

THE KIPLING JOURNAL

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE KIPLING SOCIETY, LONDON



1927

2002

*Special
75th Anniversary Issue*

VOLUME 76

MARCH 2002

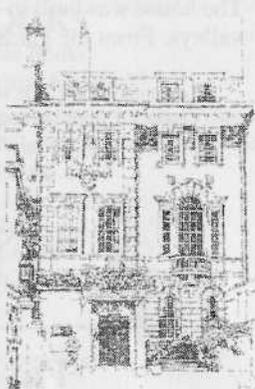
No 301

ISSN 0023-1738

THE CLUB WITH A COMMONWEALTH DIMENSION

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

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



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

The subscription rates for 2002 range from £99.50 to £300 (including entrance fee). For those aged under 25 it is £65. Membership is open to citizens of Commonwealth countries and citizens of countries which have had constitutional links with the UK since 1910 such as Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan. For further details please contact the Membership Secretary.



Royal Over-Seas League

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

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



BATEMAN'S

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

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

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

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

THE NATIONAL TRUST

Faversham Books

Antiquarian & Secondhand Books

We buy and sell

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

write today and join our mailing list

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



FAR HORIZONS TRAVEL

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

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

Telephone: (01747) 824369

VERANDAH BOOKS



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



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

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

ROUNABOUT BOOKS

Antiquarian, Rare & Collectable Books

****Specialists in the Works of Rudyard Kipling****

As a leading specialist supplier of Rudyard Kipling books and associated material we are able to offer a comprehensive service to both Kipling scholar and collector.

CATALOGUES ISSUED

please write, telephone or E-mail for inclusion on our mailing list.

BOOKSEARCH SERVICE

with no obligation to purchase and no registration fees.

INSURANCE AND PROBATE VALUATIONS UNDERTAKEN

please enquire.

FREE ADVICE

We are constantly looking to purchase additional stock
 and pay handsomely for quality items.

We are pleased to offer all Kipling Society members a discount of 20%
 on all books listed at our web-link or in our catalogue.

Telephone: 01580 714693

E-mail: eldertownsend@supanet.com

Browse a selection of our stock on:

<http://ukbookworld.com/members/roundabout>

Roundabout Books, 10 Campion Cresc., Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3QL

Antiquarian Books

Free Monthly Catalogues including KIPLING material

K·BOOKS (A·B·A)

Waplington Hall, Allerthorpe, York. YO4 4RS

TEL 01759 302142 · FAX 01759 305891

THE KIPLING SOCIETY

PRESIDENT

Sir George Engle, K.C.B., Q.C.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Joseph R. Dunlap, D.L.S.

Norman Entract

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

Mrs Rosalind Kennedy

Mrs L.A.F. Lewis

J.H. McGivering, R.D.

Mrs Margaret Newsom

Professor Thomas Pinney, Ph.D.

Mrs Anne Shelford

J.W. Michael Smith

G.H. Webb, C.M.G., O.B.E.

COUNCIL: ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

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

Anne Harcombe

Mrs Elizabeth Inglis

Lt-Colonel R.C. Ayers, O.B.E. (*Deputy Chairman*)

David Vermont

John Walker

Commander Alastair Wilson

COUNCIL: HONORARY OFFICE-BEARERS

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

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

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

Jane Keskar (*Secretary*)

[her address is 6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS; Tel & Fax 020 7286 0194;

her e-mail address is jane@keskar.fsworld.co.uk]

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

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

John Radcliffe (*On Line Editor*)

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

John Slater (*Librarian*)

Editor, Kipling Journal

Sharad Keskar, M.A.

Independent Financial Examiner

Professor G.M. Selim, M.Com., Ph.D., F.I.I.A.

THE SOCIETY'S ADDRESS

Postal: 6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS; *Web-site:* www.kipling.org.uk

THE SOCIETY'S NORTH AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE

David Alan Richards, 18 Forest Lane, Scarsdale,

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

Tel: (212) 609-6817. Fax: (212) 593-4517. e-mail: drichards@mccarter.com

AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

Secretary: Mrs Rosalind Kennedy,

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

SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 10 April 2002, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, **Peter Havholm**, on "Politics, Fiction, & Kipling's 'Late Manner'."

Wednesday 26 June 2002, the Society's **Annual Luncheon**, **12.30 for 1 p.m.**, in the **Hall of India & Pakistan**, Royal Over-Seas League, Park Place, off St James's Street, London SW1, when the Guest Speaker will be **The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres DD FSA, The Bishop of London**. For details and advance booking for tickets, see the flyer sent out with the December 2001 *Journal*.

There already has been a good response from members for this occasion, and as seating is limited, you are asked to apply soon to avoid disappointment.

Wednesday 10 July 2002, 4.30 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, the Society's **Annual General Meeting**. A cash bar will serve drinks at 5.30 p.m., before **Harry Ricketts'** talk on "Kipling the Lost Poetic Parodist", at 6 p.m. An excellent **afternoon tea** – sandwiches, scones and cakes – will be served in the **Wrench Room**, from 4 p.m. Tea, at a reduced cost from last year is £6.50 per head, and is for those who order in advance. Book by telephoning the Secretary from now to Monday 8 July 2002. [No tickets will be issued.]

Wednesday 11 September 2002, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, **Dr Elizabeth Buettner** on "The Kipling Paradigm: British Childhoods in Late Imperial India."

Wednesday 13 November 2002, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, **Mrs Meryl Macdonald Bendle** on "Kipling and the Motoring Diaries".



PHILADELPHIA'S FURY

by Charles E. Brock, R.I. (1870-1938), book illustrator and portraitist, for "Marklake Witches" in *Rewards and Fairies*, as published in 1910 in the standard Macmillan Pocket Edition – though the scroll (bottom left) was added for an edition by the Folio Society, London (1996). For an explanation of the depicted incident see page 8.

THE KIPLING JOURNAL

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

Volume 76

MARCH 2002

Number 301

CONTENTS

THE KIPLING SOCIETY: OFFICERS, ETC	4
SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	5
<i>Illustration: PHILADELPHIA'S FURY</i>	6
Note about the illustration on page 6 by George Webb	8
EDITORIAL	9-12
PAST PRESIDENTS by George Engle	13-15
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KIPLING by John Spencer	16-21
NEW MEMBERS	21
GEORGE CHARLES BERESFORD & GEORGE ARTHUR WILSON by Nick Wilson	22-24
KIPLING'S BURMA: A Literary and Historical Review Part I by George Webb	25-32
GRIEF, ANGER, AND IDENTITY: KIPLING'S "MARY POSTGATE" by William Dillingham	33-42
DID MARY POSTGATE LEAVE AN ALLY TO DIE by Bill Dower	42-47
75 YEARS AGO	48
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	49-54
NEWS VIEWS AND REVIEWS	55-57
THE SOCIETY ON LINE by John Radcliffe	58-59
"The Prayer of Miriam Cohen" by Roger Ayers	59
ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY	60

Cover design by Sharad Keskar

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

A NOTE ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 6

"Marklake Witches" is set in Sussex in 1806, during the Napoleonic Wars. A key figure, the French doctor Laënnec (1781-1826), inventor of the stethoscope, is a prisoner of war on parole. Another non-fiction character in the cast is the future Duke of Wellington, Sir Arthur Wellesley (1769-1853), an old friend of Bucksteed, the squire at Marklake Hall. Wellesley has won a high military reputation in India, but back in Europe in 1806 is not yet widely known, and merely commands a brigade at Hastings.

Each of Kipling's 'Puck stories', a distinctive contribution to the art of story-telling, centres on a tale told by a ghost whom Puck magically recalls from the dead, to give those Edwardian children a glimpse of an earlier age. The ghost evoked for "Marklake Witches" is Bucksteed's daughter Philadelphia. She is one of Kipling's most vivid creations – an attractive and spirited girl of sixteen who innocently enthralled the men around her, and will break their hearts by dying young. They all perceive – but she, touchingly, does not – that she is dying of consumption. Her sad condition leaves Marklake riddled with tensions – between two doctors in love with her; between the French idealist with his experimental stethoscope and the hostile English bigots in the village; and between Philadelphia herself, deprecating any anxiety about her, and well-wishers who cannot hide their concern. She knows that she is frail, with a chronic cough, but she bravely makes light of it, insisting that she will be put right by a visit to London and a change of air.

So when she hears that Jerry Gamm, the village 'Witchmaster' – herbalist and dealer in spells – has been induced by Cissie, her devoted old nurse, to make a spell to cure her mistress's cough, she is furious – especially on finding that Cissie has stolen three silver spoons from the squire, as Jerry's fee. Philadelphia rides over at once to his cottage to confront him. In the picture, she finds him in his garden, and leans from her saddle over his hedge, to horsewhip him.

But the chastisement comically misfires. Her horse shies; she falls into the hedge; Jerry pulls her out; and they are soon reconciled. She even accepts his spell, which prescribes a routine of beneficial breathing exercises, disguised as a ritual recital of saints' names. No mere quack, Jerry has sound insights into the causes of disease, but wisely wraps his remedies in mumbo-jumbo to meet his patients' expectations. And he too loves Philadelphia.

[G.H.W.]

EDITORIAL

THE KIPLING SOCIETY – 75 UNBROKEN YEARS

The fact that Kipling disapproved of the founding of the Kipling Society during his life time is now only a matter of historical interest. Never at anytime in its magnificent record of seventy-five years was it a relevant consideration to the Society's aims and purposes. (How else could Kipling or anyone with a modicum of modesty, have reacted? And this intensely private man may also have felt the need to discourage the enthusiasm of fans who could have taken approval as a passport to intrude.) It is more heartening to believe that not too long after its establishment, Kipling would have approved or at least tolerated a Society set up to honour him. And that ought to be good enough for Kipling's admirers today. More importantly, we should understand the impatience of those admirers who were his contemporaries, and of the Founder of the Kipling Society. It is in character for a founder to be single-minded, and to 'press on regardless', even if he has to face the snubs that he is heir to. But followers must remember that without his unswerving efforts there would have been no Society.

The Kipling Society was founded by J.H.C. Brooking and officially established in 1927. But there is documentary evidence to show that he had been trying since 1919. In 1960, Brooking was asked to write an article on the founding of our Society, and this was printed in the *March Journal* of that year. He wrote that his earliest introduction to Kipling was "The Bridge Builders" and how, an engineer himself, he was impressed by Kipling's technical knowledge.

As Brooking's collection of Kipling's books grew, so did his admiration for the writer, and it occurred to him to gather enthusiasts who would like to meet to discuss Kipling's unique writings and use of language. Then he learned of a lecture on Kipling which was being given at Picton Hall, Liverpool, by none other than his and Kipling's schoolmate, Lionel Dunsterville – Stalky of *Stalky & Co.* He invited Stalky's help. Stalky suggested a national approach rather than a provincial one. Brooking produced letters, for Stalky's signature, and sent them to "prominent people in all walks of life". The letters referred to "a Meeting at the R.A.C, London" – Stalky's club. Only two people besides Brooking turned up: Stalky and Ian Hay. Undaunted, Hay was asked to proceed with the formation of the Kipling Society, but nothing came of that.

Some years later, and as Brooking's business prospered, he moved to Slough, and there, during the General Strike [1926], and while working

for the Government, he got to know Sir George MacMunn, a strong Kipling fan. It was MacMunn's influence, help and contacts that led to the Inaugural Meeting on 4 February 1927 in the Committee Room of the Royal Automobile Club, when the resolution to form the Kipling Society was unanimously passed. Sir George MacMunn chaired the meeting, by the end of which he was elected Hon. Treasurer. Brooking became Hon. Secretary, and Stalky, (then Maj-General) L.C. Dunsterville was elected President. All Founder Members, among whom was G.C. Beresford (M'Turk), were elected Vice-Presidents.

Today the Society has an enviable status and its world-wide reputation is one of stability. Since inception it has met regularly and frequently; and distinguished figures from all walks of life have addressed these meetings. (Lord Wavell, Lord Annan, L.S. Amery, Sir Malcolm Sargent, Somerset Maugham, T.S. Eliot, A.L. Rowse, Charles Carrington, Eric Linklater, Jan Morris, Angus Wilson, Adam Nicolson, Terry Waite, Kingsley Amis, Sir John Chapple, Michael Brock, Philip Mason and Sir George Engle, to name but a few – and in no particular order.) That pattern remains unchanged. Politicians, civil servants, professors, writers, architects, artists, musicians and theologians have all lectured on Kipling's contribution to Literature, which, it is generally agreed, is second only to the Bible and Shakespeare.

OUR MAN IN NIRVANA

Anyone who describes himself as "a God-fearing, Christian atheist" has to be someone who defies analysis and pigeon-holing. Kipling not only wrote about things as they are but also of things as they ought to be, and of the humour that lay between. Like Jonathan Swift, who incidentally described himself as a "Tory Anarchist", Kipling's didacticism was tempered, in varying degrees, by the championing of individualism. He observed the world through eyes that knew pain and bereavement and with the wisdom of a world-wide traveller. (It is often overlooked that some of Kipling's finest work is his travel writing.) An undoubted moralist, he nevertheless took moral ideals with a pinch of Attic salt:

On the first Feminian Sandstones we were promised the Fuller Life
(Which started by loving our neighbour and ended by loving his
wife) [.]

But while he castigated "robbing selected Peter to pay for collective Paul", he saw that through all his individualism and indeed multicultural statements, people had to live a rule-governed life.

However, rulers were themselves to be morally enlightened. (It should come as no surprise that he, like his father, was impressed by Buddhism.) Kipling's hopes rested on the young, and his "The Children's Song" is addressed to a God outside and within all religions:

Teach us Delight in simple things,
And Mirth that has no bitter springs;
Forgiveness free of evil done,
And Love to all men 'neath the sun!

Yet when he coined the now familiar war epitaph to the unknown dead ("Known Unto God"), was he not, as he clearly did in his short story, "The Gardener", leaning on that most Christian of beliefs "The Resurrection"? And does not a very Pauline hubris and humility invade "The Church that was at Antioch" and "The Manner of Men"? In the poem "At His Execution", which follows the second of these, Paul is heard to say:

*Ah, Christ, when I stand at Thy Throne
With those I have drawn to the Lord,
Restore me my self again!*

But we shall never know because, although his writings are impregnated with Biblical allusions, Kipling discloses little of himself. When he does, it is either to put us off the scent or make a plea: "Seek not to question other than/ The books I leave behind."

Was it his myopic physical disability that made him stare closely and with prophetic intuition? Those cornflower blue eyes took in the world, which his mind absorbed like blotting paper. The eye of this beholder is outside his stories. Stories that speak for the characters within, never for Kipling. But by the very process of writing he *has* to be in all of them. In *Kim* he is the lama and Kim; and the book's creator, with "two separate sides to his head", sees and understands the paradox that is humanity.

