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## THE KIPLING SOCIETY

THE Society was founded in 1927 by Mr. J. H. C. Brooking. Its first President was Major-General L. C. Dunsterville, C.B., C.S.I. ("Stalky") (1927-1946), who was succeeded by Field Marshal the Earl Wavell, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., C.M.G., M.C. (1946-1950).

Members are invited to propose those of their friends who are interested in Rudyard Kipling's works for election to membership. The Hon. Secretary would be glad to hear from members overseas as to prospects of forming a Branch of the Society in their district.

The subscription is: Home Members, 15s. (*Journal* 10s. extra); Overseas Members, 15s. per annum, which includes receipt of the *Kipling Journal* quarterly.

Correspondence should be addressed to:—  
THE HON. SECRETARY, THE KIPLING SOCIETY,

c/o AIRBORNE FORCES SECURITY FUND,

GREENWICH HOUSE,

11 NEWGATE STREET,

LONDON, E.C.I.

Tel.: City8295.

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## Notes

### Over Hardy's Ashes

AS a member of the Authors' Club committee, I was privileged to be in the Abbey transept when Thomas Hardy, the Club President, was laid to rest in Westminster on a drear January morning in 1928. Kipling, Bernard Shaw, James Barrie and John Galsworthy were on either side of the bier as the casket was borne from the Sanctuary to a tiny grave in Poets' Corner, just large enough for the bronze urn.

Edmund Gosse was among the pall-bearers and, after the service, he introduced Kipling to Shaw. Shaw's account of the introduction was, "Kipling made a little dive at me, thrust out a hand and said, 'How d'ye do,' before he escaped to a more familiar acquaintance, A. E. Housman."

One would have welcomed a fuller account of the meeting of England's premier dramatist and premier novelist, when they made this solitary encounter at Thomas Hardy's burial place. One wonders if it would have been less chilly if the meeting had been under the great yew tree in Stinsford Churchyard, where Hardy's heart was buried at the same time in Hardy's well-loved Wessex.

### The Hermit of Burwash

The Kipling-Shaw anecdote was recalled in the December issue of *Chambers Journal* in an interesting

article upon Kipling's home-life when he was in the mid-sixties. William Ramsay, the writer, saw a good deal of the author at Burwash, and tells how Kipling once persuaded him to embark upon a cruise in a child's paddle-boat on Kipling's pond. As was to be expected, the push-off was full of promise but, quickly, Ramsay found himself marooned in the centre of the pond and with no great prospect of rescue, since the paddle was missing. Kipling, however, was resourceful, and after a visit to Bate-man's he reappeared with a salmon rod. By dint of clever "play" he got the line over Ramsay's shoulders and cried, "Hold, hold!" Ramsay did hold and thus he and the paddle-boat were drawn safely to shore. Ramsay lived in a cottage nearby and Kipling paid it a pretty compliment when he described it as "good for the soul," adding characteristically, "if there is a soul."

Like the Burwash paddle-boat, Kipling's sundial was also a failure, at any rate as a time-teller, though it was a pleasant bit of garden furniture when mounted on a pilaster from the Old Key Bridge. On the pilaster Kipling carved the words of the worst sundial motto he could find. They ran:

"It is later than you think."

A yew hedge to the south completely hid the sun from the so-called sundial, so the "worst" motto had

application to the situation of the pilaster. When one cannot find a clock, a watch or a sundial, it is always "later than one thinks."

### The Big Race

The race for the Melbourne Cup is the Australian equivalent for England's Derby Day. Every newspaper goes all-out for a full-page description of the race and the social events connected with it. Major-General Sir Julius Bruce has sent *The Kipling Journal* a clipping from the *Melbourne Age* recalling Kipling's experience when he was asked to describe the big race and had his copy returned by the Editor as "unsuitable." "Unsuitable" is the word the *Melbourne Age* uses to describe the episode, though it is interesting to remember that Kipling, in *Something of Myself*, merely records that he was invited to record the race but knew that this sort of work "was not in my line."

The *Melbourne Argus*, the other great Australian newspaper of Kipling's time, used to invite any visiting British author or journalist to supplement the record of its own staff with a personal impression of the great race, and Gilbert Parker was one of the authors thus honoured. He was as unfortunate as Kipling. Possibly by an odd freak of memory, he based his account of the Cup on a racing episode in a fairly well-known French novel, and the resemblance was at once detected and the comments caused Gilbert Parker considerable heartburnings. It is not an easy thing for an author suddenly to meet a journalistic emergency and give satisfaction.

### " Quartets "

The Queen's visit to the capitals of her Empire has drawn attention to the delightful series of " quartets " which

Kipling put into his *Songs of the Cities*. For example, the royal visit to Auckland brought to mind

Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite,  
apart—

On us, on us the unswerving  
season smiles,

Who wonder 'mid our fern why  
men depart

To seek the Happy Isles !

This was the " Quartet " which Jules Castier put into French :

Ultime, solitaire, a part—mais toute  
exquise—

C'est sur moi que sourit le prin-  
temps qui s'endort,

Et, parmi ma fougère, encore, ce  
m'est surprise

Qu'on cherche ailleurs les Iles  
d'Or.

### Kipling's Village

How will Rottingdean, which is often described as Kipling's Village, fare under the Brighton £15 million development plan which is now under discussion? It is expected to increase Rottingdean's population by one thousand, linking the village with Woodingdean and Ovingdean.

Lady Burne-Jones, who was Kipling's beloved "Aunt Georgia," had a house in Rottingdean, and Kipling lived at "The Elms" from 1897 to 1902. Sir Edward Carson and Sir William Watson, the poet, were other residents in "Kipling's Village." The long strip of agricultural land between Woodingdean House and Rottingdean School has not been built upon since Norman times, so the existing village preserves characteristics which date back 900 years. It would be a pity to disturb the national amenities, the more because Brighton has already spent £100,000 upon downland in the area, and the Corporation is fully alive to the importance of village community life which attracted Kipling for a time.

ERNEST SHORT.

# The Bible, the Prayer Book and Rudyard Kipling

by The Rev. Robert B. Gribbon

(Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A.)

