

# THE KIPLING JOURNAL



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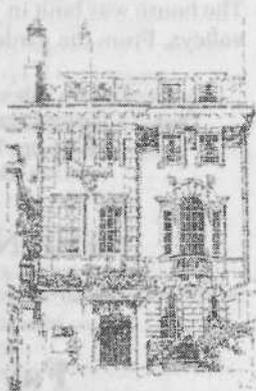
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## SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday 18 February 2004**, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in St Andrew's Hall, Royal Over-Seas League, a musical evening, that will explore Kipling set to music, with live performances by **Brian Mattinson, his son David, and Clare Toomer, David's wife.**

**Wednesday 7 April 2004**, 2-6 p.m., in St Andrew's Hall, Royal Over-Seas League, **Andrew Hambling and Jeffery Lewins:** A Symposium on "Kipling's 'Lost' Stalky Story: 'Scylla and Charybdis'". This will attract a wide audience of enthusiasts and specialists from around the world. Details were included in the flyer in a September mailing, which can be also be obtained from the Secretary. The story will be published free to Members in a special issue of the Journal.

**Wednesday 5 May 2004**, 12.30 for 1 p.m., in the Hall of India and Pakistan, Royal Over-Seas League, **the Society's Annual Luncheon:** Guest Speaker, **Sir Christopher Bland, Chairman of BT.** Details in the flyer enclosed.

**Wednesday 14 July 2004**, 4.30 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, the Society's A.G.M. A cash bar will serve drinks at 5.30 p.m. before **Max Rives'** talk **Kipling and France** at 6 p.m. Tea will be available before the meeting for those who book in advance. Details to follow.

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## CONTENTS

THE KIPLING SOCIETY: OFFICERS, ETC	3
SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	4
EDITORIAL	6
OBITUARY: SIR WILFRED THESIGER, K.B.E., D.S.O.	
by George Webb	7-8
SOCIETY VISIT TO ROTTINGDEAN by Jane Keskar	8
"THE GARDENER" by Roger Ayers	9-19
KIPLING'S "THE HOUSES": AN EXTRAORDINARY SONNET	
by Dr R. Butler	20-22
THE HUN AT THE GATE: KIPLING'S OBSESSION WITH THE GERMAN THREAT by F.A. Underwood	23-30
THE INDIA MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON	
by Roger Ayers and Bryan Diamond	31-32
MUSIC, KIPLING AND MUSICIANS by Brian J.H. Mattinson	33
KIPLING'S COMIC AND SERIOUS VERSE by Christie Davies	34-54
JOHN HENRY CHILCOTE BROOKING by Ian Whiteman	55-58
PRESERVING THE NEW READERS' GUIDE by John Radcliffe	59
MEMBERSHIP NEWS & <i>Note on Subscriptions</i>	60
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	61-63
NEW BOOKS DUE IN DECEMBER	63
KIPLING: POET OF EMPIRE – a weekend course	63
ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY	64

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## EDITORIAL

### THE KIPLING JOURNAL FOR MARCH 2004

Members will now be aware that the March 2004 issue of the *Journal* is to be a very special one with the first publication from manuscript of Kipling's 'Lost' Stalky story "Scylla and Charybdis", and also that we are hosting an International Conference about it on 7 April 2004. To avoid pre-empting the Conference, Council has decided that the despatch date of the *Journal* will be held back for a month on this occasion, and instead of reaching UK members early in March, it will arrive in mid-April. For reasons of space, we will be cutting out most of the regular items but will return to normal with the June issue which is targeted to reach you in early June.

### RECYCLED VERSE

An article titled "A Dealer in Brains" in *Pearson's Magazine*, January 1898, pp.75-82, by Robert C. Burt is about Major James Burton Pond, an arranger of lecture tours and also an autograph collector. My eye was caught by a facsimile illustration of an undated letter from Kipling to Pond in this article, and also by a transcription of a verse inscribed by Kipling in the Major's autograph book. The letter reads:

Dear Major Pond –

Yr order of the 22nd inst has been filled: and the stuff is returned herewith.

We did not know that there would be such a mass of lumber to put through the mill: and we note also that your order covers at least two supplementary orders – (a) in the case of a young lady aged nineteen [not in original contract] and (b) an autograph book for which we have supplied one original hardwood verse.

Our mills are running full time at present in spite of business depression: but we are very reluctant to turn away any job that offers under these circumstances, and making allowance for time concerned in unpacking: sorting: packing: writing and returning finished goods we should esteem it a favour if you would see your way to forwarding an additional ten (10) dollars to the *Tribune* Fresh Air Fund.

Very sincerely yours

R. Kipling & Co.

(Autographs supplied on moderate terms: guaranteed sentiments to order. Verse a speciality. No discount for cash.

(Continued on p.22)

## OBITUARY

## SIR WILFRED THESIGER, K.B.E., D.S.O. (1910 – 2003)

By GEORGE WEBB

Wilfred Thesiger's death last August, aged 93, was widely noted by the press, both in Britain and abroad, for he had earned an international reputation as a traveller and explorer of outstanding intrepidity, who had recorded his journeys to remote corners of Asia and Africa in memorable books, finely illustrated with evocative photographs.

He held Kipling in high esteem, and as a member of the Kipling Society attended meetings when he could. He particularly admired *Kim*, which he took with him on all his travels. He saw it as a work of genius, the only book that he could open at any page, in the certainty of being instantly captivated anew. Also he chose two admirably suitable verses of Kipling's "Prelude" to *Departmental Ditties*, to serve as a moving dedication of his autobiography, *The Life of My Choice*, to 'dear hearts across the seas'.

His childhood in Abyssinia, where his father was for several years the Minister in the British Legation, was highly formative, giving him a close-up view of colourful events in that beautiful but turbulent country, and instilling in him an eager desire to see more of it. Together with a lasting affection for Abyssinia, he grew up with a devoted loyalty to Ras Tafari, the prince who in 1930 was crowned as Emperor Haile Selassie in a magnificent ceremony which Thesiger attended.

In 1935 the Italians carried out their brutal and unprovoked assault on Abyssinia and annexed it. For Thesiger, his service in Wingate's Gideon Force during the campaign against the Italians in 1940-41 was in the nature of a crusade, and he played a skilful and gallant part in the swift defeat of the entire Italian force. For this he was awarded the D.S.O. while still gazetted as a subaltern, which was, to say the least, unusual.

He was totally at home in the upper-class ambience of his privileged upbringing and his education at Eton and Oxford. (When his family visited India on leave in 1918 they went as guests of his uncle Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy. Exposure to that stately environment, still much as Kipling had described it, and riding on elephant-back to participate in a tiger hunt, were unforgettable experiences for an eight-year-old.) He enjoyed London – his flat in Chelsea, his books, long talks with his friends, pageantry and ceremonial such as Trooping the Colour – also membership of the Travellers Club — and he took an innocent pleasure in being lionised.

By contrast, however, he came to admire the courage, toughness

and values of ordinary people still living outside the reach of western civilisation. In his journeys he adopted their way of life, and the hazards and hardships that came with it. Above all he valued their companionship, and lived with them on almost equal terms. He deplored the spread of technology which was breaking down centuries-old ways of life. His first two, and best, books, *Arabian Sands* and *The Marsh Arabs*, are eloquent testimony to that vanished world which he was just in time to experience and record. I feel sure that Thesiger would have gained Kipling's approval as a man with 'two separate sides to his head'.

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## SOCIETY VISIT TO ROTTINGDEAN

By JANE KESKAR

Once again, on 16 July, we were in 'Sussex by the Sea', where a group of around 25 Members gathered in the Grange to hear Mike Smith's brilliant introduction to Rottingdean's history and the three famous houses, the Grange, the Elms and the holiday home of 'the beloved Aunt', North End House. Mike's lecture was illustrated with readings by himself, Elaine Erdley and Roger Ayers, of which I have only space here to mention a few. We heard of the labyrinth of passages beneath the cottages of Rottingdean and thrilled again to "A Smuggler's Song".

We dispersed in groups for lunch and were able to chat with old friends and meet members who cannot attend our London meetings. Fortunately the rain that threatened held off and after lunch we had a pleasant walk around the village while Mike entertained us with more stories of village landmarks. We heard of the Kiplings' efforts to improve "The Elms" inspiring him to write the teasing "Architect's Alphabet" (unpublished). There was an inevitable sadness when we were reminded of the tragedy of Josephine's death in New York and the memories which haunted Kipling on their return as Elaine read "Morrow Down".

Much of the large garden, which once belonged to The Elms, now flourishes as The Kipling Gardens, open to the public. It had the air of an intimate private garden, with winding brick footpaths, stone arches and luxurious herbaceous borders. Before tea we were able to see the very special Burne-Jones' windows in St Margaret's Parish Church, with the calm faces of the Archangels and Burne-Jones' soft blues and greens. Afterwards, we had an excellent cream tea in the sunlit walled garden of The Grange and Roger Ayers read the moving "Roman Centurion's Song" accompanied by a chorus of seagulls.

## "THE GARDENER"

By ROGER AYERS

[Roger Ayers was given the run of his father's red-leather pocket editions at an early age, which got him hooked on Rudyard Kipling as a story-teller during his schooldays. A chance purchase of *Sea Warfare* at a jumble sale 10 years later turned him into a collector of everything to do with Kipling, which led him to the Kipling Society. During some twenty years of Army staff appointments and Civil Service postings overseas he was unable to play an active part until he returned to England on final retirement. He became Membership Secretary in 1998, a job for which, since he is currently also Chairman of Council, he is earnestly seeking a successor. He has run courses on the life and works of Rudyard Kipling for his local branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) as well as introductory courses in his other active hobby, archaeology. Roger gave this talk to the Society in London on 9 April 2003. – Ed.]

There is a frequently quoted paragraph in *Something of Myself* where Rudyard Kipling wrote, specifically with reference to *Rewards and Fairies*; – 'I worked the material in three or four overlaid tints and textures, which might or might not reveal themselves according to the shifting light of sex, youth and experience' – an admission which I feel has too often been taken as a pointer to hidden treasure in all his stories.<sup>1</sup>

However, I have to accept that Lord Birkenhead was right in his biography of Rudyard Kipling, when he said that the late stories 'are composed with layer upon layer of meaning, close packed like the skin of an onion' and lists "The Gardener" amongst those stories on which 'four or five' different interpretations can be placed.<sup>2</sup>

I had not considered "The Gardener" in this light until I was preparing for a series of discussion periods on the late stories with a group of members of the local U3A – University of the Third Age – the members of which are over fifty and free to study in groups on weekdays – so they are mainly retired people with a wealth of experience from all walks of life – and some very sharp minds.