"What profit to kill men?" [The lama asks the ressalidar.]
"Very little – as I know; but if evil men were not now and then slain it would not be a good world for weaponless dreamers."

In 1936, the year Kipling died, Malcolm Muggeridge, writing in *Time & Tide*, said that it was impossible to understand Kipling apart from India. His mysticism came from the East. "He did not see the world as so many wrongs to be righted, so much disorder to be ordered, but as a confusion of colour and sound and appetite whose discords were as

valid as its harmonies, that had to be understood not by arrangement into a pattern, rather by reverent watching. . . Like an Oriental he preferred kingship to elbowing democracy, cruel splendour to pusillanimous squeamishness, the unashamed exercise of power to its disguise however plausible and enlightened the formulae under which it was hidden. Indians were in his eyes an ancient rather than a subject people, and if he bewailed their degeneracy into tiresome demagogues mouthing stale slogans, and the sterility of a transplanted political system with all its unedifying apparatus, it was more as an artist than an imperialist." He concludes that Kipling "is likely to be rediscovered as a sort of Blake, a strange, sometimes absurd, but still inspired babbler of truth whose genius was so spontaneous as to be child-like."

THE JOURNAL

The Society's 75th Anniversary is also the 75th Anniversary of the *Kipling Journal*. The *Journal* speaks for itself. More than that, it speaks for two outstanding Editors who between them edited the *Journal* for nearly half a century; and it was the second of these who gave it, not only worth but also an image of high quality. George Webb may have stopped editing the *Journal* but we are doubly fortunate to have his guiding influence and regular literary contributions. Not one to rest on his laurels, he has now undertaken the onerous task of leading a team of scholars and plodders to revise and supplement *The Readers' Guide to Rudyard Kipling's Work*. This is an 8-volumed labour of love inspired and largely financed by "Reg" Harbord, Fourth President of the Kipling Society (cf., p. 14). But there are gaps to fill in and new material to be annotated; and what better "guide" to have than George Webb!

"Truth" [Kipling wrote in the closing lines of "A Matter of Fact" (*Many Inventions*, 1907)] "is a naked lady, and if by accident she is drawn up from the bottom of the sea, it behoves a gentleman either to give her a print petticoat or to turn his face to the wall and vow he did not see." The extract is indicative of Kipling's outlook. However, petticoats can be revealing and disclose as much as they hide; although they sometimes tend to deceive. Two articles on "Mary Postgate", (printed in this issue, pp. 33-47) demonstrate this very equivocal and delicate state of affairs. q.v. – Ed.

PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE SOCIETY

By SIR GEORGE ENGLE, PRESIDENT OF THE KIPLING SOCIETY

When, last year, our President, Dr Michael Brock decided that it was time for him to retire on the ground of *anno domini*, I was enormously honoured – and I must add greatly astonished – to be elected to succeed him. I then realised that, except for Michael himself, I had only a hazy and incomplete knowledge of the previous holders of the office of President. In the following notes I have tried to mention aspects of their careers likely to be of special interest to Members of the Society. Periods of office are shown in square brackets. My thanks to Michael Smith for his prompt and effective assistance.

1. MAJOR-GENERAL L.C. DUNSTERVILLE [1927-1946]

The Kipling Society was set up in 1927 after nearly a decade of effort on the part of our Founder J.H.C. ("Jack") Brooking, with the support from 1923 onwards of Kipling's friend and schoolfellow Lionel Dunsterville – the *Stalky of Stalky and Co.* – who, given that Kipling himself regarded the whole enterprise with "gloomy distaste", was the natural choice for its first President. He had had a distinguished army career, having served in the China Expeditionary Force after the Boxer Rising of 1900, commanded the famous 20th Punjab Infantry regiment in India (where he was known affectionately as "Blobbs"), and towards the end of the Great War was the commander of the so-called "Hush Hush Push" aimed at limiting the spread of Bolshevism in the Middle East in the wake of the Russian Revolution. After leaving the army he was the author of five books, among them *Stalky's Reminiscences* (1925) and *Stalky Settles Down* (1932). On his death at the age of eighty, after 19 years as President, the Secretary wrote of him: "From first to last the General's relations with our Society have been perfect and unbroken".

2. FIELD MARSHALL VISCOUNT WAVELL [1946-1950]

Archibald Wavell joined the Society as a life Member on its foundation in 1927. In 1946, when he accepted our invitation to become our President, he was serving as Viceroy of India. His record in the Second World War as Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East is too well known to need rehearsing here; but it is worth recalling his once famous telegram. On his victory over the Italians in Egypt, the Society had sent him a telegram: "Kipling Society sends congratulations on Tabaqui's discomfiture" – Tabaqui being of course the jackal in *The Jungle Book*, and Mussolini being often referred to as Hitler's jackal. Wavell replied: "Many thanks. Hope *Shere Khan's* [sc.Hitler's] skin will soon be on Council Rock". He was a great lover of poetry and in 1944 published his personal anthology under the title *Other Men's*

Flowers, consisting largely of poems which he could at one time or another repeat entire or in great part from memory.

3. LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR FREDERICK BROWNING [1950-1961]

Another soldier, he succeeded Lord Wavell as President in 1950, remaining in office for 11 years. He was the wartime leader of Britain's airborne forces, and was married to Daphne du Maurier, the novelist. He was known in the army as "Boy" Browning because of his youthful appearance and unflinching enthusiasm. In 1948 he was appointed Comptroller of Princess Elizabeth's household, and later became an equerry to the Queen and Prince Philip. He was also in his day a noted all-round athlete, winning the English high hurdles three times between 1924 and 1926 and competing as a member of the English bobsleigh crew at the Winter Olympics.

4. R.E. ("REG") HARBORD [1961-1973]

Another Founder Member who, after serving for 12 years as President, retired in 1973 on losing his sight. His obituary in the Journal says of him: "For those of us who knew, loved and worked with him over the years, some of the sparkle will have left our Society for ever. There was no job he wouldn't take on, from errand-boy to President, and he was the first man to justify his appointment to our highest post entirely through services to the cause." For Kipling lovers, the major work of his life was the creation of *The Readers' Guide to Kipling's Works*, privately published by the Society by instalments between 1955 and 1972 in eight stout volumes averaging over 500 pages each. Reg was one of a team of more than a dozen editors of this major work of reference, and he spent several thousand pounds of his own money on its creation and distribution.

5. LORD COBHAM [1973-1977]

Charles Lytton, 10th Viscount Cobham and 7th Lord Lytton, was not only President of the MCC but also Governor-General of New Zealand. In the Second World War he commanded the 5th Marine Regiment, which provided guns and gunners for the defence of merchant ships. He later became Lord Steward to the Queen's Household, and was created a Knight of the Garter. On his death Charles Carrington wrote of him: "We of the Kipling Society will not forget his kindness, his easy manner, his sensitivity to language and literature, and his unerring memory for English Poetry".

6. JAMES CAMERON [1977-1980]

He was a well-known journalist and TV producer, with a long and close identification with India, having witnessed the transfer of power in 1947 and, as he said of himself, "sustained the association ever since, to the point of clinching it with marriage". He travelled the world for

more than 30 years as a foreign correspondent, working for *Picture Post* in its heyday and later for the *News Chronicle*. He wrote at least eight books, and had what his obituary in the *Guardian* called "a unique combination of moral seriousness, humour and literary talent". Sadly, ill health prevented him from taking an active part in the Society's activities and eventually in 1980 obliged him to resign. He died in 1985 aged 73.

7. SIR ANGUS WILSON (1981-1988)

He was a many-sided and substantial literary figure who, said the *Guardian*, would be remembered for "the capacious yet acute observation of his novels and his ability to lay bare the English psyche during a time of complex transition involving everything from loss of empire to the extension of higher education, the development of new towns and the collapse of sexual taboos". He was the author of three major critical studies – of Zola (1952), Dickens (1970) and Kipling (1977). He was also Professor of English Literature at the University of East Anglia, Chairman of the National Book League, President of the Royal Society of Literature, and President of the John Cowper Powys Society as well as of ours. Lovers of Kipling are indebted to him for his book *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling* (1977), a deeply personal consideration of the whole of Kipling's output which C.P. Snow considered to be "a masterwork". His last years were clouded by illness; worsening health obliging him to give up the post of President in 1988, three years before his death.

8. DR MICHAEL BROCK (1988-2001)

Michael Brock, now a sprightly 82, is happily still among us. He is one of the most distinguished Oxford figures of his generation, and was Warden of Nuffield College from 1978 to 1988. A detailed and glowing account of his remarkable academic career, by the Editor of this Journal, appeared in the September 2001 issue – illustrated for good measure with a drawing of him by Elizabeth Frink. I will not repeat what Sharad Keskar there said of him, except to mention that he gave the Stephen Graham lecture to the Royal Society of literature on Kipling's political ideas (published in the March 1988 issue of the *Kipling Journal*), and that when he addressed our Society at its Annual Luncheon in 1987, he urged us not to be put off by Kipling's comparatively short-lived political ideas, but to turn our recognition and appreciation more firmly towards his literary achievements. I would like to put on record his extreme kindness and courtesy to myself from the very first time I attended a meeting of the Society.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KIPLING

A Memoir of Allahabad and Lahore in the Fifties

By JOHN SPENCER

[John Spencer read English at Oxford University, taught in a university in Sweden, and then studied postgraduate Linguistics at Edinburgh. After his three years in India and Pakistan he moved to a post at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria before joining the staff of Leeds University, where he was Director of the Institute of Modern English Language Studies. From there he went to the Chair of English at Hong Kong University, later becoming the Professor of English and Linguistics at the University of Bayreuth in Germany. After he retired he was given an Honorary Professorship by Warwick University. Among his publications are *Language in Africa* (1963), *Linguistics and Style* (1964) and *The English Language in West Africa* (1973), as well as numerous articles, reviews and poems. He and his wife live in the North Cotswolds. – Ed.]

In 1956 I was invited by the British Council to spend two years in India, helping to set up the first English Language Institute for the Indian Government. This was to be in Allahabad. My wife and I travelled out in the traditional style: liner to Bombay, Frontier Mail to Delhi. There we stayed for a couple of weeks with an old friend who was the BBC representative. I had no inkling then that we were bound for Kipling's second city. My childhood reading had included none of his work, apart from *The Jungle Book*. No master at school had encouraged us to read Kipling. And the English literature which I studied for a degree at my ancient university did not include any texts beyond 1830. Even if the syllabus had then included English literature up to 1930, I doubt whether Kipling would have figured on the reading list. So it was in India itself, perhaps appropriately, that Kipling belatedly moved into my consciousness.

Our friends took us to Old Delhi to meet the writer Nirad Chaudhuri, whose book *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* had appeared some years previously. More to the point, he had recently written an article in *Encounter*, which I had read, and in it he had expressed his admiration for Kipling's remarkable knowledge and understanding of India. I had noted at the time that he was probably the first Indian critic to write approvingly of Kipling, since I had always assumed that Kipling's imperialism would be unattractive to Indians; as indeed it was, for Chaudhuri's generally positive attitude to the British record in India did not find many supporters among his contemporaries.

He said I ought to read Kipling, especially now I was in India and about to live in what he told me was, after Lahore, the second city in which Kipling had worked as a young journalist. I should start, he said,

with *Kim*. I followed his advice as soon as I could get hold of a copy, which as a matter of fact was not easy. However, I was soon directed to a secondhand bookshop in Allahabad, run by two Bengali brothers in the front room of an old bungalow. There I found shelves of English books, bought, I assumed, from departing British families a few years previously. Among them were some slightly worn red volumes from the early editions of Kipling, and with them I started my collection of his works. I know which I bought there, and not in London bookshops, because they still smell slightly of monsoon damp.

So I began to read my way into Kipling's India, three generations back from the India I was experiencing day by day. As instructed, I started with *Kim*, sitting on the verandah of our half-bungalow in the Civil Lines, admiring Kipling's narrative skill and his brilliance in creating character and atmosphere; thinking too of the Grand Trunk Road, almost a character in itself, down which I had driven from Delhi not many weeks before. Not far away from where I sat, as a local journalist friend one day showed me, stood a single-storey building in which there was a tablet on a wall identifying it as the former editorial offices of *The Pioneer*. Many years after we left Allahabad a plaque was unveiled commemorating Kipling's work there as a journalist. The unveiling ceremony was conducted, perhaps surprisingly, by Krishna Menon, never known as an apologist for British rule in India.

I was living and working in a modern independent India, helping, as I believed, in a modest way, to keep open what Jawarharlal Nehru [India's first Prime Minister] had spoken of as India's "window on the world", the English language. But so soon after Independence it was impossible not to try to picture that earlier India, from which the British had so recently departed. Of course, a few of them had not departed, but had remained to serve the new India. In Allahabad there were only two who had "stayed on": the Anglican Bishop and the Chief Justice, both of whom were very kind to us. But the India I was trying to imagine, from hints and echoes, from Kipling, from the anecdotes of our Indian friends, as well as from buildings and places, was the India that had even then almost disappeared into a distant past – or so it seemed.

However, I soon caught an early echo of Kipling on a visit I made to Lucknow, to La Martinière School, for a vacation meeting of secondary school teachers from all over Uttar Pradesh. The school was a great grey building standing, like a country house, in its own grounds. It had been built in the early nineteenth century by General La Martine, and had been used for over a century as a boarding school: the model, so I was told, for St Xavier's in Partibus, the school to which *Kim* was sent.

"A big school," Mahbub Ali explains, "for the sons of Sahibs and half-Sahibs".

Shortly afterwards I was invited to judge the poetry-speaking competition at the Allahabad Boys High School. I had expected to hear renderings of poems by Tagore, or perhaps by Sarojini Naidu, after whom the road in which we lived had been renamed; though everyone still called it Queen's Road. So I was astonished to discover, when the headmaster gave me copies of the three poems to be spoken by the competitors, that they all belonged to what one might call the poetic high noon of Empire. There was the Victorian elocutionist's favourite, Felicia Hemans's "Casabianca" ("The boy stood on the burning deck. . ."), Henry Newbolt's "Vitai Lampada" ("There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight. . ."), and Kipling's "If-". These must have been recited by generations of British public schoolboys who came out to rule India. But the poems were evidently also well-known to this schoolboy audience, for I watched many of them mouthing their favourite lines as they listened. And I had to ask myself: were not the moral and martial virtues taught by these poems still relevant in the new India? After all, the notion that poetry should teach virtue is very old in India, older even than the *Ramayana*.