*[The following article is reprinted by permission from 'The Living Church' the weekly record of the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A.]*

THE extent to which the Bible has permeated the thinking and writing of English-speaking peoples has often been noted, sometimes with the additional observation that such influence has largely passed away—at least since the second decade of the 20th century.

There is some evidence for the truth of this latter statement—at least for the fact that Bible knowledge is hazier than in the older days. Would it have been possible in the Victorian era for a pundit like Lewis Mumford to state (as he does in *The Conduct of Life*) that God said to Job, "I am that I am," and that the children of Israel, in the wilderness, "turned to the *worship of brazen serpents* instead of Elohim"?

Less learned persons, however, are still more literally accurate in quotation, and the large number of Scriptural allusions in political oratory heard over the air recently should have been quite an eye-opener to those who say that knowledge of the Bible has passed away from among us. Jacob and Esau, Moses and St. Paul, Solomon and his wisdom, the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Our Lord, were again and again on the lips of speakers.

One was reminded of that great

era of Biblical allusion and reference: the Revolution in England, when the vicissitudes of Charles I were so frequently paralleled with those of David, and "the counsel of Ahitophel," the actions of Shimei, etc., were used as descriptions of leading issues of the day. Actually there is far more Bible study and reading going on today than many commentators are aware of. A librarian tells me that not a day goes by without several inquiries for books bearing in some way upon the Bible—often with the added remark, "for my Bible class assignment."

## An Unexplored Area

My present purpose is to direct the attention of Church people to an area of Bible illustration and reference which I find to be almost completely overlooked. I refer to the poetical works of Rudyard Kipling. Of course, it is generally known that he used much Scriptural phraseology, and there is an impression that this was done mainly to get heavy effects and to sound portentous. Detailed knowledge and sympathetic interpretation of the Bible are not usually considered to have been in his field. Like many "popular impressions," these conclusions turn out to be astonishingly false when brought to the test of discoverable facts. The contrary claim—and this is the one that I should like to make—can be amply justified: namely, that Rud-

yard Kipling is the most intelligent as well as the most frequent user of the Bible among the better-known English poets.

Over the years I had long learned to look for and enjoy personally the Biblical allusions and quotations in Kipling's poetry, and then, one fatal day, resolved to start counting and analyzing them. This resolution led to months of careful checking and ever-closer reading, using a concordance to help out the memory, and it has resulted in a series of fascinating discoveries. I worked on the volume known as the Definitive Edition, published in England by Hodder & Stoughton, containing all of Kipling's extant verse, and page references herein are to the edition of 1948.

First, as to quantity : I was able to identify 248 Old Testament references (exclusive of the Psalms), 142 New Testament allusions, and two from the Apocrypha.\* There are also 33 poems which have so much Biblical language and atmosphere not readily assigned to specific texts that they may be classified as "general Bible background." To this we can add 48 from the Psalter and 26 from other parts of the Prayer Book—a grand total of nearly 500.

The last two figures are of special interest to Churchmen as such, but are also of interest because of the accounts of Kipling's religion given

*\*The Apocrypha consists of 14 Jewish books not counted as part of the Old Testament. They were written roughly between the Old Testament and New Testament period, and exist mostly in Greek. They are included in Episcopal Church Bible, "for example of life and instruction of manners," but are not regarded as having the doctrinal authority of the rest of the Bible.*

by his biographers. I have found no one who gives any credit to the Church of England for his background. Rather he is assigned a Methodist leaning, because his maternal grandfather was a Wesleyan preacher and the influence remained in the family. Yet, when he quotes from "David," he most frequently uses the translation of our Prayer Book Psalter rather than that of the Authorized Version,\* and his familiarity with other of the Offices is much more than superficial. My own conclusion is that he got both his Bible and Prayer Book knowledge from the Daily Offices said in the United Services College at Westward Ho ! which he attended as a boy.

### **Blotting-Paper Consciousness**

Part of the evidence for this statement is naturally the use of the Prayer Book translation of the Psalms and knowledge of other portions as stated, but another and very strong bit of evidence is the wide distribution of the sources of his Biblical material. It is a well-known fact that in no other Christian body is the whole Bible so thoroughly read in all its parts as in the various Churches of the Anglican Communion. If we want to, we can justifiably claim to be the "most Biblical Church in Christendom." Our Lectionaries take us through the Scriptures year by year, without deviations for purple passages or individual whims, so that anyone who regularly reads or attends Daily Morning and Evening Prayer perforce knows every part of the Bible—or at least did before the more recent revisions of the lectionary. At any rate, Kipling

*\*Psalter (Book of Psalms) in Prayer Book is older translation than Authorised (King James).*

must have done so. Note the following distribution of his quotations: Genesis—45, Exodus—18, Leviticus—3, Numbers—6, Deuteronomy—8, Joshua—6, Judges—9, I Samuel to II Chronicles—34, Job—18, Proverbs—24, and one to four each from every other O.T. book, with a few exceptions. In the new Testament he quotes most liberally from the Gospels and Acts, and uses also all the Epistles (and Revelation), with the exception of the Pastorals\* and Hebrews.

It is not merely a matter of apt literal quotation of words to which I am referring, but an amazing grasp of the inner meaning and provenance of the material used. Kipling shows here the same uncanny skill as in the other fields of his knowledge and use. It will be recalled how vividly he could reproduce the whole authentic atmosphere of the engine room, the club, the fo'c'sle, and the jungle. His was a "blotting-paper consciousness," that could soak up and retain the colour, sound, smell and meaning of any situation in which he found himself, however briefly. It was so with his hearing of the Bible.

We may illustrate this by a comparison of his best known and most highly regarded poem, "Recessional" (147 in *The Hymnal* 1940), with the second chapter of Isaiah. The tendency of the two passages is the same: a comparison of earthly glory with the judgments of Almighty God, and warnings to humility. We all remember the haunting refrain "Lest we forget," and perhaps the prayer: "Judge of the Nations, spare us yet." Isaiah begins with a description of

the glories of Zion\*\* as head of the nations: "all the nations shall flow unto it" (v. 2). Then he says, "He shall judge among the nations" and "they shall beat their swords into plowshares," etc. (v. 4). He utters a series of exhortations to humility which Kipling echoes in his fourth and fifth stanzas, although the "humble and contrite heart" quotation (stanza 2) is, of course, from Psalm 51.