Prior to this, "The Gardener" had been to me the sad distillation of the life of a woman who made a mistake, concealed it and paid a terrible price for it before receiving absolution in a spiritual experience. I had also read it infrequently enough for something of the special effect of a first reading to return each time.

Closer reading gave me glimpses of some of Birkenhead's 'layers of skin' and I received help from many members of the Rudyard Kipling forum on the Kipling Society website<sup>3</sup> when I sought their aid on points unclear to me, help I must acknowledge with grateful thanks.

As a result, and prompted by the keen interest and the discussions

of my U3A group, I started to delve deeper into the story and was unwise enough to mention this to Dr Jeffery Lewins, our Meetings Secretary, and so I find myself here today.

Right from the start of the story, in the paragraphs that set the scene for all that is to follow, a single, clear story line is not easy to pick out because there is a touch of irony, a hint of double meaning, which can sow doubt in the reader's mind about the veracity of the statements being read. It is almost as if Kipling was counting on the reader to think the worst of the situation so that it becomes unclear whether it is the reader or the village that assumes there is more to things than Helen has actually said.

These initial seeds of uncertainty are so skilfully sown that it takes very careful reading to get past the surface layer to some of the layers of meaning detected by Kipling's biographers and critics over the years.

The generally accepted surface layer is that Helen Turrell, of good family, from an English village, at the age of 35, both parents dead, goes to the South of France for the best part of a year, ostensibly for her health, actually for the birth of an illegitimate son. On returning, she passes him off as the child of her dead brother by the daughter of an army N.C.O. This fiction she maintains as the boy, Michael, grows up and goes to school. During this phase Kipling makes clear the love between them and Helen's joy in that love. However, in the autumn of 1914, Michael, initially tempted to enlist, gets a temporary commission in a new wartime battalion and is subsequently reported missing in France.

There follows a description of Helen's metamorphosis into one of the thousands of the bereaved relatives of the missing, which ends when Michael's body is found.

Helen is then converted into one of the pilgrims making their way to their loved ones' graves. After meeting other pilgrims on her way, she ends up in a vast cemetery of 'merciless black crosses' and is shown to Michael's grave by a man planting out seedlings. She only has to say Michael's name, adding, as she has always done, 'my nephew', for him to rise and say 'with infinite compassion', 'I will show you where your son lies.'

With no further comment, the story ends with Helen leaving the cemetery, and going away, 'supposing him to be the gardener'.

The American critic, Brander Mathews, writing in 1926, the year of its first publication, calls it 'a beautiful tale, beautifully told, which leaves us wondering who the mysterious gardener might be. But those will pierce the veil who recall the memorable meeting of Mary Magdalene with "one in the likeness of a gardener"<sup>14</sup>, an early assessment which reflects nothing but the smooth outer skin of the story.

The association of the gardener with Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden near Golgotha may come as a surprise to the first-time reader, although it should not, since Kipling has prefaced the story with eight lines of verse.

One grave to me was given,  
One watch till Judgement Day;  
And God looked down from Heaven  
And rolled the stone away.

*One day in all the years,  
One hour in that one day,  
His Angel saw my tears,  
And rolled the stone away!*

For many critics and, I believe, for most readers, all this adds up to Helen having her stone 'rolled away', her burden of the years of concealment of her true relationship to Michael being lifted from her shoulders. Just how this occurs is not clear and is frequently skated over, one critic even saying that this absolution comes to Helen 'although she could not recognise it'<sup>5</sup>.

That other interpretations are possible can be seen from Charles Carrington, in his biography of Kipling, who, when contrasting it with the earlier story, "Mary Postgate", says that "The Gardener" 'is quite another view of a hard, efficient, loveless woman!'<sup>6</sup> Efficient – yes. She organised the birth immaculately. Hard – well, at least tough and, like Michael, 'fearless and philosophic'. But loveless – Never!

Helen's love for Michael and his love for her are clearly shown by the descriptions of Michael's 'wonderful Christmas, Easter, and Summer holidays following each other, variegated and glorious as jewels on a string'; an echo here, perhaps, of Kipling's own holidays with Aunt Georgy from the House of Desolation<sup>7</sup> and his own feelings when his son, John, came home from school 'as blissfully happy a young mortal as I have ever seen'.<sup>8</sup> But it was more to Helen and Michael than just release from school, for Michael's 'interest in Helen was constant and increasing throughout. She repaid it with all that she had of affection or could command of counsel and money'.

From a different viewpoint, Rupert Croft Cooke stated that, while "Mary Postgate" and "The Gardener" were about loss, in neither case was it 'a son who has been killed as Kipling's own boy was.'<sup>9</sup> That is, Michael really was Helen's nephew.

I thought that this was an isolated view until, as a result of my appeal for help on the Rudyard Kipling forum, Professor William

Dillingham of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, sent me a draft of his article on "The Gardener", which has since appeared in *English Language Notes* in January this year.<sup>10</sup> This, and his article "Grief, Anger and Identity: Kipling's "Mary Postgate" " in the March 2002 *Kipling Journal*<sup>11</sup> are intended for his forthcoming book, *Rudyard Kipling; Hell and Heroism*. It may surprise you to hear that "The Gardener" falls into his Hells section.

This most generous gesture really got me thinking, for Professor Dillingham also puts forward a case for Helen truly being Michael's aunt, but argues that this fact becomes almost incidental, for by the end of the story the love that she bore him, which I have illustrated above, makes her, in every sense but the biological, Michael's mother. And it is this developed love that makes her bereavement such a terrible Hell.

Whatever meanings may be read into the story – and some of these may well not be what the author intended – in the case of this particular story we do have evidence of how Kipling saw Helen and Michael. On 14 March 1925, while on a visit to war cemeteries and cathedrals in France, he wrote in his motoring diary 'Have begun a few lines on the story of Helen Turrell and her "nephew" and the gardener in the great 20,000 cemetery'.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that "nephew" was in quotation marks, particularly as Charles Carrington, in his biography of Rudyard Kipling, omitted them in his version of this entry,<sup>13</sup> which has led some commentators astray.

Incidentally, Kipling completed the story for its first typing by 23 March, his diary entry being 'A good job not so badly done'. With which, I think, all will agree.

But even if we did not have the "nephew" entry, there are also passages within the story, which I feel make this mother-son relationship unambiguous. That essential careful reading of the opening paragraphs makes clear that while the village knows enough about Helen and her brother George to believe what Helen says, all that the village knows about Michael's birth is only what Helen has told it, and this is a fiction that Helen carefully maintains. Maintains even to the extent of telling people some years later about Michael being allowed to call her 'Mummy' in secret, just in case Emma, the elderly maid, should overhear him say it. When Michael, aged six, is distressed that she has revealed this secret, Helen maintains the fiction of his parentage to him but later has to reassure him, when ill and with a fever, that 'nothing on earth or beyond could make any difference between them.'

However, there is one moment when it looks as though Helen may finally drop the pretence, at least with Michael, in the passage where the possibility of Michael enlisting as a private on the outbreak of war is discussed. Helen is horrified at the thought.

'But it's in the family,' Michael laughed.

'You don't mean to tell me that you believed that old story all this time?' said Helen.

Here Kipling inserts, in parenthesis, a fact that can only have relevance to this question – '(Emma, her maid, had been dead now several years.)'

Now what story could Helen mean except the one that she had concocted about Michael's mother being the daughter of a non-commissioned officer? With Emma dead, she appears to be about to reveal all to Michael, but in the end says only 'I gave you my word of honour—and I give it again—that—that it's alright. It is indeed.' Which reveals nothing, and Michael remains unenlightened, still accepting that his grandfather was an NCO.

In the end, Michael does not enlist, he gets a temporary commission in a new battalion and, like John Kipling, and as Kipling recommended to Stanley Baldwin for John's cousin Oliver,<sup>14</sup> he gets a period of grace and training in England before being sent abroad to the war.

The 'period of grace' is spent on Home Defence in England and is then extended by good fortune in France until Michael is suddenly killed by 'a shell-splinter dropping out of a wet dawn'. A description almost of some gentle act, enhanced by the image of the next shell covering the body so 'that none but an expert would have guessed that anything unpleasant had happened.' Michael vanishes.

After a one-line break in the text, there follows a closely written section on the ritual following the notification of a report of missing or killed which had become such a terrible, inescapable, and almost universal, aspect of life in the Great War.

This must reflect the experiences of the Kiplings, and that of many of their friends, both before and after John was reported missing and it emphasises the unbreakable, conveyor-belt-like process that the bereaved went through. To press home this image, Kipling tells of Michael taking Helen to a munitions factory to see shells being made – somewhat unlikely for the ordinary civilian but just the sort of thing Kipling himself might have seen.

Unlike the Kiplings, Helen is later given proof of Michael's death and the location of a grave – 'an altar upon earth where [she] might lay [her] love'. It was the lack of such a place for himself and Carrie that made Rudyard such a staunch advocate of the Imperial War Graves Commission's policy of equal treatment for all dead and missing, writing, in opposition to those who wanted private memorials or bodies brought home,

'... We shall never have any grave to go to ... I wish some of the people who are making this trouble realised how more than fortunate they are to have a name on a headstone in a known place.'<sup>15</sup>

Helen now takes her place on a new conveyor-belt of pilgrims to their loved ones' graves and Kipling's irony is here touched with a hint of bitterness, directed to those comfortably off who had a grave and could afford to visit it, the sort of people who told Helen 'how easy it was and how little it interfered with life's affairs to go and see one's grave'.

Helen is advised that Michael's cemetery could be 'comfortably' reached by boat and train and a 'comfortable' night could be spent in a 'comfortable' hotel before visiting one's grave – "'So different' as the Rector's wife said 'if he'd been killed in Mesopotamia or even Gallipoli' " – and I hear in these words Kipling again stressing how much more fortunate some relatives were than others.

So Helen makes the trip and ends up seeking direction from an officer 'in a board and tar-paper shed on the skirts of a razed city full of whirling lime-dust and blown papers.' Having experienced a bombed city, I can only marvel at such an economic evocation of the destruction of old buildings, built with lime mortar, and the wind-spread litter of their one-time contents.

She is asked, not for the last time, if she 'knows her grave', which no longer seems to be just Michael's. She shows him the row and number just as a large Lancashire woman is thrust almost forcibly into the story. Although her appearance is limited to less than 20 lines, the abruptness of her entry into the smooth but painful flow of the story, and her equally sudden exit, must mean that she has a part to play although most critics do not even mention her. Now I do think her part is important but it will be more appropriate if I leave it for now and return to it later.

