or for ladies like Aurora), but for ordinary people like the 'market-girls an' fishermen,/ The shepherds an' the sailors' whose ballads Homer used. They are the ancestors of the working-class soldiers for whom the following *Barrack Room Ballads* speak in the voice of an old sweat for 'Back to the Army again,' or a man grieving for his dead comrade in the plangent 'Follow me 'Ome', or a cynical private cheated by a dishonest sergeant whose company is, with barely suppressed glee, attending the man's marriage ceremony to a woman of dubious reputation: 'We 'ave scores to settle/ Scores for more than beer;/ She's the girl to pay 'em,/ That is why we're 'ere!'. Even more than in 'Song of the Banjo,' the prestige of ancient Greek epic here brings out in the young Kipling the irreverent impulse to bring it down to earth.

Disrespect— or more accurately, disregard — for the high reputation of the Ancient Greeks is also present in 'The Finest Story in the World' (1891), which fragmentarily invokes the forgotten lives of unknown men. Its bouncily knowing narrator strikes up a friendship with a youth called Charlie, an aspiring but (we are told) untalented writer, who reads voraciously with a particular enthusiasm for Longfellow's poems (this turns out to be important), but whose own words are apparently pathetic trash — until the boy suddenly comes out with a narrative of compelling power about a man in a ship,

'the kind rowed with oars, and the sea spurts through the oar-holes, and the men row sitting up to their knees in water ... He's chained to his oar of course — the hero.'

'How is he chained?'

'With an iron band round his waist fixed to the bench he sits on, and a sort of handcuff chaining him to the oar. He's on the lower

deck where the worst men are sent, and the only light comes from the hatchways and through the oar-holes. Can't you imagine the sunlight just squeezing through between the handle and the hole and wobbling about as the ship moves?'

The narrator gradually realizes that Charlie is relating his unconscious memory of a past life as a galley slave.²⁶ Reading Longfellow's lines about the sea ('Only those who brave its dangers/ Comprehend its mystery') prompts Charlie to reveal more about the galley slaves' lives and the food they were given, 'rotten figs and black beans and wine in a skin bag' from which the narrator realizes that the galley must have existed in the ancient world, and much more:

'I wrote down on a piece of paper the sort of stuff the men might be supposed to scratch on their oars with the edges of their handcuffs. It seemed to make the thing more lifelike. It's so real to me, you know' ... He pulled out of his pocket a sheet of notepaper with a single line of scratches on it, which I put carefully away.

'What is it supposed to mean in English?' I said.

'Oh, I don't know. I mean it to mean "I'm beastly tired." It's great nonsense,' he repeated, 'but all those men in the ship seem as real as real people to me.'²⁷

The narrator rushes off to show Charlie's 'sheet of scratches' to 'a Greek antiquity man' at the British Museum. The official crossly offers a translation, which causes the narrator to 'dance with joy in the corridor – for the expert has independently confirmed just what Charlie had 'meant it to mean':

'So far as I can ascertain, it is an attempt to write extremely corrupt Greek on the part' - here he glared at me with intention – 'of an extremely illiterate- ah- person.' He read slowly from the paper, *Pollock, Erckmann, Tauchnitz, Henniker* – four names familiar to me. 'I have been – many times – overcome with weariness in this particular employment. That is the meaning.'

The names '*Pollock, Erckmann, Tauchnitz, Henniker*' are an attempted transcription of four Greek words, of which only three are intelligible: *pollak ekamon heneka* (πολλακ[ις] εκαμων ενεκα: 'I was often weary on account of [?])' *Tauchnitz*, appropriately in this context, is the name of a nineteenth century European publisher of cheap paperback editions of classics and well-known authors, for which Charlie would be a likely customer, but is otherwise baffling since it doesn't seem to correspond to the Greek for 'of this employment' which would be *tēsde tēs ergasias*: τῆσδε τῆς ἐργασίας.²⁸ In any case the official may well

glare suspiciously, for the ‘corrupt’ Greek words he has translated are in fact a rendering – very rough, since they presumably draw on the author’s half-forgotten memories of New Testament Greek – of a line in Longfellow’s sonnet ‘The Broken Oar’. A poet on the seashore seeking the *mot juste*, finds ‘a broken oar, and carved thereon he read/ “Oft was I weary when I toiled at thee”’ – at which he ‘flung away his useless pen.’²⁹ The respect Kipling showed for classical scholarship in his later years is conspicuously absent from this early story, the contempt of the ‘Greek antiquity man’ for the ‘extremely illiterate – ah – person’ who produced the scribbles sounding remarkably like Mr King ticking off ‘Beetle’ for poor work. Although the words are Kipling’s own, the galley slaves’ lives, like those of the Viking voyagers elsewhere in the story, are imagined not factual, and the idea of literary composition being shamed by reality comes from the Longfellow poem which Kipling has himself rendered, ungrammatically, into a dead language, the story nonetheless trumps book-learning with the power of harshly authentic experience. There is a particularly impressive power in the lines Charlie describes as ‘the song they might sing in the galleys,’ which he has scribbled down before going to sleep. The toiling slaves, ignored by the epics and tragedies for which ancient Greeks are celebrated, are given their own plangent voice:

We pulled for you when the wind was against us and the sails were low.

Will you never let us go?

We ate bread and onions when you took towns, or ran aboard quickly when you were beaten back by the foe.

The Captains walked up and down the deck in fair weather singing songs, but we were below.

We fainted with our chins on the oars and you did not see that we were idle, for we still swung to and fro.

Will you never let us go?

The salt made the oar-handles like shark-skin; our knees were cut to the bone with salt-cracks; our hair was stuck to our foreheads, and our lips were cut to the gums, and you whipped us because we could not row.

Will you never let us go?

But, in a little time, we shall run out of the port-holes as water runs along the oar-blade, and though you tell the others to row after us you will never catch us till you catch the oar-thresh and tie up the winds in the belly of the sail. Aho !

*Will you never let us go?*³⁰

By 1910 when Kipling wrote to his son John that ‘a man who has acquaintance with that tongue has the key that unlocks half the real wisdom of the world’,³¹ he had become far more respectful towards the ancient Greeks. The taut, deeply felt brevity of his *Epitaphs of the War* (1919) suggests that he had learned from Simonides’ epigrams on the Spartan dead at Thermopylae and the Corinthians who fell at the battle of Salamis (‘We did not flinch but gave our lives to save/ Greece when her fate hung on a razor’s edge’).³² He wrote in 1933 to a classicist friend that the *Epitaphs* were ‘naked cribs from the Greek anthologies,³³ although this seems an exaggeration since only one, ‘V.A.D. (Mediterranean)’ has been identified as based (not closely) on a classical source: ‘Ah, would swift ships had never sailed, for then we ne’er had found/ These harsh Aegean rocks between, this little virgin drowned’: which borrows the first line of an epigram from Callimachus (310–240 BC).³⁴ This epigram recurs in the song of the Marseilles girls to a trireme in ‘The Manner of Men’: ‘Ah, would swift ships had never been about the seas to rove!/ For then these eyes had never seen nor ever wept their love.’³⁵