### Echoes

An illustration of the use of the Prayer Book rather than King James' version of the Psalms may be taken from an early poem on the Indian seasons called "Two Months" (p. 80). He describes the heavy, airless heat of the night: "That will not suffer sleep or thought of ease." In Psalm 132: 4 we have: "I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep . . . neither the temples of my head to take any rest." In the A.V. the word "suffer" does not appear at all.

Where we find more direct quotation, there is still quite often slight alteration so that the phrase may fit into the poetic line and scan properly. Some of these are interesting, as for instance, Ecclesiastes 6: 9: "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire," which Kipling renders in "M'Andrew's Hymn"

*\*Pastoral Epistles are the Pauline writings addressed to SS. Timothy and Titus, containing advice on the work of Christian pastors. Most modern Biblical scholars think they were written after St. Paul's death, incorporating some of the apostle's sayings and passing correspondence.*

*\*\*Zion (fortress) was one of the names of the city of Jerusalem, coming from the fact that King David built a stronghold there in the early days of his reign.*

(p. 120/123) : "Better the sight of eyes that see than wanderin' o' desire."

So one might go on for pages, but I shall close with a brief consideration of Kipling's interest in, or fascination for, the Litany. He uses it again and again. There is "The Lovers' Litany" (p. 30), and "The Wet Litany" (p. 659), with its refrain "Hear the Channel Fleet at sea—*Libera nos Domine*" and "The Prayer of Miriam Cohen" (p. 614). In three poems : "The Dykes" (p. 305), "Hymn Before Action" (p. 323), and "Our Fathers of Old" (p. 563), he makes use of the two magnificent adjectives : "O God, we have heard with our ears . . ." and "O Lord, arise, help us . . ."

He does not directly quote but echoes words and feeling. In "The Dykes," it is a reversal : the present generation has no heart for the traditions and warnings of the past : "All that our fathers taught us of old, pleases us now no more." In the "Hymn Before Action" it is direct :

"As Thou didst help our fathers, Help Thou our host today." In "Our Fathers of Old" it is the title and content of the poem which describe the tradition of healing herbs received from the past.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to indicate the scope and character of Rudyard Kipling's involvement with the Bible and Book of Common Prayer. It is a phenomenon unique in the annals of English poetry, for, while some writers (Milton in particular) have developed Scriptural themes more magnificently, and others have set forth religious experience and teaching more excellently (George Herbert, Robert Browning and Francis Thompson), none has exhibited to the same extent, or in the same inimitable way, the "possession" of the Bible material. It will pay Church people to follow up the search here indicated.

*Quotations by permission of Rudyard Kipling Estate.*

## Mr. J. P. Collins

IT is with deep regret that we record the death of Mr. J. P. Collins, a valued member of the Kipling Society, who for a number of years was a regular contributor to this *Journal*. He had a long record of activity in Fleet Street and was a keen student of English literature.

He was educated at St. Edmund's, Erdington, a Benedictine foundation, and after serving a journalistic apprenticeship in Birmingham he came to London, and was literary editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* for ten years until the time of its extinction. For half that period he was also assistant editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*. In the later stages of the 1914-18 War he was a special correspondent on various fronts, and in 1920 he was a delegate to the Imperial Press Conference at Ottawa. For ten years Collins was on the *Daily Telegraph*

staff, and then over a long period of years represented overseas journals in London, notably the *Cape Times*, the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, and the *Boston Evening Transcript*.

Collins had a remarkable range of experience as a journalist and a large store of personal memories, from an acquaintance with Newman onwards, which made him an admirable guide to England and particularly to London on the many occasions when overseas visitors arrived with letters of introduction from editors of papers to which he contributed. He had a knowledge of London and its literary associations seldom gained by those who are born within the sound of Bow Bells.

He married Amelia Louise, youngest daughter of Alexander Bounevialle, who survives him with their three sons and one daughter.

## Rider Haggard and Rudyard Kipling

"The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." 2 Timothy, chap 4, v. 13.

[By kind permission of Miss Lilius Rider Haggard, we are privileged to quote the following extracts from her book, "'The Cloak that I Left,' a biography of the author, Henry Rider Haggard, K.B.E., by his daughter," and published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton.]

KING Solomon's Mines, Allan Quatermain, Jess and She were all written and completed in fourteen months. In them all are seen traces of an inspiration outside and beyond Rider himself—what Rudyard Kipling, who was so near akin to Rider (and in later years so beloved and intimate a friend), called the Personal Daemon, and said of it:

"When your daemon is in charge, do not try to think consciously. Drift, wait and obey."

He also wrote the following lines:  
"This is the doom of the Makers—  
their Daemon lives in their pen,  
If he be absent or sleeping, they are  
even as other men.

But if he be utterly present, and  
and they swerve not from his  
behest,

The word that he gives shall con-  
tinue, whether in earnest or jest."

\* \* \*

The world owes something to *Nada the Lily*, for from a seed sown in Rudyard Kipling's brain after reading it sprang *The Jungle Books*. Writing to Rider from America in 1895, he says, referring to a man who had supposed Rider, not Kipling, to be the author of them:

"It made me chuckle a little, and reminded me incidentally that he was nearer the mark than he knew; for it was a chance sentence of yours in *Nada the Lily* that started me off on a track that ended in my writing a lot of wolf stories. You remember in your tale where the wolves leaped up at the feet of a dead man sitting on a rock? Somewhere on that page I got the notion. It's curious how things come back again, isn't it? I meant to tell you when we met; but I don't remember that I ever did."

The growing strength of his friendship with Kipling was a great joy to Rider. Many of his books went to Rudyard in manuscript for criticism. They planned plots together, discussed their farms and the visits that Rider paid to the Kiplings were the greatest joy and refreshment. "It is, I think, good for a man of rather solitary habits now and again to have the opportunity of familiar converse with a brilliant and creative mind. Also we do not fidget each other—only last year Kipling told me he could work as well when I was sitting in the room as though he were alone. Whereas generally the presence of another person while he was writing would drive him almost mad."