The Lancashire woman is immediately followed by another character, Mrs Scarsworth, whose part in the story critics have discussed extensively. Mrs Scarsworth is an experienced visitor to war cemeteries – on behalf of friends at home, she assures Helen – so that she can tell them about 'the place' and take photographs for them. Mrs Scarsworth intrudes into Helen's numb grief, joining her at dinner, going on and on about the dead whose graves she was visiting until Helen flees to her room. Even there, Mrs Scarsworth follows her, aware of Helen's distaste but compelled in an outburst of confession to admit that she, too, had a grave, the grave of a man who was once, and still was, everything to her in a relationship to which she could never admit, never had admitted to until now. Although she had visited the grave – him – eight times, she felt so sick of years of lying that she could not

go again without telling someone, in order 'to be worthy of him.' She ends this outpouring with a gesture carefully described by Kipling –

She lifted her joined hands almost to the level of her mouth, and brought them down sharply, still joined, to full arms' length below her waist.

This seems to be at first a move to keep back the words she was saying, followed by a lowering of defences as a sign that she was making a clean breast of things, perhaps even a wringing of hands. Professor Nora Crook showed at our last meeting how similar this description was to Holman Hunt's 1853 picture "The Awakening Conscience" – described as a 'crowd pleasing moral lesson' and much reproduced.<sup>16</sup>

Helen is moved enough to catch her hands in this position and, head bowed over them, murmur "'Oh, my dear! My dear!'", Mrs Scarsworth's reaction, for whatever reason, was immediate and unexpected – purpling, she says " 'My God! Is *that* how you take it?' " and leaves.

What could have been the reason for Mrs Scarsworth feeling so rejected? I have puzzled long over what Kipling meant by causing her to react in the way that she did but I have now come to the conclusion that the reason does not matter to the story, it is Mrs Scarsworth's belief that she has been rejected that matters. That this belief might be the result of a misunderstanding makes it all the more poignant, for she had made her confession, apparently only to have it rebuffed, absolute denied.

The following morning, Helen approaches the cemetery, the fictitious 'Hagenzeele Third' of 21,000 graves — incidentally, nearly twice as large as any actual cemetery. Helen meets, at the top of the steps 'the entire crowded level of the thing . . . a merciless sea of black crosses . . . a waist-high wilderness as of weeds stricken dead, rushing at her.' The seeds of this description can be seen in Kipling's letter to Rider Haggard, written the same evening that he started "The Gardener", in which, describing his visit the day before to Rouen Cemetery (11,000 graves) he wrote 'One never gets over the shock of this Dead Sea of arrested lives'.<sup>17</sup>

Bewildered and lost, Helen seeks help from the young man firming a young plant in the soft earth. Without prelude or salutation, he asked:

'Who are you looking for?'

'Lieutenant Michael Turrell—my nephew.' said Helen slowly and word for word, as she had many thousands of times in her life.

I think these words are the saddest part of the story, for here Helen's careful maintenance of her false front is pointless, and it is too late for the truth to be revealed to Michael, even as it was too late for Mrs Scarsworth to become 'worthy' of her lover. But the man in the graveyard looked at Helen

with infinite compassion before he turned from the fresh-sown grass towards the naked black crosses.

'Come with me,' he said, 'and I will show you where your son lies.'

There is a one-line break in the text here, as there has been between other episodes in the story, before Kipling ends with:

When Helen left the Cemetery she turned for a last look. In the distance she saw the man bending over his young plants; and she went away, supposing him to be the gardener.

Despite every hope that the reader might have that Helen would be comforted by this compassionate being speaking the truth, there is absolutely no indication that this is so or that her burden has been lifted, the stone rolled away. It feels as though it ought to have happened but when she goes, Helen still supposes him to be the gardener and there is nothing to indicate that anything has changed.

This is the opposite of what happened to Mary Magdalene according to St John's Gospel, for Mary, 'supposing him to be the gardener', addresses Jesus who immediately reveals himself to her and her sorrow is lifted.<sup>18</sup>

And it is here that I return to the Lancashire woman who burst so abruptly into the story earlier. She was searching for her son who had enlisted, since they were respectable folk, under the name of Smith, she did not know his number nor which of his two Christian names he might have used and she gave a different place of death that day to the one she had given the day before. Her Cook's tourist ticket was about to expire, and, if she could not find her child, she would go mad, with which words 'she fell forward on Helen's breast' and has to be carried unconscious to a cot.

To Philip Mason, one of the few critics who do mention her, this is just an hysterical woman who did not know under what name her son had enlisted.<sup>19</sup> A critic who takes her more seriously is Elliot L Gilbert who sees her 'separated from her child by an exaggerated and destructive commitment to respectability' and that in her search for 'this son named Smith who seems to have fallen on more than one battlefield'

she 'becomes a symbol of all mothers who have lost their children and have afterwards sought for them in vain'.<sup>20</sup>

But this story is not about mothers – what its other two women characters, Helen and Mrs Scarsworth, have in common is that they are both Magdalens; woman who had had what was then an illicit sexual relationship. The term Magdalen at that time was used to cover girls and women within a wide range of real or suspected sexual behaviour, as the recent award-winning film on Irish Magdalen Laundries makes horrifically clear.<sup>21</sup> Magdalen Laundries or homes were not exclusively Irish and the term was used in England.

So could the Lancashire woman also have been a Magdalen? I think she was, for not knowing where a child was or what it had come to be called was the lot of many Magdalens who had given up, or had had taken from them, their illegitimate babies.

All together, I think the whole story is one of great compassion – Kipling's compassion for women who found themselves in their various Hells, torn apart by the war because they were unable to be truthful about those whom the war had taken from them. A triple tragedy: Helen grieving for her secret son, Mrs Scarsworth for her secret lover; the Lancashire woman for the lost child. Though we might differ on some aspects of the story, I think with Professor Dillingham that it is right to put "The Gardener" in "The Hells" section of his book. But still, this is a story, as Craig Raine puts it, of Kipling's 'abiding concern with love, in all its desolate manifestations'.<sup>22</sup>

Compassion, too, in the second half of the story, for all those bereaved who, like the Kiplings, had no knowledge of the place where their dead lay, or had no means of visiting it if they were 'so more than fortunate'. I strongly suspect that it was this compassion that originally prompted Kipling to write the story during his visit to the cemeteries with their Dead Sea of arrested lives.

To return to my view that the three women of the story are Magdalens all – I also think that this view is not inconsistent with the poem, "The Burden", which Kipling added to the collected version of the story. Only on the most superficial level can the first three verses all apply to Helen and support the simplest level of the story, ending with her stone being rolled away in the last verse, but, like the story, there is a layer underneath.

If we think of three separate Magdalens, then the first verse does apply to Helen – stuck with her secret and with no living soul, now Michael has gone, to whom she can reveal the truth.

One grief on me is laid  
Each day of every year,

Wherein no soul can aid,  
 Whereof no soul can hear:  
 Whereto no end is seen  
 Except to grieve again—  
 Ah, Mary Magdalene,  
 Where is there greater pain?

The second verse is Mrs Scarsworth, so tired of lying, of acting lies, of thinking lies; but, since her lover is dead, to no profit, all is in vain.

To dream on dear disgrace  
 Each hour of every day—  
 To bring no honest face  
 To aught I do or say:  
 To lie from morn till e'en—  
 To know my lies are vain—  
 Ah, Mary Magdalene,  
 Where can be greater pain?

And the third verse, which is totally unlike anything which we have heard of Helen's behaviour, could be the Lancashire woman, for it is she, fearing that she will never find her child, who rages into the story, threatening to go mad.

To watch my steadfast fear  
 Attend my every way  
 Each day of every year—  
 Each hour of every day:  
 To burn, and chill between—  
 To quake and rage again—  
 Ah, Mary Magdalene,  
 Where shall be greater pain?

Which leaves us the last verse. Who was she? In my view, this verse in italics is in a completely different voice, the voice of the original Mary Magdalene, the only Magdalen whose tears the Angel saw and the only one for whom the stone was rolled away.

*One grave to me was given—  
 To guard till Judgment Day—  
 But God looked down from Heaven  
 And rolled the Stone away!  
 One day of all my years—  
 One hour of that one day—*

*His Angel saw my tears  
And rolled the Stone away!*

Which did not happen to her three sisters in their own individual Hells.

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# KIPLING'S "THE HOUSES"

## AN EXTRAORDINARY SONNET

By Dr R. BUTLER

[Dr Ronnie Butler read Modern Languages at Cambridge, and then taught at Eton, Manchester Grammar School, and for three years in France. After this, he became Senior Lecturer in French at Manchester Metropolitan University until retirement. He has published books on Zola's *La Terre* and *Balzac and the French Revolution*. He is currently engaged in compiling *An Anthology of English Sonnets*. – Ed.]

In the *Definitive Edition of Rudyard Kipling's Verse*<sup>1</sup>, there are only six sonnets, yet despite their small number there are aspects of them which are of particular interest. They comprise the two sonnets "June" and "September", which appeared in 1885 under the title of "Two Months" in *Departmental Ditties*. They were followed by "The Houses"(1898) and "Prophets at Home"(1906), and by Kipling's last two sonnets, "The Covenant"(1914) and "The Hour of the Angel"(1923).

Between them the six sonnets display a considerable variety in terms of their rhyming-scheme. One of them, "Prophets at Home", adopts the Shakespearean format of abab cdcd efef gg. In another three, "June", "September", and "The Covenant", Kipling opts for two quatrains of variable rhyme in the opening octave, while two tercets, each of which rhymes efg efg, make up the closing sestet. The most idiosyncratic rhyming-scheme is the pattern of abab bcdd def dec, which is found in "The Hour of the Angel".

Each sonnet has its qualities, but it is "The Houses" which stands out from the rest. What distinguishes it as far as rhyme is concerned is the fact that it is entirely written in rhymed couplets. Kipling thus confirms that the rhymed couplet provides an alternative rhyming-scheme for the sonnet beyond the Petrarchan and the Shakespearean models which have traditionally dominated it.<sup>2</sup>

Kipling is not the only poet to have experimented with the rhymed couplet in the sonnet. Others before and since, notably Herrick, Sassoon, and Yeats, have done the same, but the remarkable feature of "The Houses" is the accomplished manner in which Kipling allies his use of the rhymed couplet with a rare metrical dexterity.

With one exception ('anon' in line 7), all the final words forming the sequence of rhymed couplets are monosyllabic, and such is Kipling's verbal economy that no fewer than five lines (lines 2-5, and line 9) consist exclusively of monosyllables.