Echoes of the past, partially made resonant by my desultory reading of Kipling's Indian tales, helped me to see Allahabad in a little more depth; not only as the home of the Nehrus, but also as part of an India once, not long before, ruled by the British. There were the Civil Lines where they had lived, rectilinear roads and avenues, many still named after long-gone Viceroys. These were lined by nineteenth century bungalows with broad verandahs all round, some of them now belonging to our Indian friends and their families. From them we soon learnt quite unselfconsciously to use those Hobson-Jobson words to be found scattered through Kipling: *chit*, *chuprassi*, *bhungi*, *tiffin*, *goonda*, *topee*, *dhobi*, *durzi*, and many more.

Across the city was a small colony of what Kipling called "the railway folk", a community he would no doubt have classed with those Mahbub Ali termed "half-Sahibs". Officially known, since early in the 20th century, as Anglo-Indians, their English pronunciation was regarded by the British as distinctive and referred to unkindly as *chee-chee*. I was able to study their phonetic behaviour with the assistance of two teachers from a convent school, and later embodied my findings in an article in a scholarly journal. On the other side of the Civil Lines was the derelict cantonment, a part of the city even then still known in the vernacular as *lalkurtiganj* (redcoat district), where the likes of Ortheris, Learoyd and Mulvaney would once have been quartered. And from the hill-station of Mussoorie, where the new Institute held a

summer course, I saw for the first time the eternal snows distant in the moonlight, as the Lama and Kim saw them on their final journey into the Hills.

After two years, and leave in England, I was offered a year in Lahore, on a Ford Foundation fellowship at the University of the Punjab. The thought of a further period in the sub-continent was attractive. We had enjoyed our time in India very much, and Pakistan would be interesting; a contrast perhaps, or possibly not so very different a mere eleven years after Independence – or Partition, as we discovered it was referred to in Pakistan. Then there was the prospect of living in Kipling's first city, where, as he wrote in *Something of Myself*, "my English years fell away, nor ever, I think, came back in full strength".

So we made almost the same journey as before, by Lloyd Triestino from Genoa. On the way we heard that General Ayub Khan had seized power in Pakistan, and we disembarked in Karachi to find martial law in force, though it did not seem to affect us or the Pakistani friends we soon made in Lahore. They were as welcoming as one could wish, yet Lahore was not like the India we had recently left. The Hindus and Sikhs, who had contributed to making it such a vibrant community before Partition, were of course no longer there. Lahore was now a Muslim city. Friends told us regretfully that more and more of the women were going back into purdah, and that the mullahs were gaining power. We found that even liberal, free-thinking Pakistanis needed to be seen to observe Ramadan.

I suppose we missed the multicultural cosmopolitanism of the India we had come to know, though that was not, of course, the typical India of the vast majority of its people. Our closest friends in Allahabad had been a High Court lawyer and his family; he was a Hindu, his wife a Muslim, and they sent their daughters to a boarding school in the Hills run by Irish nuns. The lawyer's brother-in-law was a Communist: before the war he had gained a doctorate from the London School of Economics, and during it had been imprisoned with Nehru and others in the Quit India campaign. There were plenty of free-thinking liberals in Pakistan, but we gained a feeling from them that their new nation's future might not be as democratic as they had hoped. And so it has turned out.

There were more English people in Lahore than in Allahabad, as well as some Americans. It was, after all, a seat of regional government. Twice I visited the Lahore Club with an English member. Very few people used it, and no Pakistanis had joined, so I was told. It was the Club that Kipling wrote of, and which he frequented, where in the hot weather season men's tempers could flare, where a man might drop in the first stage of cholera on his way to fetch a newspaper from the table,

and where Kipling listened to the talk and gossip of army men and civilians, some of which he turned into his Indian tales. I recall it only as vast, cavernous and largely deserted, with lofty ceilings and a sparsely stocked bar; for Pakistan was 'dry', and I had to obtain a special ration book, available only to foreigners, before I could buy a bottle of whisky.

I soon located Kim's gun, Zam-Zammah, precisely where it had stood in Kipling's time. We visited Anarkali and the bazaars – which Kipling would have called "the native city". In the Mall were the offices of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, still at that time being published. It had a very small circulation by then, and ceased to appear a few years after we left. But I wrote a few book reviews for it, and so can claim to have written for one of Kipling's papers. We went for a picnic in the Shalimar Gardens; and we watched boys on horseback tent-pegging at Aitchison College – formerly Princes College, to which the rajahs, nawabs and khans sent their sons in the days of the British. I also made a point of visiting the Fort, featured in a number of the Indian stories, where Kipling "got to meet the soldiery".

So the year in Lahore was fascinating in its own distinctive way, and my memories of it remain intense. The time we spent in the two countries has left me with a deep interest in the sub-continent, to which I have paid several visits since. We have friends there who still visit us in England, sometimes now with their children and grandchildren. I have also kept my interest in Kipling, who I find a puzzling figure in some ways; yet in spite of his prejudices and his confident imperialism, which after all belonged to a very different age, he remains a brilliant story-teller and a poet with a very wide range. And he certainly knew his India, as Nirad Chaudhuri asserted all those years ago.

Perhaps I may add a postscript. Ten years or so after I left Lahore I had occasion to test Nirad Chaudhuri's assertion. Teaching in Leeds University's English Department, I was supervising a postgraduate student from India. She was a young lecturer from Calcutta University, and having completed her first-year MA work – for we still had a two-year MA by dissertation in those days – she was looking for a research topic. I asked her whether she had ever read any Kipling. Certainly not. So I suggested that she might have a look at *Kim* and some of the stories which contained Indian characters. Compare them, I said, with E M Forster's *A Passage to India*; and perhaps she might look especially at the way Kipling presents the speech of his Indian characters.

In a month or so she returned to tell me how impressed she was by Kipling's sense of India. He must, she felt, have had a familiarity with at least one Indian language – which indeed he had, as he tells us, from

childhood – since she could often detect, in the dialogue of characters supposedly speaking to one another in an Indian language, a reflection of vernacular styles of utterance. So she started work on Kipling there and then, and in due course completed a thesis comparing aspects of Kipling's presentation of India with that of Forster. Her external examiner, Professor Bonamy Dobrée*, in retirement in Blackheath, asked if we could hold the viva voce examination there. She and I duly travelled to Blackheath, where the viva was conducted in his drawing room. Afterwards, having sent the candidate out to look at his garden, he told me he considered the thesis worthy of a Distinction. I readily agreed. She was, I like to think, one of the first Indians to conduct research on Kipling at a British university. And I am glad she gained a well-deserved Distinction for it.

*see his *Rudyard Kipling: Realist and Fabulist* (Oxford University Press, 1967)

NEW MEMBERS:

Mrs G. Ajmone Marsan, (London, SW1)
 Mr H. D. Balls, (Southwold, Suffolk)
 Mrs S. Baslow, (London, SW8)
 Mrs M. Berry, (Kimberley, South Africa)
 Prof. E. Bindseil, (Hillerod, Denmark)
 Miss L. Casaletto, (Potenza, Italy)
 Mr M. J. Eldred, (Blackpool, Lancashire)
 A. Joy Ferguson, (Coronado, CA, USA)
 Mrs C. Leslie, (Stockbridge, Hampshire)
 Mrs M. E. McCarthy, (West Mailing, Kent)
 Mr R. Raymond, (Olympia, WA, USA)
 Mr K. K. Shortsleeve, (Gainesville, FL, USA)
 The Revd J. D. M. Stuart, (Delhi, India)
 Mr K. Wharton, (Waterlooville, Hampshire)
 Mr E. B. Whitaker, (Cambridge, MA, USA)
 Mr P. Winterble, (New York, NY, USA)

SUBSCRIPTIONS – ROUTINE REMINDERS

For those individual members who pay annually by cheque or cash, the *Kipling Journal* address labels carry a routine reminder of the month in which their subscription falls due. In order to keep costs to a minimum it would be appreciated if such members would check their address labels and send their subscriptions in that month, obviating the need for further reminders. The subscriptions – still £22 (plus £7 for airmail) or \$35US (plus \$10 airmail) – should be sent to:

The Membership Secretary, 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, SP1 3SB, England.

UK members can remove the need for reminders and checking by paying by Bank Standing Order, a form for which is available from the Membership Secretary.

GEORGE CHARLES BERESFORD & GEORGE ARTHUR WILSON

By NICK WILSON

My paternal grandfather, George Wilson, died seven years before I was born. Throughout my childhood, any discussion about him was frowned upon. My attempts to draw my father out on his father's life were met with a swift change of subject or a stony silence. My mother was a little more forthcoming but it was obvious that she knew very little about him. All I managed to discover was that he and my grandmother, Jessica, had lived in Brighton and that he had been a photographer.

When I was ten years old, I found a large black trunk in the attic of my parents' house. It was unlocked and, on lifting the lid, I found it full of papers, sketches and photographs. My attention was drawn to bundles of letters, still in their envelopes, addressed to G C Beresford. My father discovered my investigations and was furious. He made me promise never to open the trunk again. The next time I looked in the trunk was over forty years later in 1996, when I inherited it from my mother.

On opening the black trunk for the second time in my life, I hoped that I was finally going to solve the mystery of the grandfather that no one talked about. I was not disappointed. As the trunk began to yield its secrets, I discovered that my grandfather was a Beresford, christened George Charles, and had been to school at The United Services College (USC) at Westward Ho! There were bundles of letters from Kipling and Dunsterville. There were letters from Croft, Cornell Price and other masters at the College. There were plans of the College and photographs of the College marked up with arrows pointing to where Grandfather had shared a room with Kipling. I had read *Stalky & Co* when I was at school and seen it some years later on television but I had no idea that the character M'Turk was based on my grandfather.

The black trunk took me on journey through my grandfather's life. It took me through his schooldays with Kipling at USC and his early career as an engineer in India. As his artistic side prevailed and he studied at The Slade School of Fine Art, it introduced me to his friends William Orpen and Augustus John and to Virginia Woolf, George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats and many other artistic and literary contemporaries. Throughout, it told of his relationship with Kipling, at times close, at other times distant, as grandfather sought to debunk the



GEORGE CHARLES BERESFORD
M'Turk of *Stalky & Co*

concept that *Stalky & Co* was a journal of Kipling's schooldays at USC. This was reflected in a number of articles he wrote on the subject and culminated in the publication of *Schooldays* with Kipling, written earlier, but published after Kipling's death in 1936. Whether the delay in publication was out of respect for his old friend or out of fear of his wrath is unclear. I would prefer to think it was the former.

It was a fascinating journey – fascinating and intriguing – for it told the story of two men, George Wilson, a family man living in Brighton with his wife and two sons, and George Charles Beresford, an unattached successful photographer and art dealer with a studio and gallery in Knightsbridge. At first, I assumed the name 'Wilson' had come from my grandmother but I subsequently discovered that grandfather had been inspired to adopt the name as he drove along Wilson Avenue in Brighton on his way to register the birth of my father.

Grandfather's dual existence persisted until shortly before his death in 1938. In 1936, he appeared on my grandmother's death certificate as George Wilson. Two years later, he was buried in Brighton as George Charles Beresford and – no – they were not married, which was why my father would never talk about him.



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Editor would like to especially thank Nick Wilson for his article and particularly for the many photographs he sent with it. Four of these have been used above a simple and straight-forward caption. Two illustrations of sketches by Beresford will appear in a future issue of the Journal, along with another (new) and very suave photograph of the artist himself.

In a covering letter to me, Nick Wilson said that he was happy for me to publish his article, and added: "It was a story I have been meaning to tell for a while. The timing now seems appropriate. Given the change in social attitudes today, I don't think that GCB would mind."

KIPLING'S BURMA

A Literary and Historical Review [Part I]

By GEORGE WEBB

[George Webb, C.M.G., O.B.E., was Editor of the *Kipling Journal* from March 1980 to December 2000. He is responsible for giving the Journal a face-lift; and a design which (as I cannot imagine any prudent Editor would want to change it) promises to be its permanent feature. The *Journal* is a quarterly publication of the Kipling Society, and it was he who introduced the colour coding of the covers to identify the quarters: yellow, blue, orange, and grey, for March, June, September, and December respectively.

This is Part I of the text of an address delivered to the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, in London on 16 June 1983. Part II will be in the next issue of the *Journal*. – Ed.]

*It was a wearied journalist — he left his little bed,
And faced the Burma telegrams, all waiting to be read;
But ere he took his map-book up, he prayed a little prayer:-
"Oh stop them fighting Lord knows who, in jungles deuce knows
where!"¹*

These lines, from a piece of nonsense-verse in an Indian newspaper in December 1886, provide our equivocal first glimpse of Kipling's Burma. Not that its readers knew that. They could not tell that more enduring work would flow from that pen, especially as the verses were unsigned. But those same readers, without our disadvantage of hindsight, with the distortion and disillusion that come with it, saw their world of 1886 with a clarity denied to us, and read the news from Burma that December with an immediacy far beyond our recall. Presumably it was also read by ex-King Theebaw, settling into sulky exile near Bombay: but current affairs had never been *his forte*.

1886 – the year of *King Solomon's Mines* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Tennyson and Browning were the grand old men of poetry, and Sickert and Sargent the coming young men of art. In that year the Statue of Liberty was completed. So was the Canadian Pacific Railway. In British politics, Irish Home Rule was an inflammatory prospect: Gladstone and Salisbury changed place in office three times.

In far Peking, an obscure Anglo-Chinese Convention was signed in July. Britain acknowledged Chinese interests in Tibet. China withdrew all claims to the still partly unmapped and unexplored country which the Viceroy of India, Lord Dufferin, had annexed in January as Upper Burma. On its absorption, the Indian Empire had grown to about its maximum extent, but the victorious troops, after a swift formal conquest, now faced an unending prospect of irregular warfare and

police-work over difficult terrain, to suppress an epidemic of banditry. To keep a semblance of order since January had required an average strength of 14,000 troops. Now, in this December, they had to be reinforced.