Years later, in his book *Something of Myself*, Kipling said much the same of Rider. "Rider Haggard would visit us from time to time and give us of his ample land-wisdom. His comings were always a joy to us and the children, who followed him like hounds in the hope of 'more South African stories.' Never was a better tale-teller, or, to my mind, a man with a more convincing imagination. We found by accident that each could work with ease in the other's company. So he would visit me, and I him, work in hand; and between us we could even hatch out tales together—a most exacting test of sympathy."

Kipling, who hid so great and sensitive a heart under a brusque and rugged exterior, was not prodigal in his friendships.

Not only were both of a trade but tremendously in sympathy on many points, including Kipling's strong party and Imperialistic convictions, for which both men were roundly abused at times. After Kipling's publication of his *Recessional*, he wrote the following note to Rider:

"Your note did me much good and I thank you for it. I've just come off a fortnight with the Channel Squadron—rather a jolly time. Now any nation save ourselves with such

a fleet as we have at present would go out swiftly to trample the guts out of the rest of the world; and the fact that we do not seems to show that, even if we aren't very civilized, we're about the one power with a glimmering of civilization in us. As you say, we've always had it somewhere in our composition. But my objection to that hymn is that it may be quoted as an excuse for lying down abjectly at all times and seasons and taking what any other country may think fit to give us. What I wanted to say was—"Don't gas but be ready to give people snuff," and I only covered the first part of the notion."

This last remark refers to a continuation of the *Recessional* which Kipling told Rider he wrote but never published.

\* \* \*

## TWO HEARTS THAT BEAT AS ONE

(The first two signatures to a letter calling for funds to finance "The Liberty League" are those of Sir Rider Haggard and Mr. Rudyard Kipling.)

"Every Bolsh is a blackguard,"  
Said Kipling to Haggard.  
"And given to tipping,"  
Said Haggard to Kipling.

"And a blooming outsider,"  
Said Rudyard to Rider.  
"Their domain is a blood-yard,"  
Said Rider to Rudyard.

"That's just what I say,"  
Said the author of *They*.  
"I agree; I agree,"  
Said the author of *She*.

(*Daily Herald*, March 4th, 1920.)

\* \* \*

Rider went down to St. Leonards for the winter. Before he came back to Ditchingham in the spring of 1918, he spent a long day with the Kiplings at Bateman's and noticed somewhat sadly how thin and worn Rudyard was looking.

"Seated together in his study while he fiddled with his fishing tackle with which he tries to catch trout in the brook, we had some interesting hours together. He is one of the two men left living in the world with whom I

am in complete sympathy, the rest have gone. . . . What did we talk of? So many things it is difficult to remember them—chiefly they had to do with the fate of man. Rudyard apparently cannot make up his mind about these things. On one point, I happened to remark that I thought this world was one of the hells. He replied he did not think—he was certain of it. He went on to show that it had every attribute of hell; doubt, fear, pain, struggle, bereavement, almost irresistible temptations springing from the nature with which we are clothed, physical and mental suffering, etc., ending in the worst fate man can devise for man, Execution! As for the future, he is inclined to let the matter drift.

"Like myself, he has an active faith in the existence of a personal devil. His humility is very striking. We were talking of our failings, of the sense of utter insufficiency which becomes apparent as one nears the end of one's days, but I commented on the fact that he, at any rate, had wide fame and was known as 'the great Mr. Kipling,' which would be a consolation to many men. He thrust the idea away with a gesture of disgust. 'What is it worth?—what is it all worth?' he answered. Moreover, he went on to show that anything any of us did well was no credit to us; that it came from somewhere else, that we were, in fact, only telephone wires. As for an example he instances some of our individual successes—'You did not write *She*, you know,' he said, 'something wrote it through you . . .' He opined in his amusing way that if the present taxation went on much longer he and I would be seen on opposite sides of the Strand selling the *Recessional* and *She* for our daily bread.

"When I left him he told me how delighted he was to have had the opportunity of 'a good mental and spiritual clean out.' I think outside his own family there are few—perhaps none—to whom Rudyard opens his heart except myself. With literary people, he remarked, he had little acquaintance and added, 'But then, I don't think I'm really literary, nor are you either!'"

# Kipling's Later Tales

## THE THEME OF HEALING

By J. M. S. Tompkins

[By courtesy of Professor C. J. Sisson, General Editor of the 'Modern Language Review,' and of the author, we reproduce below the second part of an article by Dr. J. M. S. Tompkins, from the January 1950 number of that Journal.]

THE poems that accompany these later tales are mostly significant, and are sometimes the links that join them to each other. *Untimely*, the prelude to *The Eye of Allah*, leads directly to *Unprofessional*, as *The Threshold*, which follows the latter tale, points back to *The Eye of Allah*. All the inventions of men, it says, have been discovered more than once. There is pity for the discoverer, who received 'oppression and scorn for his wages,' and greater pity for the 'wise souls' who

aborted  
Noble devices and deep-wrought  
healings,  
Lest offence should arise.

But, at last, 'Heaven delivers on earth the Hour that cannot be thwarted.' In *Unprofessional* we share such an hour. All external obstructions are removed, and the three associated scientists—pathologist, surgeon and astronomer—backed by all that money can buy and the wit of man devise, held together by the bonds of a personal affection, rising out of their war experience, as well as by devotion to the job, explore 'the swab of culture which we call the world' and the 'influences' external to it, to such effect that Mrs. Berners does not die of cancer, like Anne of Norton in *The Eye of Allah*, but is healed. What is achieved is only 'some data and inferences which may serve as some sort

of basis for some detail of someone else's work, in the future,' but the dawn-wind blows strongly in the darkness<sup>1</sup> and we tremble with expectancy. 'What do you suppose is the good of Research?' asks Harries, and Lof tie replies: 'God knows. . . . Only—only it looks—sometimes—as if He were going to tell.'