Like "Prophets at Home", "The Houses" departs from the iambic pentameter and relies instead on the tetrameter to give the sonnet its

metrical design and rhythm. Its uniqueness lies in the exquisite symmetry of its metre.

The unbroken succession of tetrameters reveals an ingenious series of variations which are developed on the insistent refrain of 'my house and thy house'. In only one line, line 9, is it not found in some form or other. Kipling's virtuosity in the sonnet can be measured by the fact that not only is each line an eleven-syllable tetrameter, but it also has an identical metrical structure. In every single line an iamb is followed by three anapaests<sup>3</sup>, so that the scansion emerges as follows:

• / •        • / •        • / • • /  
 'Twixt my house and thy house the pathway is broad,  
 • / • • / • •        •        /  
 In thy house or my house is half the world's hoard;  
 • / • • / •        • / • •        /  
 By my house and thy house hangs all the world's fate,  
 • / • • / • • / •        •        /  
 On thy house and my house lies half the world's hate.

• / • •        / • • /        • • /  
 For my house and thy house no help shall we find  
 • / •        • / •        • / • • /  
 Save thy house and my house—kin cleaving to kind;  
 • / • • / •        •        / • • /  
 If my house be taken, thine tumbleth anon.  
 • / • • / •        •        / • • /  
 If thy house be forfeit, mine followeth soon.

• / •        • /        •        • / • • /  
 'Twixt my house and thy house what talk can there be  
 • / •        • / •        • / • • /  
 Of headship or lordship, or service or fee?  
 • / • • / •        •        / • • /  
 Since my house to thy house no greater can send  
 • / • • / • • / • • /  
 Than thy house to my house—friend comforting friend;  
 • / • • / • • / • • /  
 And thy house to my house no meaner can bring  
 • / • • /        •        •        / • • /  
 Than my house to thy house—King counselling King!

"The Houses" is an astonishing *tour de force* of poetic technique. The combination of rhymed couplets with a rare mastery of innovative met-

rical forms enables it to qualify as one of the most audacious achievements in the history of the English sonnet.

#### NOTES

1. Published by Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, Final Edition, 1940.
2. In the Petrarchan rhyming-scheme the octave consists of two quatrains rhyming abba abba, while the concluding sestet comprises two tercets of variable rhyme. In his sonnet-sequence "Amoretti", Spenser adopted an original rhyming-scheme of abab bcba cded ee.
3. An iamb is a metrical foot in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable. It may be denoted •/. In an anapaest, two unstressed syllables precede a stressed syllable( ••/ ).

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#### EDITORIAL – (Continued from p.6)

The Fund referred to was set up in 1877, and promoted by the New York *Herald-Tribune*. The objective was to enable impoverished children to have a holiday at a summer camp, and in another letter to Pond, Kipling describes it as his 'pet charity'.

The 'original hardwood verse' inscribed in the autograph book is:

In the "Iroquois" at Buffalo that partnership broke up  
To the melancholy tooting of a six-shot boudoir Krupp;  
And the bell-boys on the staircase counted pistol crack and oath,  
While the partners argued hotly if the earth could hold them both.

"The Story of a Lecture" (Rudyard Kipling).

It sounded familiar, and I finally tracked it down in Andrew Rutherford's *Early Verse*. Here it has the title "Verses from a Letter to Andrew Lang" of 26 October 1889 (quoted from *Rudyard Kipling to Rider Haggard*, ed. Morton Cohen, London, 1965, pp.26-7) of which the penultimate stanza is that given above except that 'tooting' becomes 'music', 'crack' becomes 'shot' and 'earth' becomes 'States'. This amusing poem is modelled on Bret Harte's "The Society upon the Stanislaus", perhaps better known for its first line 'I reside at Table Mountain, and my name is Truthful James;', and is about a possible joint lecture tour by Lang and Rider Haggard who at that time were collaborating in writing *The World's Desire*. In this, Odysseus meets Helen (of Troy) once again, but this time in Egypt.

The letter must have been written between 1890 and 1897, probably when Kipling was living in Vermont, and it can be seen that his use of his talents to benefit charitable causes started early in his career.

## THE HUN AT THE GATE

### KIPLING'S OBSESSION WITH THE GERMAN THREAT

By F. A. UNDERWOOD

[Before he retired Alan Underwood was a physicist in industrial research laboratories, and eventually a lecturer at the University of Bath, but his private passions were fox-hunting and Kipling. He has collected books by and about Kipling since he was a schoolboy and has kept Kipling scrapbooks since 1940. He joined the Society in 1944 and became a Life Member (a now extinct category) a few years later at the cost of one week's salary as a newly-qualified scientist. – *Ed.*]

An article by Mr. H. D. Potter on "Rudyard Kipling and the First World War"<sup>1</sup> and the letters provoked by it<sup>2</sup>, mostly rather against his conclusions, set me thinking about the attitude of my father and some others of his generation – the reason perhaps why I understand Kipling's long-lasting fear of German aggression. The term "Hun" is certainly less shocking to me than it is to younger readers, and I intend to trace Kipling's use of it, quoting a few examples, and to conclude with an Appendix on the opinions on which I was brought up in the 1930s. It is strange to realise that the gap between the two world wars was only 21 years (or 15 minutes according to Kipling). In the school OTC [Officer Training Corps – *Ed.*] before the second we wore the Field Service Dress of 1914, flat cap, tunic and puttees; many of the masters had served in the first war and the PT [Physical Training – *Ed.*] teacher cum sergeant instructor had been wounded at Mons. On the other hand, 58 years have elapsed since the end of the second, this leading to an attitude of mind which regards the bombing of Germany (but not of Britain) as wicked. One can see how a parallel change occurred between 1918 and 1939 in spite of the shorter interval and how it was accepted by the naïve left.

Lord Birkenhead pointed out<sup>3</sup> that Kipling expressed his fear of Germany's intentions in a letter to CE. Norton as early as 1897:

You see we are girded at and goaded by Germany, and there is an uneasy feeling that the continent is getting ready for the big squeeze. We have only ourselves to trust, but the people won't move (you know our way) *en masse*, till they consider it's a just war. . . .

This distrust of Germany and worry about Britain's unpreparedness ran as a thread through the rest of Kipling's life. It would be a daunting task to follow the thread through all of his political verses, speeches, stories and letters<sup>4</sup> and so I limit myself to a few examples,

mostly but not entirely, to show he came to use the term Hun more as time went on.

Kipling apparently first used the term in 1902 in "The Rowers"; one of his spirited political poems. Kaiser Wilhelm had used it in 1900 in a speech to German troops sailing to China at the time of the Boxer Rising<sup>5</sup>. "The Rowers" was published in *The Times* in December 1902, first collected in *The Five Nations and The Seven Seas* (Bombay Edition, Vol.XXII, 1914) and was significantly placed as the first item in *The Years Between* (1919). Kipling like many others in Britain, had been angered by Germany's siding with the enemy during the Boer War and so was not pleased by a request from that State shortly after it ended. The otherwise puzzling poem is explained in a heading referring to a long-forgotten episode: 'When Germany proposed that England should help her in a naval demonstration to collect debts from Venezuela'<sup>6</sup>. I quote a few verses:

They sang:—'What reckoning do you keep,  
 And steer her by what star,  
 If we come unscathed from the Southern deep  
 To be wrecked on a Baltic bar ?  
 'That we must lie off a lightless coast  
 And haul and back and veer,  
 At the will of the breed that have wronged us most  
 For a year and a year and a year !  
 'In sight of peace—from the Narrow Seas  
 O'er half the world to run—  
 With a cheated crew, to league anew  
 With the Goth and the shameless Hun !'

The years from 1902 to 1914 saw Kipling becoming more involved in politics. From "The Islanders" onwards to "Ulster" and *Rudyard Kipling's Indictment of the Government* [Speech at Tunbridge Wells, 16 May 1914 — *Ed.*] he displayed an increasing dislike of the way politicians, the Liberals of course in particular, managed affairs. His tone rose at times to a very shrill pitch indeed, as in the last two items mentioned. Like Lord Roberts and his National Service League, he urged preparation for the war he saw coming and stressed the need for compulsory military service: both were either ignored or reviled as war-mongers. Most of Kipling's involvement with politics was indirect, for example his frequent letters to H.A. Gwynne, editor of the *Standard* and later of the *Morning Post*, with suggestions of 'lines to take' and for editorials. Before the Great War he tended to use "Teuton" rather than "Hun" for Germany in these. For example in 1908

he wrote to Gwynne: 'You are dead right about the Teuton and I fear the time shorter even than we think.'<sup>7</sup> And in 1910:

We in England are just camping quietly on the edge of a volcano and telling each other that the danger of a German explosion is over . . . . Meanwhile the Teuton is angry, and is taking measures and steps as fast and as hard as he can. I don't want to see a conscript army under small-arm fire for the first time . . . . but I expect I shall live to see it – for a few minutes at any rate.

In another letter he wrote: 'Meanwhile the Teuton has his large cold eye on us, and prepares to give us toko when he feels good and ready. . . .'

It is not surprising that Kipling spoke of the Hun at the gate in "For all we have and are" [*The Years Between*] at the beginning of the Great War; not for him 'swimmers into cleanness leaping/Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary. . . .'<sup>18</sup> Having foretold it for so long and weighed the odds he knew that it was not to be a short, easy war.

For all we have and are,  
For all our children's fate,  
Stand up and take the war,  
The Hun is at the gate !

In a note for F.N. Doubleday on this poem<sup>8</sup> Kipling said: 'Generally adjudged at the time it was written as "too serious for the needs of the case" but in 1915 it was realised that it was the truth and was generally used, for propaganda.' Taken on its own the last line quoted could mean no more "the barbarians are attacking", and this was no exaggeration in 1914. It would seem that Kipling's use and perhaps the general use of "Hun" took time to become commonplace. Those of us who remember the summer of 1939 will appreciate the feeling in the summer of 1914 when ruthless invaders were loosed on Europe again.

The published writings and letters in the early years of the war used the terms "Teuton" (or "Boche" occasionally) but "Hun" hardly ever, even after John Kipling was reported missing in 1915. "Hun" was used frequently from 1916 to 1919 with which Pinney's volume 4 closes, and excerpts from letters in various biographies show that this continued to the end of Kipling's life. I quote a few examples from 1916 onwards.

In a letter to Ian Colvin<sup>9</sup> in October 1916 Kipling suggested an editorial in the *Morning Post* answering a speech which had stated that a trade war after the peace would revive "hates" better left to die; it read in part:

There is no question of "hate" now in our relations with the Hun whatever may have been the case at the opening of the war . . . . The

Hun is outside any humanity we have had any experience of. Our concern with him is precisely the same as our concern with the germs of any malignant disease. . .