Kipling returned to the Greek Anthology in the selection of speeches *A Book of Words* (1927), placing his own prose translation of a Greek epigram in front of each. Thus ‘Literature’, given to the Royal Academy (1906), is prefaced by ‘I am Earth, overtaking all things except words. They alone escape me. Therefore, I lie heavy on their makers;’ and ‘Our Indian Troops in France by ‘Worshipping Gods unknown (to us); oppressed by fears of Gods unknown (to them); in battle worthy to be rewarded for their valour by all (Gods)’³⁶ - which is very close to (though not so good as) Kipling’s own two-line ‘Hindu Sepoy in France’ in the *Epitaphs*: ‘This man in his own country prayed we know not to what Powers./ We pray Them to reward him for his bravery in ours.’³⁷ Although Kipling said he found writing these prose epigraphs ‘great fun,’³⁸ their effect, unlike that of the earlier poems and story discussed above, is rarely playful; rather, they add an extra *gravitas* to the speeches that follow. The irreverent gaiety which ancient Greeks inspired in the youthful Kipling is not to be found in his later works – not even in the parody of Lucian reprinted in this issue, whose sombre message is Kipling’s warning to the British public not to forget their dead of the Great War, and to prepare for the next one lest they be annihilated.

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NOTES

- 1 Rudyard Kipling to John Kipling, 3 October 1910, *Letters vol. 3* p. 453; 'A Centurion of the Thirtieth,' *Puck of Pook's Hill* p. 153.
- 2 Ben Jonson, 'To the Memory of my beloved, the Author William Shakespeare', *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse* no.118, p. 177
- 3 Kipling ed. Thomas Pinney 'From Rudyard Kipling's Motor Tours', *KJ* 371 Dec 2017. The accident and rescue on 31 Aug are described on pp. 33–6.
- 4 See RK's letter to Margaret Burne-Jones *Letters vol. 1* p. 103
- 5 Trivedi 'Kipling's "vernacular"' p. 201
- 6 Kipling to Sir John Bland-Sutton, 29 May 1928, *Letters* 5 p. 432
- 7 Rudyard Kipling to John Kipling, Pinney ed. *Letters* 3 136–7
- 8 Plowden 'Kipling as Tragedian', *Kipling Journal* 397 Jan 2024, 23–30
- 9 Kipling 'Regulus', *A Diversity of Creatures* p. 244
- 10 *Odyssey* Book 5 line 170, tr. Andrew Lang and S.H. Butcher.
- 11 Kipling 'In the Interests of the Brethren', *Debits and Credits* p. 72
- 12 For the Masonic allusion, see Background Notes to 'Regulus' by Lisa Lewis and George Kiefer in the *NRG*, The Sappho quote, from *Lyra Graeca* (Loeb) which Kipling presumably possessed, goes in full:

Ἔσπερε πάντα φέρων ὅσα φαίνολις ἐσκέδασ' αὖτως,
 ἡφέρεις ὄιν, φέρεϊς ἢ αἶγα, φέρεις ἀπὸ μητέρι παῖδα
 'Hesperus bringing all that bright dawn has scattered, you bring the sheep, you
 bring the goat, you bring back the child to its mother.'

Keede has changed *Hespero panta feron* in the first line (participle, 'bringing') to *ferois* (verb, 'you bring') from the second.

- 13 Kipling 'A Charm', *Rewards and Fairies*, xi
- 14 Paffard *Conservative Belief and the Imagination in Kipling's Fiction* p. 6
- 15 RK to J. W. Mackail 21 July 1897, *Letters* ed. Pinney vol. 2 306
- 16 John Dryden 'Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Musique', 1697, collected in the *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, no. 565 pp 867–73, eds. H. Grierson and G. Bullough, Oxford University Press 1934.
- 17 Kipling 'Song of the Banjo', Pinney ed. *Complete Poetry* vol 1 pp. 367–9; 'Epitaphs of the War', *ibid.*, p. 1148
- 18 'Smithsonian Music', <https://music.si.edu> accessed 2 May 2024
- 19 Kipling 'Song of the Banjo' Pinney ed. *Complete Poetry* p. 379
- 20 Harvey *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* p. 204. I think the otherwise helpful notes on this poem in the NRG are wrong in giving Delos as the birthplace of Homer ('Chios and Smyrna have the best traditional claims': Harvey p. 212), and in reading 'the Stealer' as a reference to 'When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre' (1896). Hermes was proverbially the patron of thieves, and moreover 'Song of the Banjo' (1895) appeared a year earlier, and according to Carrie Kipling's diary was being composed in 1894. ('Working at Song of the Banjo': *Carrie's Diaries* 24 May 1894).
- 21 'Water-Carrier: Mesopotamia Campaign', Pinney *Complete Poetry* p. 1143
- 22 'When 'Omer smote,' (1896), Pinney, *Complete Poetry* p. 421
- 23 See Robert Buchanan 'The Voice of the Hooligan' (1899), collected in Roger Lancelyn Green *Kipling: The Critical Heritage*, 1971.
- 24 'Tennyson and Aurora Leigh came to me by way of nature during the holidays': Kipling, *Something of Myself*, p. 22
- 25 Elizabeth Barrett Browning *Aurora Leigh* (1857) ed. M. Reynolds (New York, Norton, 1996), Book V lines 1246–9, 1255–7
- 26 Sandra Kemp has suggested convincingly that Kipling has probably read Edwin Arnold's novel *The Wonderful Adventures of Phra the Phoenician* (1890), which 'follows the incarnations of a young Phoenician merchant' from 'a slave-consort ... to a young man in the age of Queen Elizabeth' (*Kipling's Hidden Narratives* p. 33). David Scourfield has also alerted me to 'E.M. Forster's early short story "Albergo Empedocle" "whose central character Harold "seems to the narrator to have been drawn back into a past life as a Greek".) Letter to JM 30 May 2024
- 27 Kipling 'The Finest Story in the World,' *Many Inventions* pp. 100–101.
- 28 The NRG glosses Tauchnitz as 'του κνιζ/ τοῦ κνιζ and translates the line as 'Many times I have been wearied, the rasping/vexation on account of'. David Scourfield has commented: 'του κνιζ ... in Greek would be τοῦ κνιζ,, which is meaningless; τοῦ κνιζεῖν/(του κνιζεῖν) would be possible grammatically and with ἕνεκα following would mean something like 'on account of the scratching/chafing' – which I suppose is just possible, if 'this particular employment' is regarded as a sort of periphrasis.' (Email to JM 30/v/24)