### " He Turned to The Stars "

To get the emotion of such a story, the sense of the exacting and complex toil, the endless recording of minute facts, the emergence of unexpected questions, the startling moments when the shadow of a colossal and distant truth is glimpsed—an intellectual passion, humanized in this case by being focused on to a particular patient, so that the measure of what pure knowledge means when applied to human pain can be kept in view—Kipling needed to draw on the detail of a specific line of inquiry. He could not achieve the effect by means of general terms, and it is not likely that he could, even with expert help, make use of any authentic research, past or present. The established achievements, such as Laennec's stethoscope, were too confined, and would hardly yield to a modern reader that trembling of the edges of revelation that he wished to suggest. Contemporary research, even if it were not too abstruse to use, could hardly be driven to the required point of success. So he turned to the stars, whose influence on human lives was a commonplace of the India he knew, as he showed in *Kim* and much

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Last Ode*, after *The Eye of Allah*.

later in *The Debt*.<sup>2</sup> 'We can't tell on what system this dam' dynamo of our world is wound,' says Harries, 'but we know we're in the middle of every sort of wave, as we call 'em. They used to be "influences".' We move through the tale from point to point of brilliantly illuminated detail—the logging and filming of minute stellar 'tides' in the cells of tissues, the timing of operations by planetary hours, the setting of the patient's bed on a compass bearing—an intricate fantasy, telling strongly in the laboratory setting of 'taps and sinks and glass shelves,' typed papers and cages of white mice, until the astrology of *A Doctor of Medicine* comes to look less like a historical curiosity than the clumsy and purblind beginnings of a new science. The vision in *The Astrologer's Song* of the interaction of all created things is restored on a vaster scale and at a higher level when Harries, 'drunk with the ferment of [his] speculations,' describes the ultimate heavens as 'all one generating station of one Power drawn from the Absolute, and of one essence and substance with all things.' This, says *The Threshold*, was also the vision of the sages of 'resolute, unsatisfied Ionia,' but their truth was choked at birth; and the imagination loops back to *The Eye of Allah* and ties it up to the greatest historical example of the delayed dawn of knowledge. In the moment of success we remember the spilt 'blood of the vanguards.'

The greatest obstruction that the friends have to meet is the suicidal impulse that draws the already convalescent Mrs. Berners to the grave they have cheated of her. These spasms of insanity have been interpreted symbolically as the aftermath of war, and it may be that they do

indicate the contemporary situation of the human race, strung between the science that can save and a despairing trend to self-destruction. All these later books are full of symbols and allusions and echoing implications that vibrate faintly in an enormous distance. These symbols, however, do not rise up from the unconscious mind to impose themselves upon the author's art. They are accepted and willed, and planted on the main road of a story; they do not subtly contradict what it asserts. Their first value is always that of a fact necessary to the working out of the tale. Thus Mrs. Berners's suicidal impulse is primarily an example of the unforeseen, critical difficulties that may open on a team of scientists as the result of an apparently successful interference with the course of nature, requiring from them, on the spur of the moment, yet greater acts of imagination and devotion. In the same way, cancer, in the several stories in which it occurs, is there, in each case, because the tale requires the imposition of a long strain by a disease that can be slow, insidious, painful, secret and mortal. The victim must die hard, and with full consciousness of the act.<sup>3</sup> This is the case with Bella Armine in *A Madonna of the Trenches* and Grace Ashcroft in *The Wish House*<sup>4</sup> but, before examining these tales, it is relevant to look back to the much earlier *Children of the Zodiac*,<sup>5</sup> because it is in connexion with its occurrence here that the statement has been made that Kipling was obsessed with cancer. Perhaps; we do not know. Every age

<sup>3</sup> The exception is Castorley in *Day-spring Mishandled in Limits and Renewals*. But here our main concern is with Manallace, and the chief function of the disease is to disable his revenge.

<sup>4</sup> Both in *Debts and Credits*.

<sup>5</sup> In *Many Inventions* (1893).

<sup>2</sup> In *Limits and Renewals*.

finds death dressed in some prevailing fashion, and cancer is specially a modern dread. Moreover, art is often made out of obsessions. Cancer occurs somewhat more often in Kipling's work than tuberculosis;<sup>6</sup> but, if by obsession is meant a preoccupation that masters the writer and intrudes where a more dispassionate art would have dispensed with it, neither the early fable nor the later tales give any support to this suggestion. The nature of the disease is explicable in all cases by the part it plays in the tale. In *The Children of the Zodiac* cancer is certainly symbolical. The whole fable is an arrangement of symbols. It is a statement of the conditions of human life, and of the spirit in which these can be supported, and the characters are drawn from the ancient signs of the Zodiac. Some half of these are the mysterious slayers of men from their heavenly Houses, notably the Archer and the Crab. The others, the Bull, the Ram, the Twins, Leo and the Girl, wander on earth, and, conforming in time to the modes of human life, are able, like half-gods, to strengthen and comfort men, though at the cost of sharing their experience. Given this scheme, it was obvious that Sagittarius and Cancer must be the slayers, the lords of the quick and the slow doom. And the procedure of the Crab is wholly appropriate; it touches

<sup>6</sup> Tuberculosis in *On Greenhow Hill*, in *Life's Handicap* (1891), 'Wireless,' in *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904), *Marklake Witches* and 'Teem,' *A Treasure Hunter* (1935). Cancer in *The Children of the Zodiac*, *The Wish House*, *A Madonna of the Trenches*, *The Eye of Allah*, *Dayspring Mishandled* and *Unprofessional*. To these may be added *A Death-Bed* (1918), a short, grim poem, in which the cancer of the throat, of which rumour said the Kaiser was dying, is taken as the symbol of a diseased mind, spreading destruction round it.

the Girl on her woman's breast, and she goes on loving, and Leo, the singer, on the apple of his throat, and he sings to the end. But this gigantic Crab is much more than a specific disease; it is all the sorrow and evil of the world that tries to stifle the singer's voice and fastens on the heart of his wife. Since, moreover, both the slayers and the comforters come from the heavenly Houses, we have here the same conception that is echoed in *The Astrologer's Song* in *Rewards and Fairies*:

Through abysses unproven  
And gulfs beyond thought,  
Our portion is woven,  
Our burden is brought.  
Yet They that prepare it,  
Whose Nature we share,  
Make us who must bear it  
Well able to bear.

Death and healing equally are shed on us by the heavenly powers, whose nature interpenetrates our own.