The first sentence reads oddly compared with "The Beginnings", the verses following "Mary Postgate" in *A Diversity of Creatures*. The second brings to mind the descriptions and photographs when the concentration camps were entered at the end of the Second World War.

To my mind one of the nastiest examples occurs in a letter to Stanley Baldwin from Newquay, Cornwall in September 1918<sup>10</sup>. By all accounts spy-mania was common in Britain throughout the Great War, but was usually found amongst the less educated classes. Kipling described an incident when a mob of locals and visitors, incensed by the arrival of bodies from torpedoed ships attacked a boarding house overlooking the coast and harbour because it was occupied by in his words 'a party of Huns – dog and three dry bitches'. They turned out to be German-born but long naturalised and were fortunately spirited away by a town-councillor. The glee with which Kipling described the events is shocking now, although the uncomprehending scorn with which later generation views that of 1939-45 makes me reluctant to judge reactions in 1918.

To mention another example from many available, it is noticeable that a speech [Folkestone, 15 February 1918 – *Ed.*] supporting war savings published as *Kipling's Message* (1918) began with references to thugs in India but was peppered by "Hun" towards its end.

In the extracts from correspondence between Kipling and Theodore Roosevelt spanning the war years included in Birkenhead's biography<sup>11</sup> it is interesting to note that he used "Hun" sparingly and that Roosevelt used the term himself on one occasion. In February 1919, Kipling wrote:

As you say, the fighting seems to be over, but the War is in full blast between a rather wearied Humanity and a Devil whose only hope now is to persuade people he is not so black as he was painted. . . .

Birkenhead concluded:

Reading this correspondence in the light of later knowledge it is clear that Kipling was right. The record and character of President Wilson, and his tortuous negotiations through Colonel House, which afterwards came to light, fully justify the contemporary opinions that Kipling formed of him. Wilson was proceeding according to the disastrous perfectionist theory that a fundamental change had come over human nature . . . This theory was accepted by many

eminent and able men, including J. M. Keynes. Kipling knew that it was false.

In the darkening last years of his life Kipling anticipated the Second World War: his public utterances were full of foreboding, and there is much evidence that those who met him found that he had become excessively irascible when the topic of defence was raised. Unlike the professionals, he took his politics to heart and did not treat it as a game in which party and personal advantages were more important than the safety of their country. He was again reviled by Liberal and now by Labour newspapers who condemned such oblique warnings as "The Storm Cone" (1932), "The Pleasure Cruise" and "Bonfires on the Ice" (1933) while the Nazis rose to power. A translation from a short letter to Henri Bordeaux appeared in some newspapers and caused great offence, an editorial in a now defunct Liberal daily being headed "A Voice from the Past"<sup>12</sup>. The letter included:

One thing is certain . . . and that is that the Boche has learned nothing from the last war during which he suffered relatively little. It is also certain that as soon as he can see his way clear he will begin his work again.

'Suffered relatively little' sounds hard in view of German casualties, but it must be remembered that the Great War ended before Allied armies entered Germany. *Souvenirs of France* (1933) [p.41] upset many who were blind to the threat from Germany, especially one remark:

The manoeuvre to abolish her internal debt cost Germany no more than a few thousand old and unusable persons wiped out, perhaps by starvation. It was magnificent, and it was the first step of the real war which began at a quarter-past eleven on the 11th November 1918.

As one would expect with Kipling, he refused to explain to the press the removal of the swastika from the Ganesh design on the cover of this small volume: the reason should have been obvious in 1933.

In his letters Kipling continued to send ideas to Gwynne and even to urge the organisation of air raid precautions long before the authorities took any steps towards them<sup>13</sup>. In private he still used the term "Hun", for example in January 1934<sup>14</sup>:

Here's the Hun getting into position for – '36? or a year later? I don't suppose anything will teach our people anything. Personally I shall be grateful if we are allowed three years, but given our pre-

sent administration and our disturbing internal influences, I can't see why the General Staff should not strike before that time. We aren't merely asking for it; we're imploring it... we have lost years in slush.

As a last effort Kipling spoke to the Royal Society of St. George on 6 May 1935, suppressing his internal passion and nor referring to Germany by name, much less to the "Hun"<sup>15</sup>. After mentioning the British who died in the Great War, those who died later from its effects or were incapacitated by them, he turned on those who had dissociated themselves from the war and then formed the theory 'that the war had been a sort of cosmic hallucination' and so condemned those who taken part. With a drive towards what is now called the Welfare State, '. . . we chose—we chose—not to provide that reasonable margin of external safety without which the lowest standard of life cannot be maintained...'

[Our opponent] had won his place in civilization by means of three well planned Wars . . . He had been checked somewhat in his fourth War, but soon after the close of it – in '24 or '25 — seemed to be preparing for a fifth campaign.

. . . we toiled, as men toil after virtue, to cast away a half and more than half of our defences in all three elements . . . It was laid upon us to set the world an example, no matter at what risks. And we did.

Kipling allowed a little optimism in his conclusion, which was in part:

Nevertheless the past year has given birth to the idea that our example of State-defended defencelessness has not borne much fruit, and that we have walked far enough along the road paved with good intentions. . . but if that time be *not* given to us . . . our country may have joined those submerged races of history who passed their children through the fire to Moloch in order to win credit with their Gods.

And yet, the genius of our race fights for us in the teeth of doctrine! The abiding springs of the English spirit are not of yesterday or the day before. They draw from an immemorial continuity of the Nation's life under its own Sovereigns. . . .

I have perhaps devoted rather too much space to summarising this last speech, but it did crown half a lifetime spent trying to warn the British people of threats from Germany and their own unpreparedness. Like Roberts before 1914 and Churchill before 1939, Kipling did not desire war but was accused by press and politicians of war-mongering for so many years. His frequent use of the term "Hun" (or "Boche" in

a French context), more in private than in public writings, is a symptom of the inner rage and despair a sick man felt as he saw his warnings scorned by his countrymen.

#### APPENDIX

The trouble with Mr Potter and others who write about the Great War is that they take their views from literary men such as Owen, Sassoon and Blunden<sup>16</sup>, not from the junior officers and other ranks who were less articulate and less likely to take actions such as Sassoon's. There were many more who could speak only of mud, trench foot, lice and comrades who "went out" at Wipers or wherever. It is a pity that Charles Carrington, the official biographer of Kipling, is no longer with us, for he wrote rather differently about his experiences in *A Subaltern's War* (as Charles Edmonds, 1929).

I think also of my own father, who was very badly wounded and consequently affected for the rest of his life, his friends of that generation and one or two who were gassed but survived, with difficulty, into the 1930s. Most of them had a poor opinion of the Germans – some, by the way had reservations about the French. Their view that Germany was not sufficiently punished at Versailles would have horrified Mr Potter, but that was how they thought. They could see the Second World War coming for a long time and blamed that on the soft treatment of Germany. No doubt the left-wing writers and the economists told them that they were wrong, but they would not have convinced them. I absorbed these ideas from the conversation of my seniors, and once I could read newspapers the helplessness of the League of Nations became apparent to me. The first time my father took me to the cinema – to see a version of *Kidnapped*, I think – there was a newsreel of German tanks going into somewhere or other (the Rhineland ?) and as we emerged into the light he remarked that war was now certain to come.

I have not kept up with the historians' view of the Great War, although I was familiar with the writings of Sassoon *et al.* at one time and gathered that accounts of the War inclined to their conclusions. It was therefore encouraging to see an expression of the opposite view, nearer to my father's, just as I finished a draft of this article. Under the heading "The "futile" First World War was a Triumph of Ingenuity"<sup>16</sup>, Alan Judd argued that the 'conflict is portrayed as a needless tragedy . . . we should also remember the real achievements of those who died.' He reminds us that: 'Every participant lost grievously, and even swift victories cost many lives because 20th century weaponry made fighting between those who were anything like equal very expensive to winners and losers alike', and points out that for the first time generals could not

command by voice or see actions taking place. He quotes from Carrington's book mentioned above: 'The Somme battle raised the morale of the British Army. Although we did not win a decisive victory, there was what matters most, a definite and growing sense of superiority to the enemy, man to man.' Judd admires the war poets and their war records but says: 'We do them no service by treating their partial truths as absolutes. . . . You need only to open your eyes and admit that there are parallel truths to be argued over.'

The opinion of some of my father's generation that the Versailles Treaty was too soft rather than too hard on Germany, which I had thought was almost unmentionable, apparently now has support from some professional historians. Professor Margaret Macmillan<sup>17</sup> argues that Hitler's plans of conquest and designs on Jews would have caused him to break out from any more generous boundaries set at Versailles and hence that the treaty was not too harsh after all.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Kipling Journal*, No.296, December 2000, pp.19-43.
2. *Kipling Journal*, No. 297, March 2001, pp.52-55; No.298, June 2001, pp.60-62.
3. Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p.183.
4. See Basil M. Bazley, *Kipling Journal*, No.74, July 1945, No.76, December 1945, Nos.77-79, April-October 1946.
5. Thomas Pinney (ed.), *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling, vol.4 1911-19*, pp.534, 541.
6. *Ibid.*, p.541 : Kipling added in the notes to *The Years Between* to F.N. Doubleday that it was 'at the time when Germany wished to embroil England with the U.S.A. under pretence, as usual of friendship.' See also p.532 (letter to André Chevrillon) in which Kipling suggested that anger in Germany led to a campaign to discredit him; a strange notion, but the liberally-minded critics were doing enough on those lines in Britain.
7. Birkenhead, *op.cit.*, p.252.
8. Pinney, *op.cit.*, p.541.
9. *Ibid.*, p.405.
10. *Ibid.*, p.510.
11. Birkenhead, *op.cit.*, pp.278-286.
12. *News Chronicle*, February 4, 1933.
13. Birkenhead, *op.cit.*, p.346.
14. *Ibid.*, p.345.
15. *Ibid.*, p.349.
16. *Daily Telegraph*, July 30, 2001. The author mentions research by academic historians such as John Terraine and, more recently Gary Sheffield (*Forgotten Victory: the First World War-Myth and Realities*, London, Headline, 2001).
17. *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and its attempt to end war*, (London, John Murray, 2001).
18. "I. Peace" 1914, Rupert Brooke.