- 29 The connection with 'The Broken Oar' is made in Peter Havholm's notes to 'The Finest Story in the World' in the NRG 'Background Notes' to this story, www.kiplingsociety.com.
- 30 Kipling 'Song of the Galley-Slaves', 'The Finest Story in the World,' *Many Inventions* pp. 119–120; Pinney *Complete Poems* p. 855.
- 31 Kipling to John Kipling, 3 October 1910, *Letters vol. 3* p. 453
- 32 Simonides tr. Peter Jay, *The Greek Anthology* p. 40, from the Greek Anthology 7.249 and 7.250. (I thank David Scourfield for this reference, and for the information that 'Jay over-eggs it somewhat; there's nothing in the text about the men not flinching!')
- 33 Kipling to Mildmay 22 June 1935 *Letters 6* p. 371
- 34 Kipling 'V.A.D. (Mediterranean)', Pinney, *Complete Poetry II* p. 1147
- 35 Kipling 'The Manner of Men' *Limits and Renewals* p. 235; *Complete Poetry III* p. 2122. Both poems are based on Callimachus Epigram XVII, *Greek Anthology* 7.271 (not Epigram XIX, as Pinney's note states in *Complete Poetry* p. 2296). I thank David Scourfield for this reference, and for the information that in both poems, 'the imitation only extends as far as "Ah, would swift ships had never sailed"', for the remainder doesn't resemble the original at all.' (Scourfield, email cited above.)
- 36 Kipling *A Book of Words* pp. 1, 275
- 37 Kipling ed. Pinney 'Hindu Sepoy in France', *Complete Poetry* p. 1141
- 38 'In the *Book of Words* I manufactured epigrams out of the Greek Anthology, which was great fun': RK, letter to S.A. Courtauld 30 Dec 1932, *Letters 6* p. 151

KIPLING ON THE ROMAN ARMY

PARNESIUS, JUNIOR OFFICER

‘Did you have to pass an Exam?’ Dan asked, eagerly.

‘No. I went to my Father, and said I should like to enter the Dacian Horse (I had seen some at Aquae Sulis); but he said I had better begin service in a regular Legion from Rome. Now, like many of our youngsters, I was not too fond of anything Roman. The Roman-born officers and magistrates looked down on us British-born as though we were barbarians. I told my Father so.

‘I know they do,’ he said; ‘but remember, after all, we are the people of the Old Stock, and our duty is to the Empire.’

‘To which Empire?’ I asked. ‘We split the Eagle before I was born.’

‘What thieves’ talk is that?’ said my Father. He hated slang.

‘Well, Sir,’ I said, ‘we’ve one Emperor in Rome, and I don’t know how many Emperors the outlying Provinces have set up from time to time. Which am I to follow?’

‘Gratian,’ said he. ‘At least he’s a sportsman.’

‘He’s all that,’ I said. ‘Hasn’t he turned himself into a raw-beef-eating Scythian?’

‘Where did you hear of it?’ said the Pater.

‘At Aquae Sulis,’ I said. It was perfectly true. This precious Emperor Gratian of ours had a bodyguard of fur-cloaked Scythians, and he was so crazy about them that he dressed like them. In Rome of all places in the world! It was as bad as if my own Father had painted himself blue!

‘No matter for the clothes,’ said the Pater. ‘They are only the fringe of the trouble. It began before your time or mine. Rome has forsaken her Gods, and must be punished. The great war with the Painted People broke out in the very year the temples of our Gods were destroyed. We beat the Painted People in the very year our temples were rebuilt. Go back further still.’ . . . He went back to the time of Diocletian; and to listen to him you would have thought Eternal Rome herself was on the edge of destruction, just because a few people had become a little large-minded.

‘I knew nothing about it. Aglaia never taught us the history of our own country. She was so full of her ancient Greeks.

‘There is no hope for Rome,’ said the Pater, at last. ‘She has forsaken her Gods, but if the Gods forgive us here, we may save Britain. To do that, we must keep the Painted People back. Therefore, I tell you, Parnesius, as a Father, that if your heart is set on service, your place is among men on the Wall—and not with women among the cities.’ . . .

‘The night before I left we sacrificed to our ancestors—the usual little Home Sacrifice—but I never prayed so earnestly to all the Good Shades, and then I went with my Father by boat to Regnum, and across the chalk eastwards to Anderida yonder ... The headquarters of the Thirtieth lay at Anderida in summer, but my own Cohort, the Seventh, was on the Wall up North. Maximus was inspecting Auxiliaries—the Abulci, I think—at Anderida, and we stayed with him, for he and my Father were very old friends. I was only there ten days when I was ordered to go up with thirty men to my Cohort.’ He laughed merrily. ‘A man never forgets his first march. I was happier than any Emperor when I led my handful through the North Gate of the Camp, and we saluted the guard and the Altar of Victory there.’

‘How? How?’ said Dan and Una.

Parnesius smiled, and stood up, flashing in his armour.

‘So!’ said he; and he moved slowly through the beautiful movements of the Roman Salute, that ends with a hollow clang of the shield coming into its place between the shoulders.

‘Hai!’ said Puck. ‘That sets one thinking!’

‘We went out fully armed,’ said Parnesius, sitting down; ‘but as soon as the road entered the Great Forest, my men expected the pack-horses to hang their shields on. “No!” I said; “you can dress like women in Anderida, but while you’re with me you will carry your own weapons and armour.”’

“‘But it’s hot,” said one of them, “and we haven’t a doctor. Suppose we get sunstroke, or a fever?”’

“‘Then die,” I said, “and a good riddance to Rome! Up shield—up spears, and tighten your foot-wear!”’

“‘Don’t think yourself Emperor of Britain already,” a fellow shouted. I knocked him over with the butt of my spear, and explained to these Roman-born Romans that, if there were any further trouble, we should go on with one man short. And, by the Light of the Sun, I meant it too! My raw Gauls at Clausentum had never treated me so.

Then, quietly as a cloud, Maximus rode out of the fern (my Father behind him), and reined up across the road. He wore the Purple, as though he were already Emperor; his leggings were of white buckskin laced with gold.

‘My men dropped like – like partridges.

‘He said nothing for some time, only looked, with his eyes puckered. Then he crooked his forefinger, and my men walked – crawled, I mean – to one side.

“‘Stand in the sun, children,” he said, and they formed up on the hard road.’

A Centurion of the Thirtieth

Rimini

When I left Rome for Lalage's sake
By the Legions' road to Rimini,
She vowed that her heart was mine to take
With me and my shield to Rimini—
(Till the Eagles flew from Rimini!)
And I've tramped Britain, and I've tramped Gaul,
And the Pontic shore where the snow-flakes fall
As white as the neck of Lalage—
(As cold as the heart of Lalage!)
And I've lost Britain, and I've lost Gaul,
And I've lost Rome and, worst of all,
I've lost Lalage!

When you go by the Via Aurelia,
As thousands have travelled before,
Remember the Luck of the Soldier
Who never saw Rome any more!
Oh, dear was the sweetheart that kissed him
And dear was the mother that bore,
But his shield was picked up in the heather
And he never saw Rome any more!

And *he* left Rome, etc.

When you go by the Via Aurelia
That runs from the City to Gaul,
Remember the Luck of the Soldier
Who rose to be master of all!
He carried the sword and the buckler,
He mounted his guard on the Wall,
Till the Legions elected him Cæsar,
And he rose to be master of all!

And *he* left Rome, etc.

It's twenty-five marches to Narbo,
It's forty-five more up the Rhone,
And the end may be death in the heather
Or life on an Emperor's throne.
But whether the Eagles obey us,
Or we go to the Ravens—alone,
I'd sooner be Lalage's lover
Than sit on an Emperor's throne!

We've *all* left Rome for Lalage's sake, etc.

PARNESIUS, SENIOR OFFICER

‘He who makes himself Emperor anywhere must know everything, everywhere,’ said Parnesius. ‘We had this much from Maximus’ mouth after the Games.’

‘Games? What games?’ said Dan. Parnesius stretched his arm out stiffly, thumb pointed to the ground.