In the same month, in Lahore, fifteen hundred miles from Mandalay, a very young man sat writing in the office of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, the leading newspaper of the Punjab. If he was chronically overworked, he was also precociously well-informed, and engrossed by the indescribable complexity of India. He was twenty. Into the four years that he had been Assistant Editor, with no home leave, he had crammed a remarkable range of experience and an alarming amount of writing, quite apart from the routine editorial labour of reducing to shape the incoherent work of others, under the unforgiving restraints of time and space. In old age he was to recall days filled with

eternal cuttings-down of unwieldy contributions . . . newspaper exchanges from Egypt to Hong-Kong to be skimmed; . . . the English papers on which we drew in time of need; local correspondence to vet for possible libels, 'spoofing'-letters from subalterns to be guarded against. . . always of course the filing of cables, and woe betide an error then!²

Distinct from this editorial work with inkpot and scissors, his original writing, audacious and beautifully composed, was by 1886 just beginning to be noticed locally. Since January his paper had published sixty items of his prose and verse, and although many of them were anonymous, and some of them are to this day uncollected, eighteen others had been reissued that June in *Departmental Ditties*, a bitter-sweet collection of accomplished verses that have never since dropped out of print. In the last four weeks he had produced for his paper six of the brilliant, mordant short stories later collected as *Plain Tales from the Hills*. But even as he sat writing "The Arrest of Lieutenant Golightly", worthier subalterns were in grimmer trouble away in Upper Burma, where the state of brigandage and rebellion had prompted a stiffening visit by Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, and the strengthening of the garrison that December to 25,000 men. There were to be 99 military outposts, and mobile columns patrolled every district. News of their operations kept flooding in by telegram. However, urgent telegrams were not delivered by hand to Kipling's offices: instead, as he later recalled,

I took them down from the telephone – a primitive and mysterious power whose native operator broke every word into monosyllables. . .³

Over such a medium even simple texts became garbled. If they contained obscure names, and were noted down by an Indian clerk, corruptions were almost unavoidable. With active service news this was unfortunate, and it constitutes the serious background to those nonsense-verses that December, entitled by Kipling "A Nightmare of Names":

It was a wearied journalist who sought his little bed,
 With twenty Burma telegrams all waiting to be read.
 Then the Nightmare and her nine-fold rose up his dreams to haunt,
 And from these Burma telegrams they wove this dismal chaunt:

"Bethink thee, man of ink and shears", so howled the fiendish crew,
 "That each dacoit has one long name, and every hamlet two.
 Moreover all our outposts bear peculiar names and strange:
 There are one hundred outposts, and, once every month, they change.

If Pongdougzoon or Pyalhatzee today contains the foe,
 Be sure they pass tomorrow to Gwebin or Shwaymyo.
 But Baung-maung-hman, remember, is a trusted Thoongye Woon,
 The deadly foe of Maung-dhang-hlat, Myoke of Moug-kze-hloon.

Poungthung and Waust-chung are not at present overthrown,
 For they are near the Poon beyond the Hlinedathalone;
 While Nannay-kone in Ningyan is near Mecacaushay,
 But Shway-zit-dan is on the Ma, and quite the other way.

Here are some simple titles which 'twere best to get in writing,
 In view of further telegrams detailing further fighting:
 Malé, Myola, Toungbyoung, Talakso, Yebouk, Myo,
 Nattik, Hpan-loot-kin, Madeah, Padang, Narogan, Mo. . ."

After several more such lines he concluded:-

"Oh stop them fighting Lord knows who, in jungles deuce knows
 where!"

Where indeed were those jungles? And whom were they fighting? And why? Can we now conjure back a state of world affairs, a cast of mind, when Englishmen of no ignoble vision saw Burma's conquest by British India as a benefit conferred on a distracted land? When Indians of liberal persuasion questioned the step mainly on grounds of cost to the Indian taxpayer? (Such was the view of the Indian National Congress at its historic first meeting, just after Theebaw's overthrow –

that Burma had better become a Crown Colony than a dependency of India.) As Maurice Collis later wrote:

What will our descendants think of us when they read that the British banished the King of Burma, annexed his country, and proceeded to govern it by officials of their own race? Historians will add that we saw no harm in this, though we always resisted such a fate to the death when it threatened our own land.⁴

The most convincing explanation is in G.E. Harvey's chapter on Burma in the *Cambridge History of the British Empire*:

The real reason for imposing direct administration was that it was the fashion of the age, and modern standards of efficiency were the only standards intelligible to the men who entered Upper Burma. Few of them spoke the language, and those who did, came with preconceptions gained in Lower Burma.⁵

These were the lofty preconceptions of Harvey's own service, the ICS; but no amount of dedicated administration, as described in some of Kipling's stories about India, could alter the disqualifying fact that in grafting Burma on to India they were doing something irreconcilably repugnant – to Burmese nationalism. The union was dissolved in 1937, but too late; yet all the way was paved with high intentions.

The incompatibility of India and the Burmese heartland had lacked a "Burma lobby" to explain it in Britain. Another historian of Burma, Professor Tinker, compared this lacuna with the relative awareness in Britain regarding the affairs of India proper:

The British community in Burma was so small and the period of British rule so brief that no comparable Burma connection ever developed. To the average Englishman Burma conjured up one poem and perhaps a short story by Kipling – Kipling, who spent three days in Burma.⁶

Constitutionally, of course, Burma formed a part of Kipling's India, the subcontinent of which he drew so clear a picture. But he was employed first in Lahore, later in Allahabad, and though he travelled widely from those places, his India was essentially the north-west and north-centre. His writing touched on his birthplace, Bombay, and on the seat of Government, Calcutta; but just as the south was unknown territory, so was Burma, an exotic eastern extension to which his employers never sent him.

India's Burmese dependencies suffered from more than mere

distance from the centre. (They were closer to Calcutta than western India was.) Their remoteness lay not in mileage but in mountains, jungles, rivers and the sea. Communications in Burma always ran not towards India but north-south. In cultural as in physical terms the land is intrinsically part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula of south-east Asia.

Burma's *apartness* from India was paradoxically among the complex causes of the Third Burmese War. Certainly external strategic considerations, prompted by French expansionism in the region, played a part. This was illustrated by a *Punch* cartoon published on 31 October 1885 while Dufferin's ultimatum to Theebaw was still on its way up-river by steamer to Mandalay. The Viceroy is portrayed, a little prematurely, vigorously kicking out a repulsive toad which represents the king. In the background a similar reptile, labelled "France" and significantly armed with sword and rifle, draws no doubt salutary conclusions.

Certainly also there was a persistent commercial illusion of a practical trade route along which British goods might flow through Upper Burma to the imagined markets of Chinese Yunnan. This excited the Chambers of Commerce and influenced the annexation. It was a myth, resembling the *monomanie du Mékong* from which the French suffered. It was also reflected in *Punch*, where in January 1886 the Viceroy, shown as a soldier in Field Service Marching Order, is putting up his trading sign, "Burmese Warehouse Co., late Theebaw", to the patent delight of his new neighbour, "John Chinaman".

Such wider motives of strategy or commerce apart, Theebaw's cruelties and follies were enough to make Burma an intolerable adjacent state for an outward looking Indian Empire rising to the zenith of its power and self-respect. Here was one of the casualties of the nineteenth Century, knocked over by a momentum beyond its understanding. By processes familiar to Imperial historians, static Burma and dynamic British India had become provocatively incompatible. When the irresistible force was applied, the object in its path was too fragile to survive.

Burma's tragedy, through every stage of British penetration from 1826 to 1948, was on the one hand to be self-centred, traditionalist, conservative, desiring only to be left alone; and on the other hand to be so situated as to be exposed to external pressures which she was powerless to repulse. This dilemma has contributed to a national frame of mind well known today for its determined preference for non-involvement and a "Burmese Way" in politics.

It was not always so. In the eighteenth century it was not Burma's isolationism but her almost manic imperialism, ruthlessly asserted against her neighbours and in the end suicidally over-extended, that brought her up against the East India Company. The three wars that

ensued led by stages to the ultimate surrender in 1885 at Mandalay. Kipling's view of Burma was acquired in the aftermath of that surrender, and must be understood in the light of preceding historical events, today largely forgotten.

Theebaw, deposed in 1885, was the last of the Konbaungset dynasty of the Kingdom of Inwa, or Ava. The founder of the line, Alaungpaya, emerged in 1752 as a national resistance leader against the Mons to the south. Within fifty years he and his successors had defeated and in many cases subjugated most of the adjacent peoples, creating in the process an expanded nation-state with frontiers resembling those of modern Burma but in the north-west more extensive. It was an extraordinary explosion of military effort, though it exhausted the country. The Mons first, who in 1752 had occupied Ava itself, were expelled and smashed. Next to be defeated were the Shans in the east. In the south-east the Siamese were repeatedly invaded: Ayudhaya, their capital, was destroyed. In the north-west Assam, in the west Manipur, in the southwest Arakan, were devastated and annexed. Even China, in diplomatic theory suzerain of Burma, suffered some ignominious defeats and sued for terms. The Treaty of Kaungton in 1770, in Professor Hall's words, marked for the Burmese

the most glorious moment in their history. . .the exploits of Alaungpaya had given the Burmese an entirely new estimation of themselves. They had become a conquering race and feared no one on earth. . . ?

These triumphs however had a darker side. The empire won by ruthless violence could only be held down by oppression, enslavement, genocide. Endless rebellions shook it; massive deportations impoverished it; down in the Delta the fertile rice land of the Mons lay depopulated. Up in Ava, the world's centre, amid the splendours of an introverted court, attitudes of blinkered arrogance characterised the rulers. Given the divine right of kings in south-east Asia, this was not surprising: wholesale cruelty too was a recognised instrument of policy. But it was an unpropitious basis on which to guide their medieval kingdom into safe relations with the emerging Europe-dominated world of the nineteenth century, that inexorable new dynamic of which the kings of Ava were pitifully ignorant.

On the British side, there was at first no wish to tackle Burma, a profoundly mysterious country, alleged to have a huge population, certainly able to raise great armies. For generations, British merchants, like their military and commercial rivals the French, had dealt with the Burmese; but this was peripheral trafficking by outsiders, only tolerated for their wares. Not till 1784, when Ava annexed Arakan, was

a clash with adjacent Bengal possible; not till forty years later, when intermittent British attempts to establish a diplomatic relationship had foundered, did it take place – mainly owing to Arakanese refugees, who persistently raided Burmese Arakan from British Bengal. Ineffectual British handling of this nuisance, during years when the Calcutta government was heavily committed in urgent campaigns elsewhere, exasperated the Burmese and convinced them that in a showdown the British would prove no more formidable than any other neighbour had been.

In this mistaken spirit their general, Bandula, advanced into Bengal from Arakan in 1824. He planned to march on Calcutta, on England if need be. He took with him golden manacles with which to confine Lord Amherst, the Governor-General, and fetch him captive to Ava. But the invader had picked a bad moment for what we call the First Burmese War. The Company now had resources spare to mount a crushing response. The Burmese, with no concept of naval operations, could not anticipate a counter-plan which relegated Arakan to the strategic fringe and concentrated on a powerful invasion of Lower Burma from the Andamans by sea. Total surprise was thus achieved.

Rangoon fell without a blow. If only subsequent British handling of commissariat and transport had been other than disgracefully inefficient, the war could have been quickly ended, but it dragged on for two years, cost thirteen million pounds, and involved terrible losses from fever and dysentery. Of 40,000 British and Indian troops altogether sent in, 45% never came out. Of the deaths, 96% were not from battle but from disease.

After Bandula's death in action, the Burmese army's showing, at least against European troops, was only mediocre, though their musketry was accurate and their stockades were formidable. The British performance, handicapped by appalling logistic shortcomings, was yet enough to beat the enemy. The main advance to Ava was almost there when the king capitulated. Earlier, down at the coast, combined operations under the future novelist Captain Marryat were effective, though Marryat formed a high opinion of the Burmese – intelligent, brave, cheerful, the finest race in Asia. Incidentally, this remote naval theatre provided the scene for something new, an augury had men realised it. Among the ships involved was a small steamer, the *Diana*. 1824 was early for a practical display of the potential of steam in war at sea.

By the peace treaty of 1826, Ava agreed to pay an indemnity, abandoned claims to Assam and Manipur, and ceded Arakan and Tenasserim. The old aggressive Burma had been broken, never to recover. In Hall's words:

the course of Burmese history had now been radically altered. The British had gained possession of two large provinces. . .and must either ultimately relinquish them or go on till they occupied the whole country.⁸

British attitudes too were formed by the experience. For Calcutta and London, Burma was inaccessible, economically dubious, misgoverned by an anachronistic tyranny – a head-in-the-sand regime, recalcitrant in diplomacy, obsessive in applying humiliating protocol, hopelessly obstructive to trade. For the soldiers, Burma meant: dense forest, heavy rain, deadly disease, and a dangerous enemy who would torture and mutilate his prisoners.

Arakan and Tenasserim, though they could be seen as pre-emptive extensions towards our crucially-sited port of Singapore, were at first in economic terms worth little. Arakan would soon develop into a rice granary, but Tenasserim failed for some time even to meet the expense of its administration – a criterion of those days – and Moulmein was a village of fishing huts. In 1831 the restoration of Tenasserim to Ava was considered, but rejected since the local people would be exposed to calculated retribution, as had been terribly demonstrated in the Delta when we pulled out in 1826.

In the next twenty years the state of the monarchy in Ava was hardly reassuring. King Bagyidaw went melancholy-mad; Tharawaddy became a sadistic maniac who had to be restrained; Pagan indulged in a horrific bloodbath. It all underlined Burma's incongruousness as a mid-nineteenth century neighbour. The British Residency, established by treaty, could seldom curb the excesses of the regimes or even protect itself from repeated and calculated gestures of contempt, and it was eventually withdrawn. Only one incumbent, Fanny Burney's nephew Colonel Burney, had managed for a time to exert a useful influence.

To be continued

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "A Nightmare of Names!", *Civil & Military Gazette*, Lahore, 10 December 1886.
2. Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself*, Macmillan, London (1937), p.48.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Maurice Collis, *The Journey Outward*, 1952, cited in *Maurice Collis:Diaries, 1949-1969* (Heinemann, 1977).
5. *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol.V 1932; also ch.XXI,Vol.VI..
6. Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, O.U.P. 1937, ch.XII.
7. D.G.E. Hall, *Burma*, Hutchinson, 3rd Edition 1960.
8. *Ibid.*, ch. XII.

GRIEF, ANGER, AND IDENTITY: KIPLING'S "MARY POSTGATE"

by WILLIAM B. DILLINGHAM

[Professor Dillingham is the 'Charles Howard Candler Professor Emeritus' at the Department of English, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. He needs no further introduction, as by now his literary contributions are familiar to our readers. Bill Dillingham's commentaries on Kipling's works are uniquely intriguing, detailed, profound, and display a breadth of enviable knowledge upon his chosen topic. This article is no exception, and I leave it to readers to make their own discoveries without further assistance from me. Coincidentally, a second article on "Mary Postgate" follows this one, and, alongside each other, they widen the ambivalent insights into this very great short story. – *Ed.*]

Rudyard Kipling considered grief to be one of life's special agonies.¹ He realised, however, that its psychological twists and turns of the screw are highly individualised and, therefore, at times strange and unpredictable. That is, the course that bereavement follows depends a great deal on the psychology of the bereaved. The extraordinary effect that grief has on a peculiar and unusual mind is the subject of the complex and controversial "Mary Postgate" (1915), though this central concern has been largely ignored in criticism of the story.² The work is unusual, if not unique, among Kipling's studies in bereavement, because it ends in a moment of personal exhilaration for the grieving heroine – a sense of triumph that comes about not despite her grief but because of it. Her change does not suggest that bereavement is less horrible than Kipling describes it elsewhere, but it does illustrate his conviction, which he expressed with such forcefulness in his description of the Tower of Victory in Chitor, many years before, that a person can be made stronger by having experienced a living hell.