## THE INDIA MUSEUM, SOUTH KENSINGTON

By ROGER AYERS and BRYAN DIAMOND

[A quotation from W.S. Caine on p.28 of the September 2003 issue of the *Journal* (No.307) in the article by Roger Ayers [RA], "The Original of 'Paget M.P.'?" (pp.26-28), roused the curiosity of Bryan Diamond [BD], author of the article on "John Lockwood Kipling and the V&A Museum" in the same issue (pp.45-48). The emails exchanged between them are recorded here. – *Ed.*]

BD – I am intrigued by the mention at page 28 of Wm. Caine writing 'Mr Kipling and his talented pupils have . . . collections in the India Museum at South Kensington'. I don't believe the V&A was ever called the India Museum; it was the "South Kensington Museum" until 1899. Also, does Caine really refer to J.L. Kipling and pupils in India sending to London exhibits for the Museum collection, of which I have not heard?

RA – I quoted exactly from Caine who, from other aspects of his work and as a pillar of Victorian Midlands Liberal society appears to be a most reliable source. The India Museum existed alongside the South Kensington Museum and was incorporated into it some time after 1879. The following extract from Dickens's *Dictionary of London*, 1879 (edited by Charles Dickens, Junior) gives some idea of its scope.

India Museum, South Kensington—Open daily, free, except on Thursdays, when an order from a member of council or head of department in the India Office is necessary. It contains specimens of the vegetable productions of India, in cereals, starches, oils, fruits, fibres, &c, also of animal productions connected with manufactures, and of textile fabrics. There are also numerous cases of weapons, jewellery, works in gold and silver, dresses, Cashmere shawls, Dacca muslins, and carvings in ivory, horn, and wood; with a large collection of clay figures, illustrating the races, castes, and employments of the people, and originally prepared for the Great Exhibition of 1851. The mythological collections are considered the most complete of their kind in Europe; and there are interesting models of the Car of Juggernaut; Runjeet Singh's golden chair of state; with a large collection of Hindu idols in precious metals, and Lahore gauntlets of elaborate workmanship. NEAREST Railway Station, South Kensington; Omnibus Route, Kensington-road; Cab Rank, "Bell & Horns," Cromwell Road.

In addition to the specific mention of 'Lahore gauntlets' in the above, the following paragraph on the history of the Punjab from a 1911 encyclopaedia found on the Internet\* links exhibits in the India Museum collection with similar items in the Lahore Museum .

History.—For the early history of the Punjab from the Aryan immigration to the fall of the Mogul dynasty see INDIA: History. It deserves, however, to be noted here that from the time of Alexander onwards Greek settlers remained in the Punjab, and that Greek artists gave their services for Buddhist work and introduced features of their own into Indian architecture. Besides the bases and capitals of large Greek columns at Shahden (Taxila) and elsewhere, numerous sculptures of Greek workmanship have been found at various places. These are single statues (probably portraits), also figures of Buddha, and representations of scenes in his legendary history, and other subjects. They are obtained from ruins of monasteries and other buildings, from mounds and the remains of villages or monumental topes. Of Buddhist buildings now remaining the most conspicuous as well as distinctive in character are the topes (stupa), in shape a plain hemisphere, raised on a platform of two or more stages. One of the largest of these is at Manikiala, 4 miles east of Rawalpindi. These Buddhist buildings and sculptures are all probably the work of the two centuries before and the three or four after the beginning of the Christian era. The character of the sculptures is now well known from the specimens in the India Museum, South Kensington, and both originals and casts of others in the Lahore Museum. Unfortunately they have no names or inscriptions, which give so much value to the sculptures of the Bharhut tope.

BD – I would only add that A.R. Ankers' book, *The Pater: John Lockwood Kipling, His Life and Times 1837-1911*, 1988, does not include any mention of J.L. Kipling or the Lahore Museum collecting any material to send to anywhere in Britain.

On the other hand, as to the India Museum, Dickens' reference to the India Office is explained in that the V&A Indian collections were (per the V&A Museum Guide, my 1960 edition) originally part of the India Office museum from 1858, and in 1880 were divided between the British and the South Kensington Museums. Therefore the materials collected by J.L. Kipling and pupils could now be in the British or V&A Museums; and since the mentions in the Guide of Buddhist sculptures do not include Manikiala, it seems that they may be in the British Museum.

\* On website page <http://85.1911.encyclopedia.org/P/PU/PUNKAH.htm>

## MUSIC, KIPLING & MUSICIANS

RECITAL ON 18 FEBRUARY 2004

Brian Martinson's project to catalogue all the musical settings of Kipling's verse is well documented on the Society's web-site and in the *Journal*, most recently with an article in the September 2003 issue. What started as a personal search for songs for his son to sing soon escalated; as a result his personal library of sheet music and recordings has benefited. It is time to use this growing resource to give members and other enthusiasts a live taste of the wealth of Kipling song composed from 1890 to the present day.

Within the limits set by the music available and the time allowed it is hoped to illustrate the facets of the subject explored in the September article. The extent to which Kipling was driven by music and in turn inspired musicians is reflected in the title "Music, Kipling & Musicians". The programme should at least include the five composers singled out as profoundly influenced by Kipling – Gerard Francis Cobb, Percy A. Grainger, Charles Koechlin, Peter F. Bellamy and, active today in the U.S.A., Leslie Fish. In fact, works by four of them will probably be heard and there will also be songs by Walter W Hedgcock, Sir Edward German, Sir Edward Elgar, Charles Edward Ives and others.

More than 700 young musicians from twenty Commonwealth and former Commonwealth countries participated in the 1988 Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition, whose final took place before a capacity audience on the 4 July at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. The Gold Medallist and winner of the First Prize and the Arthur Young Award for Singers was David Mattinson; Clare Toomer won the Eric Rice Memorial Prize for an accompanist. They performed together again at the Royal Over-Seas League Gala Concert in the State Apartments of St James's Palace on the 17 October the same year.

The association between the Society and the League, the venue for the recital, makes it particularly appropriate that these two musicians will be returning to provide our illustrations. Both have continued since 1988 in successful independent yet connected musical careers and have included several well-known Kipling songs in previous recitals. This, however, will be a unique opportunity to witness the interaction between one special poet and a selection from some 275 composers touched by his writing.

No detailed programme will be provided in advance. This allows for one or two surprises and is intended to make the reader curious to find out more; do come and hear for yourself. There should be something new for everyone. — *Brian J.H. Mattinson.*

## KIPLING'S COMIC AND SERIOUS VERSE

By CHRISTIE DAVIES

[Christie Davies was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge ( M.A., Ph.D.) and is an emeritus Professor at the University of Reading. He has been a visiting lecturer in India and his earliest work was published there in the journals edited by the late A.B. Shah. He is the author of three books about humour, the most recent being *The Mirth of Nations*, New Brunswick,NJ, Transaction, 2002. – Ed.]

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was one of Britain's most talented and celebrated writers and in 1907 became the first Englishman to win the Nobel prize for literature, but he remains a controversial figure for political reasons which blind many to the skill and depth of his work as a versifier. Much of Kipling's work both in his verse and in the dialogues in his short stories is written in what purport to be regional or national dialects notably cockney (the speech of working class and lower class Londoners) but also the speech of Ireland and Yorkshire and the Glaswegian of his poem "McAndrew's Hymn"<sup>29</sup>. Kipling has been criticised for this by commentators who claim that his renderings of these dialects are inaccurate and condescending. George Orwell<sup>47</sup> has even claimed in a political judgement masquerading as an aesthetic one that Kipling's use of cockney damages the aesthetic appeal of his poetry. Here Orwell has transgressed the Kantian aesthetic doctrine that<sup>24</sup> aesthetic judgements are independent of 'interest' and in particular of moral judgements about the society that produced the item whose beauty we are considering. Yet even if we set Kant's dictum aside for the moment, Orwell's judgements are wrong even on his own terms. Orwell wrote that:

If one examines his best and more representative work, his soldier's poems, especially *Barrack-Room Ballads*, one notices that what more than anything else spoils them is an underlying air of patronage. . . the private soldier, though loveable and romantic, has to be a comic. He is always made to speak in a sort of style of cockney, not very broad but with all the aitches and final 'g's' carefully omitted. Very often the result is as embarrassing as the humorous recitation at a church social. And this accounts for the curious fact that one can often improve Kipling's poems, make them less facetious and less blatant, by simply going through them and transplanting them from cockney into standard speech. This is especially true of his refrains, which often have a truly lyrical quality. Two examples will do. . .

So it's knock out your pipes and follow me!  
 And it's finish up your swipes and follow me!  
 Oh, hark to the big drum calling  
 Follow me – follow me home!

And again:

Cheer for the Sergeant's wedding –  
 Give them one cheer more!  
 Grey gun-horses in the lando,  
 And a rogue is married to a whore!

Here I have restored the aitches etc. Kipling ought to have known better. He ought to have seen that the two closing lines of the first of these stanzas are very beautiful lines, and that ought to have overridden his impulse to make fun of a working-man's accent. . . even where it makes no difference musically the facetiousness of his stage cockney dialect is irritating. However, he is more often quoted aloud than read on the printed page, and most people instinctively make the necessary alterations when they quote him.<sup>48</sup>

Orwell is wrong on all counts. It is difficult to see why anyone could possibly see 'Follow me home' as an intrinsically better line than 'Follow me 'ome'. Let us revert to Kipling's<sup>30</sup> original verses with their lost 'g's and 'd's, and deleted aitches and see how we might compare the two versions.

#### 'FOLLOW ME 'OME'

There was no one like 'im, 'Orse or Foot,  
 Nor any o' the Guns I knew;  
 An' because it was so, why, o' course 'e went an' died,  
 Which is just what the best men do.

*So it's knock out your pipes an' follow me!  
 An ' it's finish up your swipes an 'follow me!  
 Oh, 'ark to the big drum callin',  
 Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

[ 'Orse or Foot nor Guns refers to soldiers in the cavalry or the dragoons, the infantry and the artillery respectively. The speaker's closest friend, another soldier, has just died and is being taken to burial with the military band playing.]

## THE SERGEANT'S WEDDIN'

*Cheer for the Sergeant's weddin'—  
 Give 'em one cheer more!  
 Grey gun- 'orses in the lando,  
 An' a rogue is married to, etc.*

[After the wedding the newly married couple, the husband a corrupt sergeant, the wife a woman of easy virtue are leaving in a landau, a four wheeled carriage with a retractable top, drawn by two grey horses usually used to pull guns for the artillery.]