‘Gladiators! *That* sort of game,’ he said. ‘There were two days’ Games in his honour when he landed all unexpected at Segedunum on the East end of the Wall. Yes, the day after we had met him we held two days’ games; but I think the greatest risk was run, not by the poor wretches on the sand, but by Maximus. In the old days the Legions kept silence before their Emperor. So did not we! You could hear the solid roar run West along the Wall as his chair was carried rocking through the crowds. The garrison beat round him—clamouring, clowning, asking for pay, for change of quarters, for anything that came into their wild heads. That chair was like a little boat among waves, dipping and falling, but always rising again after one had shut the eyes.’ Parnesius shivered.

‘Were they angry with him?’ said Dan.

‘No more angry than wolves in a cage when their trainer walks among them. If he had turned his back an instant, or for an instant had ceased to hold their eyes, there would have been another Emperor made on the Wall that hour. Was it not so, Faun?’

‘So it was. So it always will be,’ said Puck [...]

‘He unrolled full copies of the number of men and supplies on the Wall—down to the sick that very day in Hunno Hospital. Oh, but I groaned when his pen marked off detachment after detachment of our best—of our least worthless men! He took two towers of our Scythians, two of our North British auxiliaries, two Numidian cohorts, the Dacians all, and half the Belgians. It was like an eagle pecking a carcass.

“And now, how many catapults have you?” He turned up a new list, but Pertinax laid his open hand there.

“No, Cæsar,” said he. “Do not tempt the Gods too far. Take men, or engines, but not both; else we refuse.”

‘Engines?’ said Una.

‘The catapults of the Wall—huge things forty feet high to the head—firing nets of raw stone or forged bolts. Nothing can stand against them. He left us our catapults at last, but he took a Cæsar’s half of our men without pity. We were a shell when he rolled up the lists!

“Hail, Cæsar! We, about to die, salute you!” said Pertinax, laughing. “If any enemy even leans against the Wall now, it will tumble.”

“Give me the three years Allo spoke of,” he answered, “and you shall have twenty thousand men of your own choosing up here. But

now it is a gamble—a game played against the Gods, and the stakes are Britain, Gaul, and perhaps, Rome. You play on my side?”

“We will play, Cæsar,” I said, for I had never met a man like this man.

“Good. To-morrow,” said he, “I proclaim you Captains of the Wall before the troops.”

‘So we went into the moonlight, where they were cleaning the ground after the Games. We saw great Roma Dea atop of the Wall, the frost on her helmet, and her spear pointed towards the North Star. We saw the twinkle of night-fires all along the guard towers, and the line of the black catapults growing smaller and smaller in the distance. All these things we knew till we were weary; but that night they seemed very strange to us, because the next day we knew we were to be their masters.’

The Winged Hats

A British-Roman Song

(A.D. 406)

My father’s father saw it not,
And I, belike, shall never come
To look on that so-holy spot—
The very Rome—

Crowned by all Time, all Art, all Might,
The equal work of Gods and Man,
City beneath whose oldest height—
The Race began!

Soon to send forth again a brood,
Unshakable, we pray, that clings
To Rome’s thrice-hammered hardihood—
In arduous things.

Strong heart with triple armour bound,
Beat strongly, for thy life-blood runs,
Age after Age, the Empire round—
In us thy Sons

Who, distant from the Seven Hills,
Loving and serving much, require
Thee—*Thee* to guard ’gainst home-born ills
The Imperial Fire!

KIPLING AND HORACE REVISITED¹

BY HARRY RICKETTS

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Like many nineteenth- and twentieth-century English public school-boys, Kipling's first real encounter with the Romans was in a Latin lesson. He recounts the occasion and its consequences in characteristically insouciant fashion in an 1893 article, "An English School":

There was one boy ... to whom every quantity was an arbitrary mystery, and he wound up his crimes by suggesting that he could do better if Latin verses rhymed as decent verse should. He was given an afternoon's reflection to purge himself of his contempt; and feeling certain that he was in for something very warm, he turned "*Donec gratus eram*" [Horace, *Odes*, 3, 9] into pure Devonshire dialect, rhymed, and showed it up as his contribution to the study of Horace.

This piece of cheek, it emerges, was rewarded not with the expected caning, but with the run of an extensive library, "where he found as much verse and prose as he wanted; but that ruined his Latin verses and made him write verses of his own."² It is a good story and probably not without foundation, although there may be some conflation here of the two Classics masters (W.C. Crofts and F.W.C. Haslam) and the headmaster (Cormell Price), the possessor of the extensive library. What is indisputable is that the sixteen-and-a-half-year-old Kipling was proud enough of his 'translation' to include it in the July 1882 number of the *United Services College Chronicle*, the school magazine of which he was editor. He was right to be proud: his version remains impressive, and fun. He somewhat dumbed down and tidied up the cod "Devonshire dialect" in later reprintings, but here are quatrains three and four of the original school magazine version in all their splendidly hammed-up phonetic glory. Like subsequent renditions, the quatrains demonstrate Kipling's neat incorporation of the modern and the local:

"But now *I'm* in lov with Jaane Pritt,
"She can plai the pianner she can.

“An’ if daiing weud ’elp her a bit
 “I’d dai like a man’

“You’ m lai ke me. *I’m* clean gone on yong Frye,
 “(Him as lives out tu Appledoore Quay)
 “An’ ef daiing weud ’elp en I’d dai
 “Twice over vor he.”³

This virtuoso performance in the vernacular points forward, of course, to Kipling’s numerous, later, greater, feats of literary ventriloquism: from the other ranks’ cockney of *Barrack-Room Ballads* to the Scots of “McAndrew’s Hymn” to the old women’s broad Sussex of “The Wish House”, among many other instances. His “translation” also opens up one path of his engagement with Roman history and culture, specifically his use of and eventual reverence for Horace.

Naturally, it is impossible to talk about Kipling and Horace without invoking Charles Carrington and his edition *Kipling’s Horace* (1978).⁴ This assemblage and the accompanying commentary remain an invaluable resource for anyone interested in this aspect of Kipling’s work. Classicists may quibble about the soundness of some of Carrington’s introductory remarks; the general reader will simply be grateful to have all of Kipling’s poetic Horatian offerings brought together in one place, including numerous “unbuttoned” marginal squibs, glosses and potted versions. “To Lucy,” for example, condenses *Odes* 1, 11 into a single playful couplet:

Lucy, do not look ahead: We shall be a long time dead.
 Take whatever you can see: And, incidentally, take me.

Odes 2, 9 urges Caius Valgius to return to public duties rather than grieve for a dead friend. Kipling’s gloss is brisk and pointed:

Do not always mourn your dead.
 Read the Daily Mail instead.