### Love and Death

*The Wish House* and *A Madonna of the Trenches* (and with these may be counted *The Gardener*<sup>7</sup> though it does not deal with cancer) are tales of love and death. Human love is opposed in immediate and prolonged menace to its greatest antagonist, the power that seems to defeat and nullify it. In the first two love triumphs; in the third it receives consolation, though without understanding it. In *A Madonna of the Trenches*, which is designed very boldly and painted, as it were, in poster-colours, the lovers, Mrs. Armine and Sergeant Godsoe, sure that they have all eternity ahead of them, can endure their several captivities to disease and deprivation because 'an hour or two won't make any odds.' In that subtle tale, *The*

<sup>7</sup> In *Debts and Credits*.

*Wish House*, Mrs. Grace Ashcroft, with no clearer outlook on the issues of life and death than a yearning hope that 'the pain *do* count,' forces the enemy, in the form of cancer, to become the very medium of her love for Harry Mockler. She is ageing and no longer his woman, but, since she went to the Token in the *Wish House* to change his sickness for hers, she has compelled him, as she believes, to 'get his good' from her, though he does not know it, and she is convinced that she is bearing his pain and, like Alcestis, has purchased his life with hers. The prelude poem, *Late came the God*, dealing in images, presents the wound of the poisoned knife, which is both her love and her disease, as the punishment of the God for wrong and contempt, and the contempt, as the tale makes clear, has lain in Grace Ashcroft's cruelty and her unscrupulous taking of bodily love, before she found her master in Harry Mockler. The poem also tells, after a verse which describes her agony, how she responded to punishment by making her disease the instrument of a sacrificial passion.

So she lived while her body corrupted upon her.

And she called on the Night for a sign, and a Sign was allowed,

And she builded an Altar and served by the light of her Vision—

Alone, without hope of regard or reward, but uncowed,

Resolute, selfless, divine.

These things she did in Love's honour . . .

Now, it is plain that, in these two tales and in *The Gardener*, death must confront love in detail and palpable presence. The associated poems may, on occasion, deal in stately imagery and abstractions, but not the tales themselves. So Helen Turrell's unacknowledged mother-love is set against the 'merciless sea of black

crosses,' the composed rows of the sacrifice of youth in the war-cemetery of Hagenzeele Third. But the love between man and woman, which is more immediately of the body than that of a mother for her grown son, must face the disintegration of the flesh by disease and death, the defiling and destruction of the earthly language of love. Grace Ashcroft is bound face to face with death till death.

In her isolation she recognizes, foresees and invokes every pang. Her unexhausted physical passion and possessiveness, and the completeness of the offering they exact, cleanse her spirit by their very intensity. In the poem that follows *The Wish House* love and corruption are again opposed in the figures of the leper and his woman, under the loaded gallows, 'very merry, breaking bread.' She is 'whole and clean,' but the corruption of his flesh does not hinder their delight in each other.

Since, in perfect Love, saith Scripture, can be no excess at all.

Rahere, as he sees them, is relieved from the horror of darkness that has sunk his spirit at the contemplation of life.

In *A Madonna of the Trenches* we hear little of Bella Armine's well-hidden 'trouble.' 'She'd 'ad a bit of a gatherin' in 'er breast, I believe. But she never talked of 'er body to anyone,' is all her nephew knows of it. We see little of her. Sergeant John Godsoe holds the centre of the inset story—it is one of the framed tales and the frame falls to be considered later—and his testimony is given amongst all the frozen dreadfulness of winter warfare in the trenches, where the landmarks are the four dead Warwicks and the two Zouave skeletons by the old sugar-boiler. It is open to the reader to find a harmony between the iron weather and the

fleshly abstinence of John Godsoe and Bella Armine, who are both married to other people, and even to see a symbol in the posture of Godsoe's body, when he has achieved his quiet suicide, 'frozen stiff between the two braziers'; but the chief function of the braziers, nevertheless, is to be taken literally, as providing, with the old dressing-station and the wedged door, a less exceptionable way for a 'first-class Non-Com.' to 'go on leave' than the rifle which for a second he was tempted to use. In any event, the total meaning of the tale transcends the incidental symbol. Godsoe's death is not frustration, but consummation and release. When he learns the date by which Bella Armine expects to die, he looks 'different all of a sudden—as if 'e'd got shaved,' while in the passage from that convenient play, *Gow's Watch*, which follows the tale, the purport of his quotations from Swinburne and the Burial Service is confirmed by the cry of Gow when, after all the 'barren, unyoked years,' he sees the spirit of the Lady Frances: 'What can the Grave against us, O my Heart?'

This tale is drawn out of Strangwick, an ex-Runner of a South London Battalion, after Lodge-working at Faith & Works E.C. 5837, by Brother Keede, Senior Warden and general practitioner with war-service. The mediating of a situation of high intensity by a mind and speech that can report only parts of it, and these with varying degrees of bafflement and understanding, had been practised by Kipling before. By this means varying lights can be thrown on the inset

story and various effects of contrast and stimulus transmitted to the reader. In this tale, however, the light is thrown both ways and reflected back, more strongly than usual, on the teller. Strangwick, in seeing the meeting of his Aunt's spirit and John Godsoe, has had more than he can take. He has seen what has made nonsense of all his world and knocked the bottom out of all his presuppositions, and seen it expressed through persons whose age and humdrum closeness to his own life double the shock. 'There wasn't a single goddam thing left abidin' for me to take hold of, here or hereafter. If the dead *do* rise—and I saw 'em—why—why, *anything* can 'appen.'

He has masked his trouble as war-nerves, managing in his hysterical collapse to babble about the frozen 'stiffs' under the duck-board, but when Keede has extracted the truth from him he sleeps quietly, and a step has been made towards healing.

This, then, the first of Kipling's tales of neurosis in an ex-service man, is not really concerned with a war injury at all, though the war setting throws all the values into strongest relief. We are helped to gauge the power and the range of the love streaming through Bella Armine and John Godsoe because the revelation wholly demolishes the defence-system of a cheerful young Runner, well-protected by youthful callousness and short views, and leaves him a nervous wreck. In the other cases, the neurosis is at the centre of the story and is the direct product of the war.

(To be continued)

THE KIPLING SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT is able to supply the following to Members interested : POSTCARDS of Batemans, Rudyard Lake, or Kipling's Grave, 9d. per doz. ; BOOKPLATES, 1d. each ; Members' List, 6d. ; and extra copies of The Kipling Journal at 2/6d. per copy—except for certain rare numbers. Enquiries should be addressed to The Secretary, Kipling Society, c/o Airborne Forces Security Fund, Greenwich House, 11, Newgate Street, London, E.C.1.