Orwell claims that his amended version sounds better than Kipling's original verses because the latter makes fun of the working man's accent. Yet this is not an aesthetic but a social and political point, an outgrowth of Orwell's intensely held egalitarian ideology and dislike of class differences. Orwell was the son of a minor British official in imperial India but had been educated at Eton<sup>38</sup>, an exclusive boarding school, most of whose pupils were rich and well connected, a school with an elite ethos, whose pupils and former pupils felt themselves to be apart from and superior to the great mass of ordinary people. Orwell came to repudiate this outlook and deliberately immersed himself<sup>39</sup> in the life of those doing casual work as hop-pickers or in catering or down and out altogether such as tramps, experiences leading to his writing "Hop-Picking"<sup>44</sup> and *Down and Out in Paris and London*<sup>41</sup>. Later he tried to enter the social world of those who worked in mines and factories or were unemployed which was the basis of his book *The Road to Wigan Pier*<sup>42</sup>. The extreme difference between his early social experience and what he saw during his excursions into not only working class life but that of the lower depths made him excessively sensitive to, and indignant at, the way in which speech patterns in England were graded in their social acceptability through their association with social class and education.

Hence Orwell's annoyance at those of Kipling's poems in which a kind of cockney is put into the mouths of the soldiers. Now it is perfectly possible to understand Orwell's feelings in this matter and yet to see that they are irrelevant to an assessment of the aesthetic merits of Kipling's verses. The basic point is one made by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*<sup>25</sup>, namely that true judgements of taste are independent of all external political or social considerations. It follows that we ought not to decide on the relative merits of Kipling's and Orwell's versions on the basis of Orwell's ideological dislike of the manifestation of class differences in language. Indeed Orwell<sup>48</sup> gives the game away when he admits that in many of Kipling's poems there may well be no difference musically between his kind of amended version and

Kipling's original verses. Orwell is right in saying that many of Kipling's refrains have a truly lyrical quality but it then follows that changing them in the interests of political correctness far from improving them may well damage them. Consider the lines below that Orwell wanted to alter:

*Oh, 'ark to the big drum callin',  
Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

It is as easy to argue that the lines above sound better, and feel better, than Orwell's conversion of them to standard written English as to argue the opposite. The lines may *look* better written in standard English. The absence of the aitches, 'd's and 'g's *looks wrong*. However, this is a criticism that can be made of anyone who, for whatever reason and however authentically, writes poetry in a dialect with its own idiosyncratic syntax and vocabulary and who in a rough and ready way spells the words to try to indicate the eccentric way in which they are pronounced – a crude amateur attempt at phonetic spelling. Since there is no agreed way of spelling for example cockney this often merely confuses the reader. But verse like Kipling's is best judged by the way it *sounds*, and it sounds better if the 'd's and the 'g's and the aitches are left out. Curiously enough 'ark sounds better than hark when it is the second sound in the line not the first as in 'Oh, 'ark'; by contrast if hark were the first word in the line it would sound better with the aitch pronounced because it would be an emphasised consonant. 'Why of course 'e went and died' slides through more easily than 'why of course he went and died' because the aitch is a difficult, strong, interrupting sound that gets in the way. It is for this reason that aitches are so often illicitly dropped in the speech of many native speakers of English and it is a very difficult sound for learners of English such as the French whose own language does not contain it. Even in English the aitch is not pronounced in words of French origin such as honesty or honour from *honnête* and *honneur* and indeed it is just about permissible to say 'an hotel' in English because it sounds like the French *un Hôtel*. If aitches are not pronounced it is easier to run the sounds of one word into the next as is the French custom (in contrast to say German where each aitch is clearly sounded and is a point of separation). Whether in general aitches sounded are more satisfying than aitches not sounded is not the question I am trying to resolve and I do not propose to express any preference for the sounds of French over German or *vice versa*. I am merely saying that it is this capacity of aitch sounds to break up the flow of speech that determines whether or not the particular lines quoted by Orwell sound better with them or without them. It does not really make that much difference one way or the other

but on balance 'follow me 'ome' is a better sounding and musically more satisfying line than 'follow me home' because there is an easier elision between sounds and there is not the intrusive pulse and bump of sound that occurs when the reader pronounces the aitch in home.

Ironically when Orwell says that 'follow me 'ome' is the uglier line of the two he is unconsciously expressing the very prejudice of his class of origin that lays such stress on not dropping aitches. They wish to retain the aitches in their own speech and see the retention of aitches in general as a mark of superiority precisely because it is a difficult<sup>36</sup> sound and the mark of those whose speech like their character is disciplined rather than sloppy. When they say that the dropping of aitches is ugly they are not making an aesthetic point but rather perpetrating the philistine confusion between that which is beautiful and that which is difficult to do. It is the kind of prejudice held by old-fashioned English people who take pride in being able to translate English into elegant Latin prose because it is effortful but dislike modern art because *they* think there is no craftsmanship to it.

What is odd is the sheer Etonian confidence of Orwell's assertion that the loss of an aitch wrecks one of Kipling's best lines and turns the beautiful into the ugly. If this argument were taken to its logical conclusion it would mean that no verse written in cockney or modified cockney could ever be worthy of our appreciation. In that case how could a real cockney ever write verse in a form that reflected their everyday way of speaking ?

Orwell's defence would no doubt be that Kipling's use of cockney is not genuine but facetious and mocking and that this spoils his verse, yet it is difficult to see that Kipling either aims to be facetious or produces a comic effect in the particular poem quoted above in which he writes about the soldier's grief at his friend's funeral. The other verses of this poem also reveal the sincerity of Kipling's feelings and the serious indeed solemn impact of them on the reader or listener. These verses may well be judged by hostile critics to be clumsy or sentimental but they are not in any way facetious or mocking. Here is the rest of "Follow me 'Ome'":

We fought 'bout a dog—last week it were—  
 No more than a round or two;  
 But I strook 'im cruel 'ard, an' I wish I 'adn't now,  
 Which is just what a man can't do.

'E was all that I 'ad in the way of a friend,  
 An' I've 'ad to find one new;  
 But I'd give my pay an' stripe for to get the beggar back,  
 Which it's just too late to do!

*So it's knock out your pipes an 'follow me!  
 An ' it's finish up your swipes an 'follow me!  
 Oh 'ark to the fifes a-crawlin '!  
 Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

*Take 'im away! 'E's gone where the best men go.  
 Take 'im away! An ' the gun-wheels turnin ' slow.  
 Take 'im away! There's more from the place 'e come.  
 Take 'im away, with the limber an ' the drum.*

*For it's "Three rounds blank' an 'follow me,  
 An ' it's 'Thirteen rank' an 'follow me;  
 Oh, passin ' the love o ' women,  
 Follow me—follow me 'ome!*

Now it may be that Orwell sees Kipling's stylised, not very broad cockney as inauthentic, yet what does authentic mean? If Kipling had written in truly broad cockney with all its peculiarities of grammar, vocabulary, usage and pronunciation including glottal stops the verses would have been incomprehensible. There is no agreed method of writing cockney down and no agreed standard of what cockney should be. Even the mild cockney in which Kipling writes can sometimes create problems for a reader or listener and the use of very broad cockney would have defeated them. If correctly read aloud verses written in very broad cockney would not be understood by anyone other than Cockneys or those used to speaking with them on a regular basis. Not only speakers of standard British or American English but people who speak other dialects, such as those of Fife, Yorkshire, County Antrim, Wiltshire or South Wales would be unable to follow what was being said. When the distinguished American literary scholar, Professor Don Nilsen of Arizona visited Sheffield University in South Yorkshire he found he needed an interpreter to translate the local speech of the caretaker into standard British English for him. The local people of South Yorkshire could understand general American because they regularly hear it on the radio, films and television and the Americans have no problem in understanding standard British English but the peculiarities of highly local British speech defeat them. It would have made no sense for Kipling to attempt to write broad cockney; it would merely have diminished his readership without any gain in profundity or authenticity. Kipling's collections of verse were in his own day best sellers and continue to sell but if he had written in broad cockney his audience would have been restricted to that limited number of people who can understand the meaning of cockney when it is written down more or

less phonetically and who would be able to read it aloud without difficulty to listeners who could understand what they were saying. Cockney can not be written down with any precision except by using the symbols of the specialist which very few people know. What is more, there is not just one form of broad cockney but many, for it varies from district to district within London and there is no agreed standard form. Which one should Kipling have used? How easily would Cockneys from other parts of London have been able to read him if he had done so? That Kipling could not have done it, not being a native speaker of any form of cockney, indeed not being a Londoner, is neither here nor there. Those who are the "nationalists" of local speech regularly run into this problem when they try to write poetry and the exercise runs into a squabble over the question of which local patois limited to one or another group of little villages is to be used as the canonical form, or whether some new synthetic *mélange* should be introduced. The followers of Mistral who tried to write born-again Provençal rather than standard French or of Christopher Murray Grieve (who changed his name to Hugh McDiarmid) who tried to write in Lallans, the very varied dialect of the Lowland Scots, all ran into the same problem.

Kipling could not speak cockney and when he uses it in the dialogue of his short stories it comes out in a mutilated way<sup>3</sup> but he could understand what Cockneys said to him from the time he was at school at Westward Ho!, in England. According to Carrington<sup>9</sup> :

. . . veterans [were] employed successively at Westward Ho! as 'school sergeants', that is as janitors, drill instructors, and general assistants with the school discipline. When Kipling went to school as a little boy it was the time of Sergeant Kearney, a huge drunken old Irishman who delighted in talking about the Sikh wars of the eighteen forties. Kearney retired in 1879, giving place to Schofield, a smart brisk little cockney whose character is indicated by his school nickname of 'Weasel'.

Later when he returned to India he often met and spoke with private soldiers and non-commissioned officers living in barracks though on a rather casual basis and tried to reproduce their speech in his short stories notably the speech of the Irishman, the Cockney and the dalesman from the West Riding of Yorkshire<sup>4, 10</sup>. These contacts and observations gave him a sympathetic insight into the life of the ordinary soldier in the British army in India in the nineteenth century which was a volunteer army since Britain had no conscription. The officers were 'gentlemen' but those they commanded were drawn from the lowest

sections of society. Most workers with a trade, steady employment or a claim to respectability would not have joined the army and would have despised those who did. Many of the volunteers in India would have spoken broad cockney (the sheer size of London and the peculiar insecurities of its labour market would have ensured that many of the soldiers were Cockneys) though it would have been modified over time through mixing with soldiers having different forms of local speech. Later back in London, Kipling was a frequenter of the music halls the most popular form of entertainment of the common people of London and of the bars attached to them<sup>5</sup>. Thus Kipling could and frequently did talk to Cockneys and the stylised cockney of his verse is at least not that of a person imagining cockney from a great distance.

Indeed Rutherford<sup>51</sup> writes of Kipling's war poems as 'poems based on songs he had heard sung in canteens, around camp-fires on manoeuvres and in London music halls, in which the proletarian idiom and outlook of soldiers themselves are used to give a remarkably frank and inclusive account of their real experiences in peace and war'.