Odes, 4, 7 reflects on the transitoriness of things and the irreversibility of death. Kipling’s quatrain offers an apt epitaph to this poem in particular and to Horace in general:

If all that ever Man had sung
 In the audacious Latin Tongue
 Had been lost – and This remained
 All, through This might be regained.⁵

Of Kipling's four brilliant, but neglected, 1920s 'translations' from the imaginary fifth book of Horace's Odes, which he interleaves between the stories in *Debts and Credits*, more below. Quite when Kipling regularly began his poetic annotations of Horace is not known, but it is likely that it was after the writing of "Regulus", the first of the later "Stalky" stories. This story seems to date initially from 1908, was further worked on and perhaps finished in 1911, before being finally published in 1917 in *A Diversity of Creatures*. It, too, translates a Horatian ode – *Odes*, 3, 5, the so-called 'Regulus' ode. This time, however, the "translation" – which is both a literal and a metaphorical one – is into prose. The whole enterprise shows Kipling (by now, semi-official bard of the British Empire) "reconditioning" one of the semi-official bards of Imperial Rome. The result (however the politics of the project may look now from a post-imperial, post-colonial point of view) is extremely ingenious and elaborate, and worth teasing out in some detail.

Kipling, sensibly, does not expect his imagined readers, even at the time, to have automatic recall of Regulus's story and provides a brief synopsis as an epigraph:

*Regulus, a Roman general, defeated the Carthaginians 256 B.C., but was next year defeated and taken prisoner by the Carthaginians, who sent him to Rome with an embassy to ask for peace or an exchange of prisoners. Regulus strongly advised the Roman Senate to make no terms with the enemy. He then returned to Carthage and was put to death.*⁶

Kipling then plunges straight into a minutely detailed, highly dramatic, often hilarious presentation of a Latin class. During the course of this, the acid-tongued King – generally accepted to be a souped-up composite of the real-life Crofts and Haslam – mercilessly chivvies the mostly recalcitrant Fifth Form through the length of the Horace ode, line by line, howler by howler. Much of this *tour de force* turns on King's reactions to various pupils' botched attempts, notably by Kipling's fictional surrogate, Beetle. Seemingly almost by the by, the reader is also introduced to the central character of the ensuing story – "Pater" Winton, who has unwisely asked Beetle's unreliable help with a tricky Latin word. (Winton is indelibly described as "a long, heavy, tow-headed Second Fifteen forward, overdue for his First Fifteen colours, and in aspect like an earnest, elderly horse.")⁷ Here is a representative snippet of King turning the full flow of his eloquence and invective on the inattentive Beetle:

"Beetle, when you've quite finished dodging the fresh air yonder, give me the meaning of *tendens* – and turn down your collar."

“Me, sir? *Tendens*, sir? Oh! Stretching away in the direction of, sir.”

“Idiot! Regulus was not a feature of the landscape. He was a man, self-doomed to death by torture. *Atqui sciebat* – knowing it – having achieved it for his country’s sake – can’t you hear that *atqui* cut like a knife? – he moved off with some dignity. That is why Horace out of the whole golden Latin tongue chose the one word ‘tendens’ – which is utterly untranslatable.”

The gross injustice of being asked to translate it, converted Beetle into a young Christian martyr⁸

What Kipling so entertainingly dramatises here, and throughout this whole opening section of the story, is the kind of experience he was to describe less flamboyantly in “The Possible Advantages of Reading” (later retitled “The Uses of Reading”), a talk he delivered on 25 May 1912 at Wellington College, where his son John was briefly a pupil. In the course of his talk, Kipling offers his own rationale for the traditional approach to studying the Classics. It is no coincidence that he uses Horace’s *Odes* as his talismanic example:

The reason why one has to parse and construe and grind at the dead tongues in which certain ideas are expressed, is *not* for the sake of what is called intellectual training ... but because only in that tongue is that idea expressed with absolute perfection. If it were not so the *Odes* of Horace would not have survived. (People aren’t in a conspiracy to keep things alive.) I grant you that the kind of translations one serves up at school are as bad and as bald as they can be. They are bound to be so, because one cannot re-express an idea that has been perfectly set forth Yet, by a painful and laborious acquaintance with the mechanism of that particular tongue; by being made to take it to pieces and put it together again, and by that means only; we can arrive at a state of mind in which, though we cannot re-express the idea in any adequate words, we can realise and feel and absorb the idea.

This is exactly the process presented so vividly in Kipling’s story. In the opening section, the boys, cajoled, harried and browbeaten by King, are shown literally “tak[ing] [Horace’s ode] to pieces and put[ting] it together again”.⁹

Next, after the Latin class, Winton perpetrates “the only known jest of his serious life”, releasing a mouse in a mechanical drawing lesson. This “rank ruffianism” leads (with various twists and turns, including the headmaster’s active, benign connivance) to Winton being sentenced to a “lickin” by the head of games, his close friend and relation

Mullins – a series of events which turn the “costive and unaccommodatingly virtuous” Winton into a sort of schoolboy Regulus.¹⁰

As all this unfolds, we see how some of the other boys have intuitively begun to “arrive at the state of mind” in which they can, if only embryonically, “realise and feel and absorb the idea” of Horace’s ode and its code of dutiful and extreme self-sacrifice.¹¹ That Stalky at least has started to internalise the code is underlined by his apt quotations from *Odes* 3, 5. When asked by King at one point whether he and the other boys restraining the suddenly aggressive Winton are “‘the *populus* delaying Winton’s return to – Mullins, eh?’”, Stalky quips back: “‘No, sir ... We’re the *maerentes amicos* [the sorrowing friends].’” And, at the very end of the story, Stalky gleefully calls Mullins “‘my *barbarus tortor* [barbarous torturer]’” and nicknames Winton “Regulus” – much to the gratification of the eavesdropping King. “‘You see,’ he observes to the Reverend John and Hartopp, with whom he has been strenuously arguing about the importance of the Classics over Science. ‘It sticks. A little of it sticks among the barbarians.’”¹²

So, Kipling’s story works on a number of levels, all intimately related to Horace. The boys study *Odes* 3, 5, in which the self-sacrificing integrity of a long-dead Roman hero is held up by Horace as an exemplary model for contemporary Augustan Rome and its expanding empire. Kipling then neatly connects the ode and its “idea” to the world of the school, thus “translating” the Regulus narrative into a modern British context. In addition to Stalky’s apt quotations, this act of translation is achieved by portraying the world of the school as itself a form of Roman empire in miniature. This analogy, implied in a number of places, is spelt out in a short scene in which King tries unsuccessfully to persuade the headmaster to waive Winton’s punishment:

Winton was in King’s House, and though King as pro-consul might, and did, infernally oppress his own Province, once a black and yellow cap was in trouble at the hands of the Imperial authority King fought for him to the very last steps of Caesar’s throne.¹³

In this mini-Roman Empire, the boys are confronted with their own equivalent moral tests and choices. But the reader is also aware, from the earlier *Stalky & Co.* and from specific details in this story, that the school’s entire *raison d’être* is as a training-ground for a real, contemporary empire, the British Empire. The Fifth Form boys (with the exception of Beetle) are all studying for the Army Examination. Part of Winton’s disquietude at the “mouse-business” and his consequent punishment is that he believes it may impact negatively on his future career – and that career, it is plain, will be in some branch of the Army in some far-flung corner of the empire.¹⁴

If Kipling's use of Horace as a formal and informal education for those intended to run a modern empire seems – however ingenious – rather too neat, he is careful to include several qualifying, even ironic, touches. These check the metaphorical elements of the story from becoming just too tidy, too smoothly worked out. King, for instance, may insist that the study of the classics teaches “Balance, proportion, perspective”, but he himself – after a lifetime of such study – is still patently deficient in all three qualities. Similarly, Winton throughout the story is presented as no Tom Brown of a Regulus, and certainly no proto-Stalky. He is, as the Reverend John decisively observes, “[t]he very best type of second class” and will never become “anything more than a Colonel of Engineers.”¹⁵ Whatever Kipling's proselytising intentions, his literary integrity prevents him from over-idealising Winton or pushing the contemporary applicability of his “translation” of Horace's ode beyond certain limits.