Mary Postgate, as Kipling portrays her, before her alteration, is a woman largely without any distinctive identity. She thus stands in stark contrast to the other major character of the story, Miss Fowler, whose role is chiefly that of character foil. Miss Fowler is colourful, impatient with details, eccentric, strong willed, highly opinionated, authoritative, decisive, and sometimes abrasive. In general she is very much her own woman in all that she says and does without regard to what other people may think. Mary is the opposite: colourless, meticulous with details, self-trained – to fit in and to prevent her mind from dwelling on controversial or unpleasant matters – docile, not opinionated, obedient, and pleasantly "ladylike". In general she is not her own woman but someone who keeps company with or fills in for another. She is essentially a substitute: a kind of surrogate wife to Miss Fowler (who

is somewhat mannish, or husbandly in her ways); a surrogate mother to Wynn, she fills in for Miss Fowler, who as his aunt should play that role but "who had no large sympathy with the young" (p. 491); a surrogate aunt "to very many small children of the village street" (p. 490); a last-minute replacement at the dinner tables of the Rector or Dr. Hennis; a substitute for Miss Fowler on the Village Nursing Committee; and Miss Fowler's representative at various events, such as funerals.

Whereas Kipling relates details about Miss Fowler's background, he leaves that of Mary essentially blank, a technique that further calls attention to her lack of identity. All that is revealed about her is that she was previously employed by Lady McCausland, who, in a letter of recommendation, describes her as "thoroughly conscientious, tidy, companionable, and ladylike" (p. 489), and that she has been frequently grief stricken because of a large number of deaths among her family members and friends. Miss Fowler likes to talk about her father and to recall past events. Mary just listens. When she does speak, she is apt merely to echo the words of someone else, especially those of Wynn. With obvious irritation, Miss Fowler complains that Mary does not seem to possess any individuality, does not appear to have any life of her own. After being acquainted with her for some eleven years, Miss Fowler says to her, "You've never told me anything that matters. Mary, aren't you anything except a companion? Would you ever have been anything except a companion?" After a pause Mary answers "No. . . I don't imagine I ever should" (p. 495). She has come to accept that she is only what others see her as – a "companion". She never tries to establish any other identity, never rebels against the confinement of her assigned role, never allows herself to indulge, in self-examination or questions, "for she prided herself on a trained mind, which 'did not dwell on these things' "(p. 490).

Since Mary resists any temptation to dwell on herself, to discover who she is at the core of her being, she comes across to others as admirably selfless. Everyone who knows her feels affection for her. There is nothing distinctive about her to dislike. In her letter of recommendation, Lady McCausland comments that " 'I am very sorry to part with her, and shall always be interested in her welfare.' " (p. 489). She has no enemies, provokes no jealousies, and children readily take to her. By and large, critical commentary on the story has ignored indications in the text that despite Wynn's disrespectful and bantering manner toward her, which is most often interpreted as cruelty, in his own fashion he loves her.³ He writes to her separately from Miss Fowler, and he alerts her, not his aunt, when he is to land his plane nearby. When he leaves home, he takes her photograph with him, and he saves in a packet all the letters that she has written to him over

the years. It is to Mary that he gives the identification chart of airplanes and to her that he explains all the details of his own plane and of air combat. He is a spoiled free soul who is as eccentric and as irreverent toward traditions and customs as is his aunt and more likely to camouflage his true feelings in protestations of impatience and pseudo-angry outcries of offensive name calling than to express them tenderly and directly. Mary senses his love for her and refuses to be insulted or alienated by his outrageous behaviour. Her love for him is as deep and far-reaching as that of any mother for her son.⁴ Hearing the sound of his plane's propellers at dawn, she stares at the brightening sky, catches a glimpse of his aircraft, and lifts her "lean arms toward it": a pose of adoration suggesting a worshipper at the break of day. She refuses, however, even in the privacy of her own mind, to assume the identity of mother. At Wynn's funeral, Mrs. Grant, who has lost her son in the war, expresses her sympathy and comments on the pain that only a bereaved mother can understand. Mary rejects the implied identification of herself with a mother and comments: "But both his parents are dead" (p. 498). Again, she thinks of herself as only a substitute parent while loving and grieving as a real one. Her head and her heart do not work together.

The contrast between Mary and Miss Fowler is most pronounced in their respective responses to Wynn's death. Their outward reactions are similar. They are calm, oddly without tears, and business-like in their taking care of arrangements. Kipling makes it clear, however, that Mary's grief, though restrained, runs deeper and causes more complex reactions. When news comes of Wynn's death, Miss Fowler is puzzled by her own disinclination to weep and is merely wearied by her grief. Mary, on the other hand, experiences an emotional earthquake in which the room whirls about her. John Bayley goes so far as to claim that she "has what amounts to a nervous breakdown, but being Mary. . . it takes a strange form."⁵ After Mary steadies herself and regains control, anger begins to well up within her. She is too angry to weep. Explaining to Miss Fowler why Wynn's death does not make her cry, she says: " 'It only makes me angry with the Germans.' " Not sharing or understanding Mary's quiet rage but believing that such intense anger is self-destructive, Miss Fowler replies: " 'That's a sheer waste of vitality. . . We must live till the war's finished.' " (p. 499). Anger does not destroy Mary, however, but vitalises her into an action, that for the first time, makes her feel she is something beside a "companion".

Grief therapists recognise that anger is often an important component of bereavement, but in "Mary Postgate" it is the central element.⁶ The aspect of anger that Kipling is most concerned with in the story is what modern psychologists of bereavement call 'scapegoating' – the dogged

determination to apply blame for the death of a loved one.⁷ Anger develops with such force in the bereaved, who feels victimised by loss, that striking back is not only appropriate but mandatory, and one thought comes to dominate all others – someone must pay. Justice must be done; things must be set right. Though the tendency toward 'scapegoating' may be present in any person in mourning, it is prevalent where the loss has been sudden and unexpected. It often results from "bereavement overload", that is, cases where the bereaved has had to face the death of several loved ones at once or has experienced grief repeatedly over a period of time.⁸ Accrued grief engenders resentment against such targets as death itself or God. Targets that cannot be assailed with any sense of satisfaction because they are abstractions. Therefore, the angry 'griever' finds it necessary to identify (or create) a specific, concrete enemy to blame and against whom, in some instances, to take action.

Mary's "bereavement overload" and the resentment it produces are evident in a passage late in the story, the one place where Kipling supplies information about her prior to the time that she joined Miss Fowler (other than that she worked for Lady McCausland). The details thus stand out starkly and invite careful scrutiny as essential to an understanding of her mind and actions. Waiting for the German airman to die, her thoughts turn to all the grief that she has had to endure in recent years:

Mary had seen death more than once. She came of a family that had a knack of dying under, as she told Miss Fowler, "most distressing circumstances." She would stay where she was till she was entirely satisfied that It was dead – dead as dear papa in the late 'eighties; aunt Mary in 'eighty-nine; mamma in 'ninety-one; cousin Dick in 'ninety-five; Lady McCausland's housemaid in 'ninety-nine; Lady McCausland's sister in nineteen hundred and one; Wynn buried five days ago; and Edna Gerritt still waiting for decent earth to hide her.⁹

The deaths of Wynn and Edna constitute the last straw. Accumulated grief now produces such anger that she can no longer hold it in. Exhibiting the psychological phenomenon of bereavement scapegoating, she comes to blame the Germans and then, specifically, the fatally injured airman, not only for the death of Wynn and little Edna Gerritt, but also for all the agony that she has suffered through all her bereavements.

In doing so, she is suffering from what psychologists call 'pathological grief', but she is not hopelessly insane, nor is she delusional in the sense of imagining events or hallucinating.¹⁰ Contrary

to much critical opinion, what Mary thinks she sees, she really sees. For example, Kipling supplies solid evidence to support her conviction that the child she sees lying dead was killed by a bomb rather than by the collapse of a rotted shed. That Mary did not merely imagine that she heard a plane overhead when she was going to the village is evident from Miss Fowler's remark to her "that a couple of aeroplanes had passed half an hour ago"(p.504). Mary is shrewd enough to realise that a falling shed, even with tiles, would not tear little Edna's body into "vividly coloured strips and strings"(p.510) but that a bomb would do just that. When she wisely proposes to Dr. Hennis that she refrain from telling Miss Fowler of Edna's death, the physician, who certainly does not consider her a "hysterical and crazed female", regards her "admiringly as he packed up his bag"(p.505).¹¹ He serves the village as a local constable as well as a physician and understandably wishes to prevent panic: "It is no good to stir up people," he tells her (p.506). For the time being, therefore, he wishes Edna's death to be thought of as an accident. As if to notify Mary of his intentions by "holding her with his eyes", Dr. Hennis indicates what he wishes to be made public, that the shed was rotten and collapsed on the child. Mary's response, "I saw it", (meaning Edna's body ripped by the shrapnel of a bomb), suggests that she rejects the doctor's accident explanation. She has seen what she has seen. At that, the doctor "changed his tone completely." He tells her fairly directly to keep her mouth shut, which, with her usual docility, she agrees to do.

Kipling thus makes Mary's anger toward the Germans justified by actual events, but he goes on to suggest that her outrage is really accumulative and is against more than just Germans. That is, all her rebellion and resentment against death come to be directed against the particular German in the garden, but he is for her an "It" rather than an individual human being, a kind of symbol for all Germans (whom she has heard widely and popularly condemned in news reports, in conversations, in rumours, and in British war propaganda), who in turn represent for her whatever it is that has taken from her all those she has loved over a period of years.¹² The dying German is both a real wartime enemy, whom she understandably and perhaps even justifiably despises, and a scapegoat, like the great white whale on whom Captain Ahab piles all the evil that has beset him in life and that has left him maimed. Mary's German is as real as Ahab's white whale. She does not conjure up an object of hatred; it is an objective reality. What is subjective is the meaning that she applies to it. She takes pleasure (a "secret thrill") in the death throes of the German airman because it is right that "It" should suffer and die, for this "It" that has caused such pain. In fact, when he expires, she uses the word *right*. "That's all

right", she says upon his death (p.513). She has not killed him; she probably could not have saved him.¹³ The point is, she has made sure that he dies and she feels a sense of wholeness and purpose, a new emotion for her. Right has triumphed, and she has had a part in that victory. Little wonder that she shivers "from head to foot". For once she feels like somebody, not just a "companion", because she has secretly and entirely on her own struck back. In her own mind, she has become the agent of retributive justice.

Admittedly, Kipling invited ambiguity if not confusion by creating a situation in which no one else sees the fatally injured German airman and then by keeping Mary silent about the incident when she returns to Miss Fowler, leaving the body in the garden as the story ends.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Kipling's descriptions of the flyer, and especially of the scene around him, so rich in specifics, so detailed, seem out of keeping with an intention to make all this Mary's hallucination. Specificity seems an odd bedfellow with hallucination. For example, "a broken branch lay across his [the German's] lap – one booted leg protruding from beneath it." His "hands picked at the dead wet leaves" as he tries to speak to Mary. Detail is piled on detail: "She looked up at the oak behind the man; several of the light upper and two or three rotten lower branches had broken and scattered their rubbish on the shrubbery path. On the lowest fork a helmet with dependent string, showed like a bird's-nest. . ." (pp. 508-509). Kipling knew a good deal about hallucinations – he was prone to experience them himself – and he described them in several of his writings, but they are considerably less detailed than his description of what Mary sees. In addition, if Kipling meant the airman to be merely imaginary, it seems odd that the "hallucination" is still there after Mary leaves, goes to the house for a pistol, and comes back. Kipling arranges it so that no one else in the story sees the dying airman not because the German is Mary's hallucination but because he wants to depict her as going through this experience alone, carrying out no one else's instructions, influenced by no one, substituting for no one, being no one's companion, acting for once only on what she feels in her deepest heart rather than on what her "trained mind", which "did not dwell on these things", tells her.

The story builds relentlessly to a powerful conclusion, the death of the German and the emergence of what is in a sense a new Mary. The movement begins slowly and then as it steadily gains momentum, it draws in the major artistic ingredients of the work – plot, characterisation, theme, and imagery, all working together to create a truly spectacular climax. The narrative becomes increasingly infused with a sense of urgency. The day is coming rapidly to a close; darkness is approaching. Will Mary have enough daylight to accomplish her

task, or will the night overtake her? The rain has begun and is getting heavier. The fire must be started right away and Wynn's things burned. Will the rain stifle the blaze? Tea will be ready soon. Will Mary finish her task in time to join Miss Fowler as usual? The German airman must die before Mary has to return to the house. Will he linger on beyond that time? A tension develops between certain patterns of atmospheric imagery light and darkness, fire and water – and these opposing images become projections of Mary's conflicting emotions. Externality becomes a manifestation of internality.