## Library Notes

By W. G. B. Maitland

THE name of Sherlock Holmes is as well known as that of Kipling, and there can be very few who will not be familiar with at least some of those famous adventures which began at 221B Baker Street. But how many of Holmes' followers have heard of *The Strange Case of the Megatherium Thefts*?\*

Watson recorded the details of this case, but it is small wonder he did not think it worthy of preservation with his other memoirs of his friend. It is a very minor case, calling for little or no detective effort.

Briefly, the details are that Holmes was called in by a prominent member of the Megatherium Club to enquire into the disappearance of a number of books from the Club's library. When examining a list of the missing volumes, Holmes remarks that one of the titles reminds him of a book he had recently handled. This, he said, was "an advance copy" of *Plain Tales* specially bound and inscribed by the author for presentation to his godson before the latter sailed for India.

Poor Holmes! He went sadly astray there, unless Watson misreported him, which seems unlikely, for Holmes was very positive about the volume.

No, it was Holmes. But what book did he see? It could not have been *Plain Tales*—unless it was a fake copy, for *Plain Tales* was first published in India in 1888, when R.K. was about 25 years of age and *still in India!* He did not come home to England until 1890, and as Holmes said it was *an advance copy, i.e.* a specially bound copy produced before the publication date, there is something amiss.

Such an interesting copy of his first prose volume would surely have come to light by now. No, no, Holmes slipped up badly and proved himself

to be not quite so erudite as he would have liked Watson to think.

Unfortunately, it has taken over 60 years to trip him up!

### "Fairy Kist" and "Silver Blaze"

Did Kipling get the idea of *Fairy Kist* from a Sherlock Holmes story? Probably not, but nevertheless there is a slight similarity between this story with its theme of detection and Holmes' solution of the problem of *Silver Blaze*. In both cases a preliminary survey of the evidence suggests murder.

In *Fairy Kist* the body of a young woman, named Ellen Marsh, is found lying on the bank of a narrow, muddy country lane. The cause of death is a stab wound at the base of the skull such as could have been inflicted by a fern-trowel found near the body. Ellen is known to have been on most friendly terms with a particular young man named Jimmy Tigner. He is immediately dragged from his bed and subjected to a dramatic confrontation with the body of the young woman. His behaviour under this ordeal and to subsequent interrogation leaves little doubt as to his innocence. As readers will remember, the girl did not meet her death by foul play. A skidding lorry carrying a pair of carelessly loaded iron girders was responsible.

There is a description of tests which were made with the lorry in the lane until it is proved how, by the swing and 'whip' of the girders as the lorry skids, the girl was struck down.

At first sight it seemed obvious that murder had been done: a young woman found dead at night in a country lane—a well-known trysting place. A young man with whom she was on friendly terms—a lovers' quarrel—the fern-trowel and its owner's suspicious behaviour. Plenty of evidence for a charge of murder. But a little careful investigation proves there had been no foul play.

\* Included in "Holmes and Watson," by S. C. Roberts. Oxford University Press, 1953. Price 10/6.

Now let us examine Holmes' problem in *Silver Blaze*. A trainer of racehorses at a stable on Dartmoor is found dead—presumably murdered—in a lonely part of the moor. The horse, *Silver Blaze*, the favourite in the big race at a forthcoming race meeting, is missing. Many very suspicious incidents come to light when Holmes is brought in to investigate: a stable boy has his food doped with opium—the trainer is found to have been leading a double life and running up large bills at a fashionable milliner's shop in London. Holmes finds the horse disguised and concealed at a neighbouring racing stable. When examining the ground where Straker's body was found, Holmes picks up a wax vesta. The contents of Straker's pockets include a box of vestas, a stump of candle and a very curious

type of knife identified by Dr. Watson as a cataract knife. *Silver Blaze* had been nicked in a tendon by a knife: sheep have gone suddenly lame: Straker has a wound in the thigh which could have been inflicted by such a knife, but death was due to a hideous wound in the forehead.

A horse nobbled; some lamed sheep—a dishonest trainer—the drugged stable boy all lead Holmes to the correct solution that Straker was, in fact, killed by a kick from a frightened horse.

The similarity between these two stories lies in the apparent cause of death. Both Doyle and Kipling use circumstantial evidence as a basis for a murder theory and then shew, by skilful analysis, how misleading such evidence can be.

## A Reader's Guide

MR. R. E. Harbord writes:

"May I report to you on the response to the article on this subject which appeared in the October 1953 *Kipling Journal*, from members offering suggestions and promises of help? In addition, there is 'Kiplingite's' letters to you in the "Letter Bag," December 1953 number. I will give my views on his suggestions first.

1. I hardly dare to think this plan possible, but I will approach Messrs. Macmillans as soon as members provide me with sufficient material to place before the publishers.

2. If *all* the members subscribed (and it is unlikely that more than 20 per cent. would do so), the subscription list by itself would not justify printing.

3. This would postpone the publication of the work for many years, and I do not think the number of subscribers would justify the printing.

We therefore await our benefactor, but meanwhile let us prepare for him—or her.

So far, only three really helpful letters have reached me. I have asked these members (all men) each to undertake to make a report on two or three of their favourite Kipling stories.

If I could persuade every member to do this, and each one gave full particulars of *one* story, enough material would be available to be typed in uniform fashion: one copy going to the Society's Office for safe keeping. I realise how easy this sounds and that further thought shows some difficulties, but there are fewer objections than would appear: for instance, I do not mind having two or three reports on the same story. If correspondents will let me know which story they intend to choose before starting, I will give all the *Journal* references to the story to help in the preparation of the report. Full particulars are also available as to first publication and other routine details.

No stories are barred, for, in spite of so much having been written about some of them in past issues of the *Kipling Journal*, they all require further clarification, except, perhaps, "Mrs. Bathurst." About this story so many people have written (including Kipling himself) that it would be difficult to add anything fresh, but an enthusiast might take the whole story in hand and explain every unusual phrase and word for the benefit of future generations of readers. A

summary is needed of the various suggestions put forward as to the identity of Vickery's last companion.