“Regulus” shows Kipling exploring/exploiting Horace as part of his “‘Imperialistic’ output”, as he would dub this aspect of his work in *Something of Myself*.¹⁶ “Horace, Ode 3, Bk. V”, the subtitle of “A Translation,” the poem which follows the story (probably a late addition when he was putting *A Diversity of Creatures* together) shows Kipling doing something far more literary and sophisticated. Here, picking up on a relatively minor theme of the story, the Classics vs. Science debate, Kipling has Horace ironically reflecting, among other things, on chemistry (“There are whose study is of smells”) and medical science (“Some cultivate in broths impure/The clients of our body”) before asserting the personal primacy of poetry (“Me, in whose breast no flame hath burned/Life-long, save that by Pindar lit”).¹⁷ This paratextual addendum, rather than reinforcing the story's imperialist agenda, reads much more like a grown-up version of the cheeky teenager who “translated *Donec gratus eram*. In place of broad Devonshire, the language now so adroitly ventriloquised might be called “deliberate translatorese”, a mimicking of Latinate sentence construction together with a pastiche of the pseudo-archaic, periphrastic terminology often pilloried by King.

A Diversity of Creatures appeared in 1917. It was about this time (the exact dating is unclear) that, as a welcome distraction from the war and his grief at his son John's death, Kipling took a minor part in a classical hoax. This was the creation by a group of Oxbridge dons and fellow enthusiasts of a fifth book of Horace's odes, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum Liber Quintus*, eventually published in 1920. The manuscript was supposed to have been discovered in the Vatican Library, while it was claimed another copy existed at Uppsala and yet a third was held in the Bodleian in Oxford. The idea for the hoax, as Carrington puts it, “appears to have been sparked off by the two poems that Kipling had written in his Horatian style, the eulogy of Milner (afterwards entitled

The Pro-Consuls) which first appeared in *The Times* as long ago as 1905, and the recent “Regulus Ode” (i.e. presumably “A Translation, Horace, *Ode* 3, Bk. V”, although Carrington may mean Kipling’s story about Horace’s ode).¹⁸ The hoax, which contained the supposedly original Latin texts plus English verse translations, seems to have gone down well with the small coterie best able to appreciate it and, again according to Carrington, “even misled some less erudite organs of the Press into taking it seriously.”¹⁹

Kipling’s own involvement in the hoax was limited, although it is easy to imagine him fully enjoying the game. In addition to the two poems mentioned above, his only direct contribution to *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum Liber Quintus* was “Lollius”, subtitled “Horace, BK. V. Ode 13”. This is partially based on *Odes*, 4, 9, but substitutes for Horace’s admired figure a modern, English *nouveau riche* upstart:

Why gird at Lollius if he care
To purchase in the city’s sight,
With nard and roses for his hair,
The name of Knight?²⁰

The Horatian hoax soon had its day, but the possibilities it opened up lingered with Kipling and resulted in four striking new contributions to the imaginary fifth book: “To the Companions”, “The Survival”, “The Portent” and “The Last Ode (*Nov. 27, B. C. 8*)”. These carry the respective attributions: “Horace, *Ode* 17, Bk. V”; “Horace, *Ode* 22, Bk. V”; “Horace, *Ode* 20, Bk. V”; and “Horace, *Ode* 31, Bk. V”. All appear in *Debts and Credits* and, like the other interleaved poems in the collection, bear varying relations to the stories with which they are linked.

“To the Companions”, for instance, precedes “The United Idolaters”, the first of the two late “Stalky” stories in the volume. The story itself centres on the schoolboys’ inventive high spirits when bad weather prevents any official sport. This takes the form of riotous rival gang “worship” of Brer Terrapin and Tar Baby, also the consequent discomfiture and removal of a temporary master who wrongly suspects the boys of immorality and the corrupting manifestation of “monastic microbes”, as the chaplain, Reverend John, archly puts it.²¹ The placement of “To the Companions” before the story is telling, helping to turn it into an elegy to lost youth. Opening “How comes it that” and concluding “How comes it now”, it is written in the same distinctive Victorian translatoresque as “A Translation” and “Lollius”. This carefully mannered register, maintained throughout, underwrites the central idea of the poem that – as in Horace’s day, so in the present – sudden memories of unselfconscious youthful hilarity return almost as a miraculous gift in old age (definitely a credit if a rueful one). The measured

ventriloquism is beautifully sustained, but also beautifully disrupted as the hurrying press of the run-on lines in quatrains three and four enact the carefree spontaneity they recall (even to the extent of splitting the key word “unforgotten” for its rhyme and surging over the stanza gap):

Yet at the end, these [Venus, Liber etc] comfort not –
 Nor any triumph Fate decrees –
 Compared with glorious, unforgotten
 innocent enormities

Of frontless days before the beard,
 When, instant on the casual jest,
 The God Himself of Mirth appeared
 And snatched us to His heaving Breast.²²

“The United Idolaters” revisits and reinhabits a fictional world set over forty years earlier, a late Victorian world by then long-gone. This might seem an anomaly in a collection much preoccupied with the First World War. But to preface the story with a poem so aware of “Charon’s keel grat[ing] on the beach” – a debit and Kipling’s “Horatian” way of alluding to the approach of death – provides the reader with a kind of anchor to the world of the present, a battered new world poignantly presented in the previous story, “In the Interests of the Brethren”. Seen in this light, both “To the Companions” and “The United Idolaters” form part of the volume’s often dizzying oscillation between potential debits and potential credits.²³

“The Survival”, pitched in the same tone and register, has a more straightforward connection to “The Janeites”, the story it precedes. The story, set post-war in the same masonic lodge elsewhere portrayed in *Debits and Credits*, is told by a shell-shock survivor, Humberstall. (The gist, in J.I.M. Stewart’s engaging summary, is how “the members of an English battery in Flanders keep a grip on themselves by elaborating a convention of ceaseless allusive reference to Miss Austen’s novels”).²⁴ Humberstall is one of Kipling’s gallery of limited narrators who only understand part of the tale they are telling, but he has clearly grasped the essential credit, that “there’s no one to touch Jane when you’re in a tight place”.²⁵

The poem reflects on “the amazing doom” of literary survival: how of once “Earth-constricting wars . . . No word or voice remains”, while “Mere flutes that breathe at eve” – brief lyric utterances on love gone tainted/wrong (“An harlot’s altered eyes”) or the beauty and energy of the natural world (“Glazed snow beneath the moon;/The surge of storm-bowed trees”) – endure long after the individual occasions which gave rise to them.²⁶ These are apt reflections, of course, for the real Horace, who in *Odes*, 3, 30, famously claimed that his own work would survive

(“Exegi monumentum aere perennius”: “I have completed monuments more lasting than bronze”). They are also apt reflections on the survival of Austen’s work a hundred years after it first appeared – and how much more so now, a further hundred years on.