Anger (fire) and sorrow (rain) struggle for dominance within her. Her sorrow threatens to overcome all else, to put out the fire of her anger, but her outrage grows steadily as she realises that the man before her is a German: "It made her so angry that she strode back to the destructor," (p.508). Gradually, as the fire of anger blazes within her, Kipling links her with the incinerator, the "destructor". In a sense, they become one. Stoking the fire, she herself develops what Kipling describes as a "glow", the same word he uses for the destructor: "There was a dull red glow at the bottom of the destmctor,"(p.512). Apocalyptic terms in this brilliantly executed climactic scene suggest its cataclysmic importance to Mary. She is obviously undergoing a psychological crisis of the first order in which anger (fire) is the essential element. The reason for her "rapture", a term Kipling uses that carries apocalyptic religious meanings, is not sadistic sexual pleasure as is sometimes argued but her sudden awareness that she has found "*her work*"(p.512), which is to say, a sense of who she is.¹⁵ Before this event, she "never had a voice – to herself, but now she hums like the fire in the destructor. Kipling identifies Mary with the destructor because while the fire in the incinerator is destroying Wynn's belongings – representative of a precious part of Mary's past – the fire within her, her anger is burning the tight bonds of her repression that have made her a colourless nonentity. What she is undergoing is best described as a catharsis (in the sense psychologists use the term). The often crippling psychological phenomena of bereavement overload and scapegoating, are ironically the means through which Mary is purged of the repressions that have smothered her identity by forcing her to commit an act in stark violation of and entirely uncharacteristic of the old Mary. The purifying effect of her catharsis is symbolised by her "luxurious hot bath before tea" (p.513). As Kipling wrote in one of his *Letters of Marque*: "To attain power. . . it is necessary to pass through all sorts of close-packed horrors."¹⁶ The Mary Postgate who emerges at the end has not rid herself of the close-packed horrors of life, its various hells, but she is better prepared to confront them. Her release from what has been a thoroughly repressed emotional life is suggested by her appearing in the

end "all relaxed on the other sofa" and, "as Miss Fowler remarks with both surprise and admiration, 'quite handsome!' " (p.513).¹⁷

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. To his friend H. Rider Haggard, he mentioned bereavement in a short list of tortures that make life a "Hell". Morton Cohen, ed., *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard: The Record of a Friendship* (Hutchinson, London 1965), p. 99.
2. The basic positions of the controversy are suggested by Kipling's comments on how Mary Postgate herself responds to stories she hears: "She listened unflinchingly to every one [and] said at the end, 'How interesting!' or 'How shocking!' " (p. 490). [Page references to "Mary Postgate" are to *A Diversity of Creatures*, in vol. 26, *Writings in Prose and Verse of Rudyard Kipling*, Scribner's New York 1918.] The reasons some readers are shocked by "Mary Postgate" primarily stem from a perception that the story is mean spirited (revealing the author's hatred for Germans and for women in general) if not sick (embodying a love of revenge, a cherishing of brutality, a proclivity toward sadism). For J. M. S. Tompkins (*The Art of Rudyard Kipling*, Methuen, London 1959), "Mary Postgate" and "Swept and Garnished," are "two dreadful tales" which "assault the mind" (p. 134). "Mary Postgate" left Angus Wilson dogmatically disgusted: "It is deeply shocking, and I reject all suggestions that its brutality can be explained away." *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Works* (Viking, New York 1977), p.309. Often quoted in connection with "Mary Postgate" is the epithet of shock expressed by Oliver Baldwin (son of Kipling's cousin, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin): "the wickedest story ever written!" However, Oliver may actually have been praising Kipling, not burying him, for the young man was not easily shocked. He may use wicked not in the sense of "evil" but "naughty", which carries sexual overtones that to him were not necessarily condemnatory. Among those who find the story more "interesting" than "shocking", some, like Bonamy Dobrée, point out that though Kipling did, indeed, abhor the Germans for their atrocities in the First World War, the story is not really about that subject and does not embody the author's personal hatred. *Rudyard Kipling: Realist and Fabulist* (OUP 1967, p. 131). Others, like C. A. Bodelsen, for example, argue that if Mary is cruel to the injured German airman, it is not because she is a neurotic, hysterical woman – an intended example of her gender – but because the horrors of war have made her, a decent English spinster, hate the enemy. *Aspects of Kipling's Art* (Manchester University Press 1964), p. 102.
3. Lord Birkenhead writes that Wynn is "represented as an unattractive boy who treated Mary with indifference and even contempt." *Rudyard Kipling* (Random House, New York 1978), p.317.
4. In "Kipling's 'Mary Postgate': The Barbarians and the Critics," Peter E. Firchow argues that "Mary genuinely loves Wynn – the match that lights his pyre also burns 'her heart to ashes' – and she patiently submits to a great variety of indignities for his sake. If she resembles anyone. . . it is the kind and gentle mother figure." *Etudes Anglaises*, XXIX (1976). Firchow is less convincing in viewing the story as a "spiritual allegory" with Wynn as "a sacrificial Christ figure," with Nurse Eden as "rural England before the German Satan quite literally fell into it" and with Mary Postgate as a kind of Virgin Mary. Firchow concludes that the work embodies "Old

Testament hatred and vengefulness" that is very much a part of Kipling's "stock in trade".

5. *The Uses of Division: Unity and Disharmony in Literature* (Viking, New York 1976), p. 67.
6. According to George M. and Adrienne L. Bumell, in a state of bereavement, "one of the most prominent emotion[s] expressed by parents, is that of anger." *Clinical Management of Bereavement* (Human Sciences Press, New York 1989), p. 125.
7. See Beverley Raphael, *The Anatomy of Bereavement* (Basic Books, New York 1983), pp.55, 116.
8. Bumell and Bumell comment: "if there is a history of past unresolved or multiple losses, there may be a case of 'bereavement overload,' " resulting sometimes from "loss of all family members and friends by outliving them." Such a situation brings pain, often overwhelming to deal with" (p. 63).
9. According to John Bayley "Mary is perfectly at home with death, as any of Jane Austen's characters would have been." He describes Mary as having "stoically accepted [death] as the normal way of things." *The Short Story: Henry James to Elizabeth Bowen* (Harvester Press, Brighton 1988), p. 84.
10. Nora Crook unequivocally states that "Mary is mad – I would say a great deal madder than has been supposed." *Kipling's Myths of Love and Death* (Macmillan, London 1989), p. 126.
11. Norman Page argues that it is possible that "Dr Hennis has summed up Mary as an hysterical and perhaps even a crazed female." "What Happens in 'Mary Postgate'?" *English Literature in Transition*. XXIX (1986), p. 42.
12. For a different interpretation, see Norman Page, who states that to Mary the German airman represents Wynn and that in watching him suffer and die, she is experiencing "unconscious retribution" for all Wynn's "cruelties directed at her over the years" (p.45). Similarly, Nora Crook takes the position that Mary (as an "artist") hates Wynn and secretly wishes him dead because of his cruelties toward her. In letting the German airman die before her, Mary is therefore watching Wynn die, which gives her great satisfaction. She posits the astonishing theory that since Wynn's full name is Wyndham Fowler, Kipling is making reference to the Wyndhams, longtime friends of the Kipling family and owner of Clouds, their home where Lockwood Kipling died and concludes that Kipling despised the Wyndhams and thus named the cruel Wynn after them (pp. 136-44).
13. Since Kipling makes it plain that the man Mary discovers has fallen from a plane and is fatally injured, it is difficult to accept Charles Carrington's view that she "has the opportunity of saving the life of a wounded German airman." *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work*, rev.ed (Macmillan, London 1978), p. 500.
14. Norman Page takes the position that "Kipling intends us ultimately to recognise . . . that Mary is assuredly the victim of a hallucination and that the airman never existed outside of her own mind . . . Just as she claims to have heard and seen the aeroplane that dropped the bomb – a claim that the text shows unequivocally to be without foundation – she later believes in the imagined airman" (p. 44).
15. Recent criticism tends to insist that Kipling portrays Mary as receiving sexual pleasure from the death of the German. In *The Short Story* John Bayley writes that Mary is a closet sado-masochist who is, without knowing it, in love with Wynn and whose "secret thrill" in witnessing the airman die is a "sexual response", and "source

- of acute sexual pleasure" (p. 89). Harry Ricketts goes even further: "Kipling made it quite clear that she had an orgasm" while she excitedly observed the airman expire. *The Unforgiving Minute: A Life of Rudyard Kipling* (Chatto and Windus, London 1999), p. 319. In his brief commentary on the story, Andrew Lycett refers to Mary's "perverted sexual joy". *Rudyard Kipling* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1999), p.452.
16. Chapter 11, *From Sea To Sea I* (Macmillan, London 1900), p. 98.
17. It is interesting that Kipling has Miss Fowler use a word with masculine connotations, handsome, instead of *pretty* or *beautiful*, more feminine terms. He perhaps felt that *handsome* was more in keeping with the idea of Mary's having gained a feeling of strength or power (often associated with masculinity) through suffering.

DID MARY POSTGATE LEAVE AN ALLY TO DIE?

By BILL DOWER

[Like Rudyard Kipling, Bill Dower, who has recently joined the Kipling Society, started his career as a newspaper man. He worked on the staff of the *Courier* – the leading provincial daily in East Central Scotland, which covers Fife, Perthshire, Angus and Dundee – and moved on to edit local weekly papers. As Editor of a number of titles in Aberdeenshire he wrote on a range of subjects, from local news to ladies fashions and from court news to society gossip, to say nothing of sports. In his mid-thirties he began a degree course at Dundee University and in 1997 gained his Masters in English Literature and Educational Studies, but was disappointed that Kipling did not feature largely in the course. However, he has enjoyed reading Kipling's prose ever since he picked up *Twenty-One Tales*, published by the Reprint Society (1946), in a second-hand book shop. 'Though my choice of a favourite Kipling story depends,' he says, 'much upon my mood at the time, I'd probably plumb for "A Matter of Fact" from *Many Inventions*. He is now Press Officer at Dundee College. – Ed]

Jan Morris's address to the Kipling Society (*Kipling Journal*, September 2001) was a tour de force and an example of honesty. She was honest enough to admit to being 'an impostor' in terms of how much she knows of Kipling and brave enough to state to such an audience that he has never been one of her passions. "I actually dislike much of what he wrote." Kipling would have prized such honesty and courage. There is an abundance of both in his prose and in his verse. But his detractors misunderstand this honesty and described it as 'brutality'.

"Mary Postgate", (*A Diversity of Creatures* 1917), considered by many as Kipling's most powerful story, attracts this particular

adjective. Angus Wilson described the story as "unacceptably brutal"¹ and Jan Morris said it was both bitter and cruel. Wilson claims: "It is not easy to respond wholly to such a story. And few have done so", while Charles Carrington dismisses the story in a matter of a few lines stating it to be an extension of Kipling's "the female of the species is more deadly than the male".² Wilson tries to address the different layers of the story and concludes that its brutality is a piece of self-indulgence by an author whose hatred of the Germans is well documented. Kipling's son was killed at Loos in the same year he wrote "Mary Postgate". Yet despite identifying the layered construction of the story, Wilson falls into the same trap as other commentators, including Jan Morris, and fails to see the ultimate device which the author has used to tell the story – that of playing on the prejudice of the reader.

"Mary Postgate" is the story told of a spinster who, having had a life devoid of sensual pleasure, of a husband or children of her own, while acting as a lady's companion, enjoys orgasmic delight in an act of revenge when she stands by and watches a German airman, who has fallen from his plane, die in agony.

The reader can accept this brutal act, since Kipling supplies reasons for Mary's behaviour. She has fallen in love with her employer's nephew, who was much younger than she is, and who has been killed in an aircraft accident while training as a pilot. On the day of the incident, Mary is burning the last of the young man's possessions. Also that same day a little girl is killed in the village when an explosion brings the stables, in which she is playing, down on top of her. Mary has seen the dead child. She sees the injured German lying in the garden as she is preparing the incinerator and when he asks for help, decides it is her chance to exact revenge for both Wynn, the young airman, and the dead girl.

These avenues of acceptability – that Mary Postgate's actions are justified – are closed, however, when a closer reading of the text reveals that, although the omniscient narrator tells the reader: "There was no doubt to his nationality" there are various clues that the airman is not German, or that his nationality is indeterminate. (It is typical of Kipling to assert something to the reader only for this assertion to be contradicted immediately after. For instance when he seems to be saying "...East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet. . ." they do in the lines that follow almost immediately. And the autobiographical *Something of Myself* contains very little of the author's self.) Kipling also painstakingly constructs a passage explaining that the stables which collapsed and killed little Edna, were riddled with dry rot and that the sound of the explosion was that of the beams breaking – not the result of a stray German bomb.

Taking the conventional interpretation of the story – that the dying airman is German – then, according to Wilson, Kipling is both exploring the pathological behaviour of a repressed woman exposed to the horror of war and, at the same time, encouraging the nation to believe that Mary's ruthlessness is the only way in which the menace of the Germans, a nation who will drop bombs on little children, can be stopped. He goes on to say that there are "other and more bearable layers on top of that" meaning. If this is the case, then to accept that the airman is not German and that there was no stray bomb is to condemn the story to having an unbearable layer beneath Wilson's interpretation – that of the evil that can arise from an unfulfilled nature, and that the most civilised of creatures can harbour a barbarity which blinds them to reason.

From the opening paragraph Kipling goes to great pains to present Mary Postgate's credentials. She is described as 'thoroughly conscientious, tidy, companionable and ladylike.' She prides herself on having a trained mind, she is honest and attentive to the household accounts and has no enemies. A key part of the author's description is that she is judicious in what she says. This is alluded to on two occasions – when she is described as listening unflinchingly to every one and then making the appropriate comments; and when Kipling tells the reader that: "neither gossip nor slander had ever been traced to her". This information is vital in discerning what took place in the village – as to whether a bomb was dropped as appearances suggest, or whether the explanation of the accident as given by Dr Hennis is the correct one.

Dr Hennis' motive for denying a bomb has been dropped is to avoid stirring up feeling in the village. If a bomb has been dropped then he is lying to Mary in a bid to keep her from spreading hysteria. It seems odd, however, that the doctor would have to lie to Mary, in that he is aware of Mary's character and personality. She has attended dinners in his house and shown herself to be a trustworthy and competent member of the community. There seems no reason for the doctor to try to fool her with a lie to gain her co-operation. Therefore, the reader is not allowed to know exactly what has occurred in the village – whether a German bomb or dry rot is to blame for Edna's death. To use the Doctor's own words: ". . . we cannot be sure."

With regard to the nationality of the airman, Mary at first thinks he is: "one of the young flying men she had met at Wynn's funeral". It is only the way in which the injured man wears his hair: "so closely cropped that she could see the disgusting pinky skin beneath"³ and the fact he speaks with an accent that decides his nationality. When the airman speaks he uses French to beg for a doctor, the only German spoken is by Mary when she emphatically refuses him: "Nein! . . . Ich

haben der todt Kinder gesehn." Lord Birkenhead translates this as, "I have seen the dead child" which could be sufficient for the reader to assume that Mary believes that this is the German airman who dropped a bomb on the village killing the little girl. The actual translation is difficult as Mary speaks very poor German, but one word is quite clear: "Kinder", which means children, not child. This is significant. "Mary Postgate" is immediately preceded in *A Diversity of Creatures* by another story that deals with the horrors of war. "Swept and Garnished" tells the story of Frau Ebermann, an old German lady who, while lying ill in her Berlin flat, is visited by five children. These are the victims of the war, all five have been killed and are now waiting to meet their "own people" in Berlin. Frau Ebermann, who is proud of her country's war victories, is shocked to realise that thousands of children are being slain by her own country's guns and men. Her servant finds her trying to wash the blood of the dead children from the floor of her flat in a scene reminiscent of Lady Macbeth. By placing this story directly before "Mary Postgate", Kipling succeeds in creating a frame of mind in which it is easier to sympathise with Mary rather than castigate her. Mary's use of the word "Kinder" could well trigger the association with the dead children in the previous story. One of the features of James Joyce's *Dubliners*, (1914), is the cross-referentiality between the short stories which creates a kind of 'montage'.

Within "Mary Postgate" itself, the information supplied by the narrator (or, more importantly, the lack of information) leaves the reader with at least two stories. One, the airman could be German and a bomb could have been dropped, and two, equally possible, the airman is actually French, therefore an ally, and no bomb was dropped. Even if the latter is the case, however, Kipling can still achieve the message that it is the Germans who, through the war, have brutalised Mary to the extent she acts without mercy. As stated earlier, the general belief would seem to be that Kipling is trying to incite the English to hatred. It is the war, started by the Germans, which is responsible for Mary's behaviour. There may, however, be a much more subtle message – another layer to the story – that people of the calibre of Wynn and Mary are not the sort who are capable of fighting and winning the war without losing the civilised values that they are ostensibly trying to defend.