We want facts, Mr. Editor. All the information we can collect will be made available to members; not stored away in files."

*For the information of new readers: Mr. Harbord suggests that what is needed is an up-to-date series of handbooks which will serve as a Reader's Guide to Kipling's works, on the lines of Ralph Durand's "A Handbook to the Poetry of Kipling," published by*

*Hodder & Stoughton in 1914. To subsidise the preparation of such a work is beyond the means of the Kipling Society, but it is proposed that a beginning should be made at once to collect the necessary data. In course of time, no doubt, a fully annotated edition of Kipling's works may appear, but as this may not be possible for many years, it is important that action should be taken now to record systematically all available information. Members interested are invited to send their suggestions to Mr. R. E. Harbord, Spring Grange, Wood End, Ardeley, Stevenage, Herts.—Ed. 'K.J.'*

## " Hopes or Enthusiasms "

**The Modern Writer and his World**, by G. S. Fraser. *Derek Verschoyle, London. 16/-.*

FIRST to quote the dust cover: "Much that is difficult in recent writing becomes easier to understand if one knows something of the background of ideas and events from which works sprang. Mr. Fraser's book, an expansion of lectures delivered at Tokyo University in 1950, is an account of the main development of English fiction, drama, poetry and criticism since the 1890's.

"G. S. Fraser is a Scottish poet who has published two volumes of verse."

This work shows once again how much more akin Kipling is to the French than to the Scots, although we as a Society have found increasing appreciation in Scotland for our Author. We need not, however, accept Fraser's opinions any more than English students did those early ones of Andrew Lang, another Scot. It is possible that the present author will learn a greater appreciation, as did Lang; if so, then we may get a balanced verdict from him.

The book deals fairly with the other English writers, so no doubt it is just the author's personal dislike of what Kipling stands for that has coloured his criticism. He puts Kipling in the category "one whose work reflects hopes or enthusiasms which the mere passing of time shows to be

unfounded." This is surely an unfortunate generalisation.

Here are some of the notes from the book:—

- (a) A man of genius.
- (b) K's militant Imperialism (as if that was a crime).
- (c) A cartoonist rather than a critic. We can say *tuo quoque* to that.
- (d) Page 64. Here the remarks are childish.
- (e) On the next two pages there are useful and fair criticisms.

Mr. Fraser is inclined to judge from the present-day point of view only, what was written in the 19th century, but here the excuse may be that he is writing mainly for Japanese students of the present. He takes what was the conventional 'schools' point of view of the 'twenties, ignoring much of Kipling's virtue and all his vitality. He writes like so many who have not read even all the short stories, and they date from 1880 to 1935. He thinks the time for a final evaluation of Kipling's work is not yet. Of course not, but surely it is easy to give a firm opinion now as at almost any time during the past 70 years. If he knows and fears that Kipling is to be placed even higher yet, he is most probably right, but he seems, like Lang, to be one of those who hates the English point of view too much to praise gladly.—M-O-C.

## Letter Bag

(Correspondents are asked to keep their letters as short as possible)

### The Heel of Achilles

Kipling maintained such a high standard of accomplishment that it is impossible to say which is his best story. Any one of at least a dozen might be voted into first place by different admirers of his work. Would it be possible to reach agreement as to his 'worst,' or shall we say his 'least satisfactory' story? I shall plump for "The Prophet and the Country" in *Debts and Credits*. This story about Prohibition and a 'She-dominated Civilisation' seems to me to be pointless and a vision of things never likely to come about in the United States. How different from his prophecy of the future in "A.B.C." or in "With the Night Mail"!—H. A. THOMAS (Rev.), The Parsonage, 18 Woodville Road, Bexhill-on-Sea.

### Relativity?

"Uncovenanted Mercies," in *Limits and Renewals*, was written in 1931 or earlier. It is one of Kipling's two famous eschatological items (the other being "On the Gate," in *Debts and Credits*, which was written in 1926 or earlier). On one page there is: "The Three [they were Satan, Azrael and Gabriel] nose-dived at that point where Infinity returns upon itself, till they folded their wings beneath the foundations of Time and Space, whose double weight bore down on them through the absolute Zeroes of Night and Silence."

Although it is a fancy description of what is involved in Einstein's theory of Relativity, does not the first part of the sentence indicate an early

acceptance of one of the great scientist's now well known propositions?

It must be 22 years since Kipling wrote the story. It has been referred to in ten issues of the "Kipling Journal"; in particular the late Sir George MacMunn wrote in Nos. 77, 80 and 91 and Colonel B. S. Browne in Nos. 80 and 81, but neither of them, nor Prof. Bonamy Dobrée in Nos. 104 and 105, dealt with this question.—"ORIGINAL MEMBER."

### A Crypticism Within

While I was listening to someone reading aloud "The Finest Story in the World" I noticed that the sound of the words that represented the scratches on the oar formed a sentence in the Greek language which did not correspond literally with the translation given by the Professor of Ancient Greek who was consulted. The Professor remarked airily, "It is an attempt to write corrupt Greek on the part of an extremely illiterate person." He read slowly from the paper "Pollock, Erckmann, Tauchnitz, Henniker," which sounds to me to represent this phrase:

Πολλαχ' ἔρκε(ου) Μην Τάυχηνιζ ένεξε

the translation of which reads: "Many times by means of the coil of the whip he grazed my neck, I assure you."

The scratches on the oar would have been written in Majuscule, Ancient Greek, unspaced and unpunctuated.—EDITH M. BUCHANAN, Hon. Sec, Kipling Society, Auckland Branch, New Zealand.

*NEW MEMBERS of the Society recently elected are:* LONDON—Mr. B. C. Mitchell, Mrs. E. M. Mitchell, Miss Rosemary Bagwell-Purefoy (Associate Member) U.S.A.—The Grolier Club, Mrs. Wallace H. Cole, Mrs. I. R. Kent, Mr. Henry E. Crampton, Mr. T. G. Ames, Mr. R. S. Schwartz, Mr. L. H. Goldberg.

*BANKER'S ORDERS.—The Home Members' annual subscription has been 25/- since 1949. There are still a number of members who are paying less. IT WOULD help the funds of the Society considerably and our labours enormously if members would kindly alter their Banker's Orders to the correct amount of 25/-.*

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