Literary survival, including his own, was obviously much on Kipling’s mind at the time. On 7 July 1926, the year *Debts and Credits* came out, he received the Royal Society of Literature’s gold medal and delivered a talk called “Fiction”. The talk contains several authorial “copybook headings” and a delicate balancing, for any writer, of debit and possible credit. One is that a fiction writer’s contemporary world “will extract from [his or her work] just so much of truth or pleasure as it requires for the moment. In time a little more, or much less, of the residue may be carried forward to the general account, and there, perhaps, diverted to ends of which the writer never dreamed.” Or, as he puts it a little later:

The utmost a writer can hope is that there may survive of his work a fraction good enough to be drawn upon later, to uphold or to embellish some ancient truth restated, or some old delight reborn.²⁷

It would no doubt have immensely startled Austen – perhaps gratified her, too – to find her novels not only “drawn upon” but at the very heart of a story about a world war a century after she lived.

“The Portent” similarly anticipates a central motif of its succeeding story, “The Prophet and the Country”: Prohibition in America. The poem rebukes “Varus” a.k.a. the United States, first for the wrong-headed, joyless Puritanism of Prohibition: “You needs must draw/A righteous sword”, which has inevitably led to “public strife and naked crime” (debit). But there is also the more general rebuke against American democracy for creating “a people schooled to mock, in time /All law – not one” (double debit).²⁸

Again, an air of translatoresque, of flaunted archaisms and archness, prevails. To which, in this instance, is added the sense of an older, more adult world painstakingly imparting hard-won, but age-old, wisdom to a wayward younger, newer world: “You needs must”; “smite/The priests of Bacchus at their fane”; “Virtue springs from iron within –/Not lead without.”²⁹ The whole effect suggests both an elaborate spoof and a schoolmasterly international wiggling.

“The Last Ode” is different again. Here Kipling gives his Horatian treatment to the Browningsque dramatic monologue, and by implication bids farewell to Horace himself. The Roman poet is imagined on his death-bed, hence the date beneath the title, “Nov. 27, B.C. 8”. The poem imagines his final thoughts, reflections and questions. These focus on his dead friend and fellow-poet Virgil and (anachronistically) include

the idea that Virgil, in his fourth “Eclogue”, prophesied the birth of Jesus and rise of Christian belief, specifically about the afterlife.³⁰ (No grating of “Charon’s keel” here.) This time, the poem follows the story, to which among other things it adds a sense of receding perspective. The story, “The Eye of Allah”, a sort of compressed historical novel, takes place in a medieval monastery and revolves around the use and necessary destruction of an early microscope. So, one oblique link between poem and story is the anticipation of Christianity (seen as both a credit and a debit?), and, for contemporary readers, of modern medicine (definitely a credit). Another link is the universal and perennial desire to be reunited with those we love (“the lost shades that were our loves restored/As lovers, and forever”).³¹ One strand of “The Eye of Allah” shows the monastery’s artist John “illuminating” St Luke’s gospel and in so doing transmuting into the depiction of Mary Magdalene his grief at the death of his mistress in childbirth. Here, and in the next story “The Gardener”, Kipling is comparably trying (hoping?) to transmute his own grief at the death of his son John in the war. (That the artist is called John is a characteristically indirect acknowledgement of this.) So, art/literature offer one form of “restoration” (a credit), although of course only a limited and temporal one (a debit). The “dawn” of Christianity offers the possibility of eternal restoration, if one can only believe it. It is no accident that “The Last Ode” ends not with heavenly certainties, but on hopes and on a double question: “And shall this dawn restore us, Virgil mine, /To dawn? Beneath what sky?”³²

So these final four Horatian “translations” turn out to be much more than neatly turned spoofs or further instalments in a donnish jape, though they are of course that, too. They offer Kipling further opportunities for literary ventriloquism, even the chance to construct an almost Poundian mask or persona, from behind which he is able to explore a range of moods, attitudes and feelings – elegiac, satirical, speculative, even quasi-confessional – further complicating the reader’s appreciation of what might be credit, what debit, what conceivably both.

There is a paragraph in that talk to the boys at Wellington College, which seems uncannily prescient about the role that Horace was already starting to assume for Kipling and which he would come to embody:

If a man brings a good mind to what he reads he may become, as it were, the spiritual descendant to some extent of great men, and this link, this spiritual hereditary tie, may help to kick the beam in the right direction at a vital crisis³³

Kipling presumably has in mind here some boy in his audience being inspired to make the right choice or decision in a later-life crisis in the service of empire. But, perhaps unconsciously, the words were

already applicable to himself. He always enjoyed playing the literary ancestry game. In a 1893 letter to the American writer Edward White, for instance, he claims John Donne as Robert Browning's "great-great grandfather".³⁴ "The Janeites" contains a further, reader-teasing example. When two of the battery officers suggest that Jane Austen "left no direct an' lawful prog'ny", the mess waiter Macklin, rather drunk, butts in and argues that "'She *did* leave lawful issue in the shape o' one son; and 'is name was 'Enery James.'" This prompts the obvious question "'By what sire?'" which Macklin then apparently proceeds to propose at some length; but because Humberstall – a nicely appropriate touch – cannot recall what "sire" Macklin puts forward, the more literary-minded reader is teased into trying to guess the possible candidates. Such a reader is then rewarded a page or two later (or further teased?) when Macklin refers to Humberstall as "'Dobbin'", the dutiful character in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.³⁵

As to Kipling's own literary ancestry, Robert Browning seems one obvious contender. There are the numerous Browningsque dramatic monologues in the very early work (both in verse and prose), not to mention *Barrack-Room Ballads*, "McAndrew's Hymn" and "The Mary Gloster" *et al.* In *Something of Myself*, Kipling repeatedly compares himself to Browning's Fra Lippo Lippi and, in general, Browning is more cited and quoted in the autobiography than any other writer.³⁶ However, if this essay shows anything, it is that Horace, too, has a strong claim in any question of Kipling's literary genealogy. In addition to the wealth of literary evidence offered above, there is the well-known passage in *Something of Myself*: "C— [i.e. Crofts] taught me to loathe Horace for two years; to forget him for twenty, and then to love him for the rest of my days and through many sleepless nights."³⁷ What could more convincingly convey a sense of close familial relationship than that mixture of forgetfulness and affection (and not forgetting the obligatory period of adolescent "loathing")? Less well-known is the 1934 letter in which, writing to Sir Herbert Baker, Kipling dubbed Horace "the soundest Platitudinarian that ever was" – a remark that registers exactly the note of affectionate contempt which we reserve exclusively for our closest and most-valued relations.³⁸

So, if Browning can be posited as a plausible literary father figure to Kipling, Horace should perhaps be acknowledged as one of his distant great-uncles.

NOTES

- 1 The "Regulus" section of this essay draws heavily on "Kipling, Horace and Literary Parentage", a paper I gave at the Kipling Society symposium held on 7 April 2004 at St Andrew's Hall, Royal Over-Seas League to commemorate the publication and reading of the 'lost' Stalky story, "Scylla and Charybdis".