The technique of fragmenting the body is also used widely throughout "Mary Postgate": a technique used to devalue the humanity of a character. Mary is described in terms of her physical features when Wynn is first introduced to the story. Again the narrative voice seems not to be independent but mimicking Wynn's. Kipling describes "her narrow shoulders. . .her large mouth open, her large nose high in air. .

.⁴ He conveys the message of Mary not being a complete person in the same fashion that Joseph Conrad does with Stevie in *The Secret Agent* (1907). This theme is continued when Wynn berates Mary for her inability to grasp his lessons about aircraft:

"You *look* more or less like a human being," he said in his new Service voice. "You *must* have had a brain at some time in your past. What have you done with it? Where d'you keep it?"⁵

Both Conrad's child-like Stevie and Kipling's little Edna, a real child, share a similar fate. Stevie is literally blown to bits, while Edna's body is "ripped and shredded". Both characters are innocents and luridly described in terms of the final and grimly literal fragmentation of their bodies. The injured airman is portrayed as less than human.

A broken branch lay across his lap – one booted leg protruding from beneath it. His head moved ceaselessly from side to side, but his body was as still as the tree's trunk.⁶

Both the airman and the tree have broken limbs and a trunk. This association also succeeds in reducing the airman's humanity.

When Mary returns from the house with the gun, Kipling again uses body parts to describe the airman: "the eyes in the head were alive with expectation. The mouth even tried to smile. . . A tear trickled from one eye,"⁷. The same technique is used over and over again. The airman is never referred to in human terms. He is either "the thing", or "It", or in terms of body parts: "Again the head groaned for a doctor" – not 'the airman', nor 'the German' only "the head". If by doing this Kipling is attempting to portray him as sub-human, then the same conclusion can be reached about Wynn when the author presents his readers with an extraordinary list of Wynn's belongings destined to be burned.

Through this metonymic device a picture of Wynn is painted through the things he had collected in his short life. This is a long list to be included in such a short story but it does have the effect of diminishing Wynn's character to the extent that the reader associates him with children's toys and inconsequential mementos. It is a sad list with many items being described with negative adjectives: the magazines are "thumbed and used"; only the "remnants" of a fleet of toy boats remain; the steam and clockwork trains are "disintegrated" while their rails are "twisted" (perhaps they were going nowhere as was their owner); the gramophone was "dumb" and the records "broken". Perhaps the most damning possession in the list is the "five-day attempt at a diary". Is there an allusion here to the fact that Wynn never really

had a future? This could also point to Wynn lacking the ability of self reflection and that he never gained the maturity that is needed to know one's self.

That Wynn achieved nothing with his life is recognised by Mrs Fowler's comment that she is sorry he died before he had done anything. This seemingly innocent statement sparks a sinister response from Mary: "It's a great pity he didn't die in action after he had killed somebody." Mrs Fowler seems to be alluding to the fact that Wynn was a young man whose life had scarcely begun – he had not loved, married, nor had family – he died before he achieved anything with his life. Mary, however, can only see his death as a waste in terms of him dying before killing someone. Kipling may well be writing Wynn off as ineffectual as regards winning the war, but Mary is actually worse than ineffectual. She is portrayed not only as someone who has spurned traits normally associated with women – marriage and childbirth – but who, in a sort of passive acceptance, embraces the idea of death and killing, some one who has not the moral fibre to fight the good fight.

Kipling's ability to criticise the English at home can barely be argued – "the flannelled fools at the wicket" springs to mind. "The Army of a Dream" in *Traffics and Discoveries* can be interpreted as criticism, not only of the army as it stood in the first decade of the 20th century, but of the attitude held by politicians, and public alike towards the military, likewise, "The Head of the District" (*Life's Handicap*) is a clear criticism of political interference. If it can be established that the airman in "Mary Postgate" may not be an enemy but in fact an ally, then Mary is not only a cruel and vengeful person, but one who has robbed her country of one of its defenders – another criticism of the English in England.

There is an irony in this argument that Kipling – so often berated for his support of imperialism and jingoist patriotism – should have included in his prose such heavy criticism of those people who made the empire function. It is important, however, to note that the freedom to criticise those in power is seen not as a privilege but as a right in a democracy and that Kipling's criticisms are in keeping with this long noble tradition. It is also ironic that this particular tradition is once again under threat as elements of the British military once again become involved in action in and around the North-East Frontier.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Works*, (Secker & Warburg 1977), p.310.
2. Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work*, Penguin, 1970, pp 500-501.
3. Rudyard Kipling, (*A Diversity of Creatures*, Macmillan Pocket 1925), p.436.
4. *Ibid.*, p.420. 5. *Ibid.* p.422 6. *Ibid.* p.436 7. *Ibid.* pp.437-438

75 YEARS AGO

The very first *Journal* of the Society (March 1927, page 28) has an example of young Kipling's sense of humour. In 1894, during an interview, the Revd Dr Joseph Parker said that Kipling was a relation of Mrs Parker. The day after that interview was published in the *Idler*, the following lines of verse appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"The Limitations of Knowledge"

The secrets of the Sea are his, the mysteries of the Ind,
 He knows minutely in every way in which mankind has sinned,
 He has by heart the lightships t'wixt the Goodwins and the Cape,
 The language of the elephant, the ethics of the ape.
 He knows the slang of Silver Street, the horrors of Lahore,
 And how the man-seal breasts the waves that buffet Labrador.
 He knows Samoan Stevenson, he knows the Yankee Twain,
 The value of Theosophy, of cheek, and Mr Cain.
 He knows an Ekka pony's points, the leper's drear abode,
 The seamy side of Simla, the flaring Mile End Road,
 He knows the Devil's tones to Souls too pitiful to damn,
 He know the taste of every Regimental Mess in Cham.
 He knows each fine gradation t'wixt the General and the Sub.,
 The terms employed by Atkins when they flung him from a pub.
 He knows enough to annotate the Bible verse by verse,
 And how to draw the shekels from the British Public's purse.
 But varied though his knowledge is, it has its limitation
 Alas! He doesn't know he's Dr. Parker's wife relation.

WHERE ARE THE RUDYARDITES?

[The following mention is made of the Rudyardites on Page 25 of the *Kipling Journal* of March 1927]:

Alas! in spite of all its notable Founder Members, the Kipling Society is not the first in the field. In the pleasant village of Finchamstead, Berkshire, there exists a Society under the above name. As the name implies it is a sort of Kipling Society, though confined to the members of a select village circle, mostly juvenile. Its meetings consist of impersonations of Kipling characters, and suitable recitations and songs are done by these. . .

[Readers are invited to write to the Editor if they have any information of the fate of the Rudyardites.-Ed.]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THAT FATEFUL DAY

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

Dear Sir,

The nearest I can claim to have come to Rudyard Kipling is my clear recollection of a newsboy announcing his death in 1936.

He died ten minutes after midnight on Saturday 18 January, and on the following day, aged nine and a quarter, I travelled with my parents to Brighton to visit my paternal grandmother, who was then living at the Grand Hotel. As dusk was falling, we heard a newsboy on the pavement outside the covered verandah on which we were having tea shouting (as was then the custom) the main item of news: "Read all about it! Read all about it! Great writer dies! Rudyard Kipling dead!" I was able to impress the adults by telling them that I knew who Kipling was, having read all the *Just So Stories* and learned in Community Singing at my prep school to sing "Rolling Down to Rio" (accompanied by Miss Fox on the piano) for the end-of-term concert. Two days later King George V died; but this made no impression on me.

Yours faithfully
GEORGE ENGLE

DEATH OF A HERO

From Mrs Josephine Leeper, Lammas Cottage, 43 Lammas Lane, Esher, Surrey KT10 8PE

Dear Sir,

I read with interest Bard Cosman's article on "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi as Beowulf [December 2001 Journal] and agree with him that Rudyard Kipling would have relished the Saga (especially if it was introduced to him by the much loved "Uncle Topsy") and enjoyed recreating it in the tale of the Valiant Mongoose.

However, Professor Cosman says that Kipling leaves out the third part of the epic, in which the ageing Beowulf kills the Fire-Drake and dies of his wounds; this would not have been appropriate in the story of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, which rightly ends with the hero's triumph. But we can certainly find it in *The Second Jungle Book*, where the aged Akela, who had been leader of the 'Free People', has played a heroic part in the defeat of the Red Dog and then sings the Death Song which

rang far across the river "till it came to the last 'Good Hunting' and Akela – leaping into the air, fell backward upon his last and most terrible kill."

I am afraid that I have never read the Fire-Drake section of Beowulf, but I cannot believe that the heroic King could have died in a more splendid manner.

Yours faithfully
JOSEPHINE LEEPER

OUT IN THE MIDDAY SUN

From Mr Philip Holberton, 1645 Hickeys Creek Road, Willawarrin, NSW2440, Australia

Dear Sir,

Professor de Caro's letter on Dravot and Carnehan, in the September 2001 *Journal*, speaks of "the cult of the *topi* or pith-helmet". Kipling himself expressed this neatly in his advice to "The Young British Soldier":

But the worst o' your foes is the sun over'head:
You *must* wear your 'elmet for all that is said:
If 'e finds you uncovered 'e'll knock you down dead,
An' you'll die like a fool of a soldier. . .

Yours faithfully
PHILIP HOLBERTON

MR KIPLING SEES IT THROUGH

From Mr J. W Michael Smith, 2 Brownleaf Road, Brighton, Sussex BN2 6LB

Dear Sir

The *Folkestone, Hythe, Sandgate and Cheriton Herald* of 29 October 1910 carried a three column article on a conference on international air travel below the headline: "Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Aviation". It was reported as an important meeting in the history of aviation. Representatives of the Aerial leagues of Great Britain, France and Belgium met in the Council Chamber of Folkestone Town Hall. When mooted the mayor received a request from "Mr Rudyard Kipling, the famous poet-author" that he would like to attend. Knowing Kipling's enthusiasm for transport innovation he was promptly invited and arrangements were made to receive him. But things did not go as

planned. The Mayor was waiting to receive him in his parlour at the Town Hall at 2.30 p.m. – the time fixed for the conference to begin – and a number of delegates were waiting in the Council Chamber, but still the meeting did not start, for the Mayor was still awaiting Mr. Kipling. "The amusing part of it was", to quote the report, "that Mr. Kipling was quite unaware of this little item in the proceedings, and had for some time been mixing with the delegates, no doubt wondering why the proceedings did not commence. However, in time, the matter was rectified."

Although many distinguished aviators were present – including Mr J.T.C. More-Brabazon – Kipling was elected to take the Chair. The Meeting proceeded with some difficulty, for many of the delegates were not bilingual, yet cogent matters were discussed, including the safety of pilots whose landings were ill-controlled and of those who "fell out". One cause of concern was the techniques of testing and assessing the quality of safety-harnesses, which at times was somewhat bizarre. But the most important questions tackled were those connected with the regular cross-channel flights, for which prize-money was to be awarded to successful airmen.

In his closing address Kipling said: "if five years ago we had assembled in the Hall to discuss the question of aerial commercial transit between Folkestone and Boulogne, we would have been *turned out as lunatics* by an apprehensive policeman. Five years hence I hope that we shall be discussing things more wonderful still. We are only at the beginning of a new world."

At the Mayoral Banquet that evening, Kipling was not among diners. Perhaps he was back at Bateman's preparing a sequel to "With the Night Mail" (published in *McClure's Magazine* in 1905). His "As Easy as A.B.C." was first printed in 1912. After dinner speeches referred to a predicted aerial postal service to France and to the probability of Folkestone becoming a popular resort for visitors from France.

The first note of air activity in Kipling's published letters is in that of 21 October 1910 to Josephine Dunham. Referring to manoeuvres over Tisbury he wrote: "there appeared an aeroplane high up, in the air. My people have an ancient and almost inarticulate odd-man who looks after the garden etc. and whose vocabulary, the Pater vows, does not exceed 100 words. He saw this great skimming, buzzing machine above him and forthwith flopped down on his knees, waved his hat, and ceased not to yell aloud with sheer unadulterated wonder and delight, for the space of a minute."

Yours faithfully
MICHAEL SMITH

"HOW PLEASANT TO KNOW MR LEAR!"

From Michael Jefferson, 21 Hollow Lane, Hayling Island, Hants, PO11 9AA

Dear Sir,

Elsie Bambridge wrote this of her father Rudyard Kipling: "The writing of limericks delighted him, and there exists an old copy of Lear's Nonsense Book on the blank pages of which appear many verses, illustrated with spirited little drawings of the Old Maid of Zug, the Young Lady of Brie and the Three Young Ladies of Nice and many more."

I wonder if Edward Lear's 'Nonsense' poems influenced Kipling and whether there are faint echoes of Lear in the *Just So Stories*? I also like to think that Lockwood Kipling and Rudyard, father and son, read Lear's "The Cumberbund" (which was first published in the *Times of India*, Bombay in July 1874) and were entertained by Lear's nonsensical but deliberately playful use of Hindustani words. Unlike Lear, Kipling used the vernacular extensively, poetically and intelligently. He was writing for a readership that was familiar with "everyday" Hindustani.

Yours faithfully
MICHAEL JEFFERSON

[I reproduce below "The Cumberbund" and a glossary of the words italicised.]

She sate upon her *Dobie*,
To watch the Evening Star,
And all the *Punkahs* as they passed,
Cried, 'My! how fair you are!'
Around her bower, with quivering leaves,
The tall *Kansamahs* grew.
And *Kitmatgars* in wild festoons
Hung down from *Tchokis* blue.

Below her home the river rolled
With soft meloobious sound,
Where golden-finned *Chaprassies* swam,
In myriads circling round.
Above on trees remote
Green *Ayhs* perched alone,
And all night long the *Mussak* moan'd
It's melancholy tone.

And where the purple *Nullahs* threw
 Their branches far and wide, –
 And silvery *Goreewallahs* flew
 In silence, side by side, –
 The little *Bheesties* ' twittering cry
 Rose on the fragrant air,
 And oft the angry *Jampan* howled
 Deep in his hateful lair.

She sate upon her *Dobie*, –
 She heard the *Nimmak* hum, –
 When all at once a cry arose. –
 'The *Cummerbund* is come!
 In vain she fled: – with open jaws
 The angry monster followed,
 And so, (before assistance came,)
 That Lady Fair was swallowed.

They sought in vain for even a bone
 Respectfully to bury, –
 They said. – 'Hers was a dreadful fate!
 (And Echo answered 'Very.')

They nailed her *Dobie* to the wall,
 Where last her form was seen,
 And underneath they wrote these words,
 In yellow , blue, and green: –

Beware, ye Fair! Ye Fair, beware!
 Nor sit out late at night, –
 Lest horrid *Cummerbunds* should come,
 And swallow you outright.

Dobie/Dhobi = washerman; *punkahs* — fans; *kansamahs/khansamahs* = cooks; *kitmugars/khitmatgars* = house servants or "bearers"; *Tchokis* = chowkidars = watchmen; *Chuprassis* = peons or messengers; *ayahs* = nursemaids; *mussak* = goatskin water container carried by *bheesties/bhistis* = water-carriers; *nullahs* = watercourses; *goreewallah* = syce; *jampan* = sedan chair carrier; *nimmak* = salt; and *cummerbund* = waistband. — *Ed.*]

FINALLY A TOAST

From Ms L.G.S. Silke, Cambria, California, U.S.A.

I'll raise a glass to Kipling
 For his words are simple and true;
 And he beat the philistines handily
 Though he lost a battle or two.

He told of the glory that comes to the strong,
And of the beauty the meek possess;
He sang of the dreams each one pursues
And the cost of their happiness.

For all of us travel a lonely road
And real companions are few;
Yet the joy when friend encounters friend,
Is a rhapsody well he knew.

So with a cup to eye, I've made a try,
(though this poem may not scan)
'Cause it cheers me to think,
That there waits past the Brink
A soul that understands.

LYN SILKE

- 0 - 0 - 0 -

KIPLING LIBRARY – IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to the severe fire at the City University last year the Quiet Study Area, where the Library is housed, will again be used for examinations this summer. At the moment all we know is that from 1 May 2002 to 21 June 2002 it will certainly be used. Nearer the time we will get more detailed information as to the actual hours involved. It is quite likely that the use will continue through the summer, possibly up to the end of September. Further information will be posted on the Society's web-site as it becomes available.

John Slater, Honorary Librarian (020 7359 2404)

NEWS VIEWS AND REVIEWS

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

Mr David Vermont, Council Member of the Kipling Society would like readers to know that Mr Raymond Seitz was the Guest of Honour at a Dinner given by the Ends of the Earth, on Wednesday 12 December 2001, at The Café Royal, 68 Regent Street, London W1. Mr Seitz was one of the most outstanding US Ambassadors the Court of St James has ever received. He was a career diplomat and, as Minister at the US Embassy, was an active member of the Executive Committee of the Ends of the Earth.

The Ends of the Earth was founded in New York in 1903 by Poulteney Bigelow and Rudyard Kipling to commemorate the co-operation of Admiral Chichester with Admiral Dewey at Manila in 1898 during the Spanish-American War. It is a dining club whose purpose is to bring together present and future senior British and American figures in business, public life and the Armed Services to discuss the key political and commercial issues of the time under Chatham House Rules.

IRON REBUKE

An item in the *Church Times* of 18 January 2002 caught the eye of Mr Shamus O. D. Wade. Under the title "100 Years Ago" was a report which stated that Kipling's poem "The Islanders" had evoked a spate of letters in rebuttal. Schoolmasters who took particular exception to references to "flannelled fools" and "muddied oafs", tried to strengthen their case by quoting that celebrated attribution of the Duke of Wellington. Did the 'Iron Duke' really say that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields at Eton? Shamus Wade has serious doubts. The 'lie', he says, "is very thoroughly nailed by Elizabeth Longford in her *Wellington: The Years of the Sword* – pages 15 to 17. Wellington entered Eton in the autumn of 1781. There were no compulsory, organised games at that time and even the most casual cricket or boating did not attract him. 'Lonely and withdrawn, he preferred the grounds of the Manor House where he boarded, playing at the bottom of the garden and jumping over a broad black ditch.' He did not visit Eton again till 22 January 1818 when he said: ' "I really believe I owe my spirit of enterprise to the tricks I used to play in the garden".' In 1841, when asked for a subscription to Eton's new buildings, he refused.

BOOK REVIEW

My Boy Jack? The Search for Kipling's Only Son. by Tonie and Valmai Holt, revised, reprinted and published by Leo Cooper, an imprint of Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley Yorkshire, 2001 (ISBN 0 85052 859-3), 236 pages with illustrations, including a select bibliography and index. Paperback, £12.95.

"KNOWN UNTO GOD"

By JANE KESKAR

We, who live in times when the death of a single soldier is a matter of close inquiry, find it hard to understand the psyche of a nation that, for the most part, accepted without question, the sacrifice of their sons in the Great War. In *My Boy Jack*, Tonie and Valmai Holt empathise with the heroism and stoicism of the families who sent their sons to 'Flanders Fields'. Through meticulous research, and quoting extensively from contemporary letters, they show Carrie's and Rudyard's courage, as waiting for news of their only son, John, they heard daily of the deaths of the son's of friends. Carrie, unburdening herself to her mother, wrote " 'We sent John away yesterday to his new life with outward good spirits and inward misery, but it must be born [sic] and after all every mother I know has had to do the same.' " And on 27 September 1915 (ignorant of the fact that it was on the very day John was killed) she wrote: " 'John has been in the firing line as far as we know since Saturday. We have this day a letter from him. . .one's mind cannot easily be kept long away from Flanders.' " (p.97)

My Boy Jack is a record of the search for the grave of Kipling's only son, reported missing in the battle of Loos in September 1915, and a fine addition to the list of Kipling biographies. It provides a warmer, more rounded portrait of Carrie as a devoted and anxious mother, and of Rudyard as a brave man determined to mask and assuage his grief by recording, for posterity, the history of the Irish Guards; and by his work for the War Graves Commission. The Holts have also painted a vivid picture of family life with Rudyard as a doting father: "His hands-on, intimate relationship more resembled the enlightened attitudes of a 1990's 'new father' than an 1890's one." We hear of the children's often idyllic childhood and see John, a fun loving, handsome boy, dreaming of a career in the Navy, but whose myopia and failing eyesight must have contributed to his lack of success at school. When rejected by the Navy, because of his eyesight, he tried to join the Army, but was once again rejected. Kipling, however, had influential friends, and it was Lord Roberts ("Bobs") who was persuaded to nominate John for a commission in the Irish Guards. Carrie's letters indicate that it was

not only Rudyard who wanted a commission for his son, but also John himself. The Holt's quote Carrie: " 'Lord Roberts was an intimate friend of Rud's and John insisted so much that I believe Lord Roberts rather overlooked the calendar.' " (John was seventeen.)

The story of this particular family, whilst unique, mirrors that of many others, and as John makes plans to leave for France, and writes home of the preparations for the forthcoming battle, the tension is palpable. We know of the tragedy to come. Carrie writes that Elsie was "over-tired from grief of loss of friends.. .She says very soon she won't know anyone who is alive."

The Holt's do not neglect Kipling's works. They refer to *The Just So Stories*, with which he enthralled his children, and to those later stories, by which Kipling may have come to terms with John's death. The Holts see a "great deal both of Carrie and of Rudyard" in the character of Mary Postgate, and compare her reaction to Kipling's, when she first hears of her beloved Wynn's death; "She outwardly contained her feelings while 'the room was whirling' round her as she read the 'announcement in an official envelope. . .'" Rudyard Kipling died without finding John's grave and in his poetry we sense his pain:

Is it well, is it well with the child?

For we know not where he is laid. ["The Nativity" 1916]

In the Epilogue the authors present and analyse all the evidence available, concerning the identity of the young soldier, in the grave identified in 1992, as that of Lieutenant John Kipling, Irish Guards. Having studied all the records, their conclusion seems to be supported by Rudyard Kipling's own exhaustive investigations. In this new edition of *My Boy Jack* there is an additional postscript by the Secretary and Director-General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Mr Richard Kellaway, as well as the opinions of four prominent people "whose professional or other-time activities require an analytical mind." Sadly, we are left in little doubt. The soldier therein, though indeed "Known Unto God", is unlikely to be John Kipling.

For the reader, looking for a slightly different perspective on Kipling's life and work or for anyone interested in a personal perspective on the Great War, *My Boy Jack* combines a moving narrative with fascinating material from primary sources. This new paperback edition is attractively produced and reasonably priced.

THE SOCIETY ON LINE

By JOHN RADCLIFFE

RK'S USE OF SUSSEX DIALECT

In "An Habitation Enforced" [*Actions and Reactions*, 1909] a wealthy American couple, Sophie and George Chapin, buy an old house and estate, deep in the English countryside, and settle down. Sophie finds her mother's maiden name, Ellen Lashmar, carved on a flagstone on the floor of her pew in church, and realises that her ancestors had come from there. The local people had already made the connection – "She ain't no Toot Hill Lashmar, nor any o' the Crayford lot", says Young Igguden, who worked in Connecticut: "Her folk come out of the ground here, neither chalk not forest, but wildishers."

Max Rives, translating the tale into French, was baffled by "wildishers". Was it related to "wildish" i.e., "somewhat wild"? he asked the mailbox. A most interesting discussion ensued. Dick van Toorn, in the Netherlands, suggested that it might be translated into French as *glaiseux* – someone out of the clay. Ray Beck asked if it could be an old slang word for "villager", related to "wild" meaning a villager. David Page suggested that it meant a native of the Weald of Kent, as did John Slater, quoting from Harbord. Michael Healy found this plausible. However, Adam Nicolson, born in the Weald of Kent and living in the Weald of Sussex, pointed out that "Wealden" means "of the forest", and that he had never heard of "wildisher" as a name for a Wealden person.

Alastair Wilson, who grew up within five miles of Bateman's, suggests that the setting, reached from "an ash-barrel of a station called Charing Cross", must be the Kent-Sussex border, within reach of either of the South-Eastern Railway's main lines – to Hastings or Dover via Tonbridge. "The area between Tonbridge and Dover doesn't fit," he argues, "being largely flat, though the area south of it, lying between Headcorn and Tenterden is Wealden. Far more likely (because it was by this time RK's own country) is the area in the vicinity of Burwash/Etchingham/Robertsbridge, where the Weald starts to give way towards Romney Marsh.

"Young Igguden (a Sussex name) says that Sophie Chapin isn't of the chalk (the Downs) nor of the forest (the Weald, which from Bateman's eastwards tends to run a bit north of east). But the country from Bateman's east-south-eastwards is 'open country' – being the flood plain of the River Rother, and given to sheep on the flat pastures,

and hops (or it used to be) on the gentle slopes above. So I suggest what RK was implying was that a 'wildisher' was a native of the open-ish country which lies some ten miles south-east by east from Bateman's, and within four miles or so of Etchingham or Robertsbridge stations." Michael Smith confirmed this view, with a quote from the *KJ* of March 1932. Alastair's analysis has not been challenged, and Adam Nicolson has suggested to Max Rives that in the Sussex context "wildishers", therefore, really means "lowlanders" or "fenlanders" or "from the rough wet country", *lesfosseurs sauvages* perhaps?

"THE PRAYER OF MIRIAM COHEN"

By ROGER AYERS

[Eric Cohen, Wisconsin U.S.A., e-mailed the Secretary, saying that as his wife's name was Miriam, he would like to know the background to "The Prayer of Miriam Cohen". In his reply to a later request from Mr Cohen, Roger Ayers, our Membership Secretary, gave a brilliantly concise context to the poem. I reproduce some of it here as a preview of a longer article from Roger, which will feature in a future *Journal* – Ed.]

One may speculate upon what prompted Kipling to write "The Prayer of Miriam Cohen", since it provided him with the four stanzas at the head of "The Disturber of Traffic" (*Many Inventions*, 1893). In that story, Dowse, the lighthouse keeper, with nothing between himself and God, goes mad with loneliness. The prayer asks God to veil Himself from the intercessor, Miriam Cohen. Why Miriam? Kipling was well versed in the King James Version of the Bible, and I believe he took Miriam from "Miriam the Prophetess", sister of Moses and Aaron, who wanted to look too closely at God and was stricken with leprosy and died in the desert of Zin. (Numbers, 20) Why Miriam Cohen? I suggest that Kipling put the prayer in the mouth of a modern Miriam who did not wish to suffer the fate of her biblical namesake and by association, that of Dowse – keeper of the Wurlee Light. To modernise her, Kipling surnames her Cohen, which by the end of the 19th century was sometimes used as a blanket name for Jews in the same way as Smith, Brown and Robinson were used to represent the average Englishmen. A later example of this, directly associated with Kipling, can be found in the first publication by the Imperial War Graves Commission, explaining how the British war dead would be buried in War Cemeteries and their graves marked or, if they had no known grave, how their names would be recorded. As a Commissioner and as one who lost his own son in the War, Kipling wrote the booklet with great sensitivity. It also has drawings of the planned cemeteries, cenotaphs, memorials and examples of the three types of grave marker. Two Christian examples have Robinson and Smith, and the Jewish marker bears the name Cohen.

ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY

The Kipling Society is for anyone interested in the prose and verse, and the life and times, of Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). It is one of the most active and enduring literary societies in Britain and, as the only one which focuses on Kipling and his place in English Literature, attracts a world-wide membership. (Details from the Society's web-site (see page 4) and membership forms from the **Membership Secretary, Kipling Society, 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SB**. The forms quote the minimum annual subscription rates. Some members contribute a little more.)

The Society is a Registered Charity and a voluntary, non-profit-making organisation. Its activities, which are controlled by a Council and run by the Secretary and honorary officials, include:

- maintaining a specialised Library in City University, London,
- answering enquiries from the public (schools, publishers, writers and the media), and providing speakers on request,
- arranging a regular programme of lectures, and a formal Annual Luncheon with a Guest Speaker,
- and publishing the *Kipling Journal*, every quarter.

The Journal of the Society aims to entertain and inform. It is sent to subscribing paying members all over the world free of charge. This includes libraries, English Faculties, and 'Journal – only' members. Since 1927, the *Journal* has published important items by Kipling, not readily found elsewhere, valuable historical information, and literary comment by authorities in their field. By not being wholly academic, the Journal is representative of Kipling, whose own diverse interests and versatile talent covered a wide range of literary writing – letters, travel, prose and verse. For the serious scholar of Kipling, who cannot afford to overlook the *Journal*, a comprehensive index of the entire run since 1927 is available. Apply to: **The Librarian, Kipling Society, 13 Canonbury Road, London N1 2DF, England**. Back numbers of the *Journal* can also be bought. Write to; **Mr Michael Smith, 2 Brownleaf Road, Brighton BN2 6LB, England**.

The Editor of the *Kipling Journal* publishes membership news, Society events, and the texts of talks given by invited speakers. In addition, he is happy to receive letters and articles from readers. These may be edited and publication is not guaranteed. Letters of crisp comment, under 1000 words, and articles between 1000 – 4000 are especially welcome. Write to: **The Editor, Kipling Journal, 6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS, England**.