- 2 Pinney, Thomas, ed., *Rudyard Kipling: Something of Myself and Other Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 188. Hereafter *Something of Myself*. Oddly, something comparable happened at my prep school in Kent in the early 1960s. We were set the opening lines of Ovid's *Tristia* 3, 10 to translate for homework (without using a dictionary). I, like most of the class, fumbled my way through, earning much red ink in the process. But one boy, new to the school, was asked to read out his version. To our general amazement, he had not only translated the Latin accurately but had turned it into rhymed verse. Accused by the rest of us after the lesson of 'swanking' (even cheating), he said that, since the original was poetry, he had assumed we were expected to translate it into poetry. We loathed him, of course (while in my case at least secretly envying him).
- 3 Pinney, Thomas, ed., *The Cambridge Edition of the Poems of Rudyard Kipling* vol 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 1176. I also prefer "'I'm clean gone on yong Frye' to the mere repetition of 'I'm in lovv with young Frye'".
- 4 Other indispensable resources include: Susan Treggiari, "Kipling's Classics", *Kipling Journal* 181 (March 1972), pp. 7–12; Isabel Quigly's Oxford World's Classics edition of *The Complete Stalky & Co.* (Oxford University Press, 1987); Stephen Medcalf, "Horace's Kipling" in Martindale C. and D. Hopkins, eds., *Horace Made New* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 217–239; T.J. Leary, "Kipling, Stalky, Regulus & Co: A Reading of Horace 'Odes' 3.5", *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Oct. 2008), pp. 247–262. While I do not necessarily agree with these appraisals in particular instances, all substantively contribute to the subject of Kipling and Horace. I am especially grateful to David Scourfield, Emeritus Professor at Maynooth University Department of Ancient Classics, for drawing my attention to T.J. Leary's article. This latter is more to do with how the Latin lesson in Kipling's "Regulus" does and doesn't conform to contemporary English public school educational practices than, as I am here, with the more literary and imperial aspects of the story, but the article is well worth reading in its own right.
- 5 Carrington, Charles, ed., *Kipling's Horace* (The Methuen Press, 1978), pp. 7, 55, 75. Hereafter *Kipling's Horace*.
- 6 Kipling, Rudyard, *A Diversity of Creatures* (Macmillan & Co, 1917), p. 239. Hereafter *A Diversity of Creatures*.
- 7 *A Diversity of Creatures*, pp. 242–3.
- 8 *A Diversity of Creatures*, pp. 248–9.
- 9 Kipling, Rudyard, "The Uses of Reading", *A Book of Words* (Macmillan & Co, 1928), pp. 90–1, 91. Hereafter *A Book of Words*.
- 10 *A Diversity of Creatures*, pp. 251, 252, 258.
- 11 *A Book of Words*, p. 91.
- 12 *A Diversity of Creatures*, pp. 260, 262, 270.
- 13 *A Diversity of Creatures*, p. 252.
- 14 *A Diversity of Creatures*, p. 266.
- 15 *A Diversity of Creatures*, pp. 262, 269.
- 16 *Something of Myself*, p. 111.
- 17 *A Diversity of Creatures*, pp. 271–2.
- 18 *Kipling's Horace*, p. xix. I have not included any discussion here of "The Pro-Consuls", nor of the somewhat Horatian "A Recantation", which appears "unattached" in *The Years Between* (1919). This may be unjust as "The Pro-Consuls" supposedly provided the idea for the imaginary fifth book of odes in the first place,

- and appeared in the collection as Ode 5, 6 with a joke schoolboy translation by Kipling. I agree with Carrington, however, that in that context “it is somewhat out of place” (*Kipling’s Horace*, p. 97). The poem’s emphasis on imperial self-sacrifice (“*The overfaithful sword returns the user/His heart’s desire at price of his heart’s blood*”) may place it in a sub-“Regulus” category, but, personally, I agree absolutely with Mary Hamer’s “Notes” on the poem on the Kipling Society’s excellent *The New Readers’ Guide*. Hamer concludes with the crisp observation that the central verses of the poem “consist of concise moral definitions of ideal conduct, here driven home by tight rhymes. They are designed to make readers of the time respect the dedication of those who govern them in general but with particular reference to Milner. Whether today’s readers will accept this is another question.” Exactly. “A Recantation” – addressed to a music hall performer whom Kipling had misjudged, but who went on performing despite just hearing news of their son’s death – shows Kipling paying tribute in a typically oblique way to a fellow sufferer.
- 19 *Kipling’s Horace*, p. xx.
- 20 *Kipling’s Horace*, p. 103.
- 21 Kipling, Rudyard, *Debts and Credits* (Macmillan & Co, 1926), p. 89. Hereafter *Debts and Credits*.
- 22 *Debts and Credits*, pp. 83–4. The phrase “frontless days before the beard” perfectly catches a nostalgia for adolescent openness and innocence before adulthood inevitably imposes a more self-protective exterior. The poem also contains a number of neat classical-modern confections, such as “games” (1.6), which suggests both Roman gladiatorial and other contests and modern sport. Venus and Liber were the Roman deities of Love and Wine.
- 23 *Debts and Credits*, p. 84.
- 24 Stewart, J.I.M., *Rudyard Kipling* (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1966), p. 213. C.S. Lewis in a 1948 lecture refers in passing to “the hardly forgivable *Janeites*” (“They Asked for a Paper” reprinted as “Kipling’s World” in Gilbert, Elliot. L., ed., *Kipling and the Critics* (New York University Press, 1966), p. 117.) Lewis makes a fair general point about Kipling’s partiality for what he calls “the Inner Ring” (p. 114 *et seq.*), but his objection to “The *Janeites*” on this count seems mostly Oxbridge snobbery.
- 25 *Debts and Credits*, p. 172. Carrie Kipling’s diaries suggest that during the First World War Austen’s novels played a comparably important role for her husband and herself.
- 26 *Debts and Credits*, pp. 145–6.
- 27 *A Book of Words*, p. 283. There the date of the talk is wrongly given as “June 1926”.
- 28 *Debts and Credits*, p. 179. The name Varus here obviously recalls that of Publius Quinctilius Varus, the Roman general under Emperor Augustus who lost three legions when ambushed by Germanic tribes. According to Suetonius, Augustus was so distraught at the news that he exclaimed then and for years afterwards: “Quintili Vare, legiones redde!”: “Quinctilius Varus, give me back my legions!” A comparable jibe at the USA for lost values is presumably implied.
- 29 *Debts and Credits*, p. 179.
- 30 There was a long tradition of this interpretation of the fourth “Eclogue”, dating back at least to the fourth century CE, but not of course to Horace’s and Virgil’s time.
- 31 *Debts and Credits*, p. 395.
- 32 *Debts and Credits*, p. 395.

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- 33 *A Book of Words*, p. 85.
- 34 Pinney, Thomas, ed., *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, Vol 2: 1890–99 (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 115.
- 35 *Debits and Credits*, pp. 153–4, 156.
- 36 *Something of Myself*, pp. 11, 22, 25, 43, 83–84. Pinney has a helpful discussion in his introduction of Kipling’s self-identification with the character of Fra Lippo Lippi.
- 37 *Something of Myself*, p. 22.
- 38 Kipling to Sir Herbert Baker, 22 February 1934, Kipling Papers 14/7.

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