Thus Kipling knew not only the soldiers' conversation but their songs and indeed he describes some of his own early volumes of verse as 'ballads' and 'ditties'. Curiously Orwell's other accusation against Kipling is that he is vulgar and that some of his verse is only fit for the music hall<sup>49</sup>, the popular entertainment of the working classes, where indeed some of Kipling's verses, because of their accessibility and their expression of popular sentiment would have been recited or sung often by Cockneys for a Cockney audience. Far from feeling demeaned by Kipling they were willing to adopt his work<sup>6</sup> and would not have liked Orwell's snobbish use of the term vulgar to describe the verses they enjoyed.

Many music hall artistes of Kipling's time would of necessity have played the part of the 'stage cockney' in their acts. This mode of speech was for them, as for Kipling, a necessity. Many of them were of cockney origin and a large proportion of their audiences would have been cockneys. Cockney was the natural speech for them to use on the stage. Yet many of those in a theatre audience, even in London would not have found broad cockney very easy to follow; also the performers would have wished to take their acts on tour to other parts of the country. The performers wished to remain Cockneys and yet also to communicate with the entire British population; the employment of stage cockney, a mild cockney with certain emphasised recognisable markers of cockney speech achieved this end. However inauthentic Kipling's cockney may have been, his 'cockney' poems and songs would have suited these entertainers purposes very well, for example "Mandalay"<sup>31</sup>.

Kipling is doing something similar with his stylized cockney – he is providing readers and would-be reciters with enough well-known

identifying markers to recognize that the speaker is meant to be a cockney but not burdening them with items incomprehensible to the vast majority of speakers of English. It is the best possible compromise as we can see from his poem "Wilful-Missing"<sup>32</sup> about deserters from the British army during the Boer War

'WILFUL-MISSING'  
(Deserters of the Boer War)

There is a world outside the one you know,  
To which for curiousness 'Ell can't compare—  
It is the place where 'wilful-missings' go,  
As we can testify, for we are there.

You may 'ave read a bullet laid us low,  
That we was gathered in 'with reverent care'  
And buried proper. But it was not so,  
As we can testify, for we are there!

They can't be certain—faces alter so  
After the old aasvogel's 'ad 'is share;  
The uniform's the mark by which they go—  
And—ain't it odd?—the one we best can spare.

We might 'ave seen our chance to cut the show—  
Name, number, record, an' begin elsewhere—  
Leavin' some not too late-lamented foe  
One funeral—private—British—for 'is share.

We may 'ave took it yonder in the Low  
Bush-veldt that sends men stragglin' unaware  
Among the Kaffirs, till their columns go,  
An' they are left past call or count or care.

We might 'ave been your lovers long ago,  
'Usbands or children—comfort or despair.  
Our death (*an* 'burial) settles all we owe,  
An' why we done it is our own affair.

Marry again, and we will not say no,  
Nor come to bastardise the kids you bear.  
Wait on in 'ope—you've all your life below  
Before you'll ever 'ear us on the stair.

There is no need to give our reasons, though  
Gawd knows we 'ad reasons which were fair;  
But other people might not judge 'em so—  
And now it doesn't matter what they were.

What man can weigh or size another's woe?  
There are some things too bitter 'ard to bear.  
Suffice it we 'ave finished—Domino  
As we can testify, for we are there,  
In the side-world where 'wilful-missings' go.

Most of the poem is written in standard English. There are traces of the stilted speech of official documents deliberately placed in quotation marks as "'with reverent care'" or the title itself "'Wilful-Missing'" and also some words in South African English taken from Afrikaner usage such as *aasvogel* for vulture, *Kaffirs* for the local black Africans or *bush-veldt* for scrubland. These too are markers of context and place. The loss of the speaker's aitches and 'd's throughout or the use of 'why we done it' rather than the standard form 'why we did it' are simply ways of indicating what kind of person the speaker, the 'wilful-missing' deserter from the ranks, is. It is relevant here to know his social background. The use of these markers does not spoil the verse and in one place at least it improves it. The line above 'And buried proper. But it was not so,' is a great improvement on the correct standard proper form using the adverb 'properly' properly. 'Buried proper' provides a better contrast to the stilted official sounds of 'with reverent care' in the previous line than 'buried properly' ever could. We can see this from the Orwellized version of the line below which has been amended into standard English; it has too many syllables and lacks force:

And buried properly. But it was not so,

No one can possibly say that "'Wilful-Missing'" is facetious or mocks the way in which the deserter is made to speak. Kipling is often criticized for being a militarist and an imperialist yet here is a poem of very real sympathy for the plight of the hapless man at the very bottom of the military hierarchy who has had as much as he can take and has quietly deserted his unit in South Africa during the Boer War and sought a dangerous refuge in the wilderness. One cannot imagine a Soviet poet ever having written such a poem about a Russian soldier fading away like this into the hills or the steppes in one of the Soviet

Union's many colonial wars in Central Asia or the Caucasus. Kipling can understand, sympathise with and express the feelings of those who give in to weakness and in part he does so through the use of markers in the speaker's patterns of speech that indicate his original as well as his present powerlessness. It is an indication (no more than that. It is *not* an attempt to reproduce it or to achieve realism) of the feel of the speech of a man who has never in his life had any economic power or social standing and is now driven even lower by events. It would have made no sense to make him speak absolutely standard English or to use the generally approved forms of 'received pronunciation'. The deserter is not being mocked as verbally inadequate for he is strikingly articulate and well acquainted with the ways in which other groups in his society write and speak English. Orwell was wrong to accuse Kipling of a general condescending facetiousness in his treatment of those who spoke non-standard English or had accents that revealed their low social class origins. There is no assertion of superiority in " 'Wilful-Missing' ".

Orwell was also wrong in assuming that the language of " 'Follow Me 'Ome'" or "The Sergeant's Weddin'" is *necessarily* to be read as stylised cockney or that these verses would be recited in stylised cockney. The markers that Orwell notes, the missing aitches, 'd's and 'g's, are characteristic of cockney and indeed stylised Cockney is probably what Kipling intended but they are also characteristics of many other forms of uneducated British speech. It would be as easy for example to recite either of these poems in the demotic speech of South Wales (while following Kipling's lines exactly) as to recite them in cockney. It would sound very different from Cockney but it is possible and plausible to read these verses in such a way as to make the internal narrator in each case appear to come from South Wales ; there is nothing in Kipling's lines that contradicts such a possibility or that is incompatible with the everyday speech of South Wales. Many of Kipling's lines are better seen as a kind of stylized generic lower class British speech rather than as mock cockney. If, say, an unemployed tinsmith worker from Swansea were to be asked to read out Kipling's lines in his own way he would do so in South Wales English in an entirely natural fashion without departing from the lines and it would sound convincing. There is no need to 'put on' a false cockney accent to recite these verses from Kipling nor is there any need to adjust them in the direction of the kind of standard upper middle class English spoken by Orwell's associates. When Orwell says 'most people instinctively make the necessary alterations when they quote him' i.e. that they restore the aitches and 'g's and the 'd's he is speaking *only* of people like himself and of the social class he belonged to. Did he honestly think that a genuine cockney

speaker quoting Kipling, which given Kipling's mass popularity was quite likely, would have adjusted the lines that offended Orwell out of cockney and into standard English when it was not indicated by the text and which would not have been his normal way of speaking? Indeed it is likely that if asked to read Orwell's amended text out loud he would quite naturally redelete the aitches and 'g's and 'd's inserted by Orwell, return to something closer to Kipling's original version and thus utterly frustrate Orwell's purpose. Yet he too would merely be instinctively making necessary alterations. The Welshman likewise would read out the words in his usual fashion whether he had Kipling or Orwell's version in front of him unless he were self-consciously to adjust to Orwell's spelling and the version of the language it conveys. Yet if he were to do so, it is Orwell's version that would sound embarrassing and lead to people making fun of the working man's speech because he would have been induced to abandon his normal way of speaking and to imitate, probably without success, the standard English with received pronunciation spoken by Orwell's own social class. Failed imitations of another social class's patterns of speech are embarrassing regardless of the direction in which they occur.

Because of his social background Orwell had a dichotomous view of how English was spoken. He saw it as consisting of the English his family spoke and the mastery of which was emphasized in the elite schools he attended and there was the speech of the 'barbarians' which he had been taught to reject, a rejection that now made him feel guilty. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*<sup>43</sup> he wrote:

I was forbidden to play with the plumber's children; they were common and I was told to keep away from them. This was snobbish if you like, but it was also necessary, for middle class people cannot afford to let their children grow up with vulgar accents. . . . To me in my early boyhood, to nearly all families like mine, 'common' people seemed almost sub-human. They had coarse faces, hideous accents and gross manners. . . .

Like many from that kind of social background Orwell could only speak one type of English, the posh version of 'received pronunciation'; the same was true of those with little education at the bottom of the social order who were trapped within a particular local way of talking with not only its own accents and vocabulary but its own departures from standard English syntax. Neither group could easily vary the way it spoke. When Orwell disguised himself as a tramp and went hop-picking in order to write about it, he tried to put on a fake cockney accent but he could not keep it up and it kept slipping:

Sure enough the gentleman presently came across with some butter he had not used, and began talking to us. His manner was so friendly that I forgot to put on my cockney accent, and he looked closely at me, and said how painful it must be for a man of my stamp etc. Then he said, 'I say, you won't be offended, will you? Do you mind taking this?' 'This' was a shilling.<sup>45</sup>

After I had mixed it with these people for a few days it was too much fag to go on putting on my cockney accent and they noticed that I talked 'different'. As usual, this made them still more friendly, for these people seem to think that it is especially dreadful to 'come down in the world'.<sup>46</sup>

Orwell's dichotomous account of how British people speak English according to their social class background is simplistic. Society and language are in fact stratified in much more complex and uncertain ways ; most people are well aware of this and would not share Orwell's horror of Kipling's stylized cockney, or stylized social class speech. They live in the broad central reaches of society where most people do not speak the posh English spoken by people of Orwell's stamp, learned at public schools nor the broad cockney of tramps, hop-pickers and private soldiers in a volunteer army, but rather one form or another of provincial English, each with its own distinctive accent – Yorkshire, Ulster, Wiltshire, Welsh, Scots, Geordie, etc. Within these forms of provincial speech, there are gradations of the ways in which people speak which are rooted in class differences but the differences are subtle and continuous and the socially mobile adjust their speech accordingly. Most speakers of provincial English speak English in a very flexible way and can shift easily between the broad and the mild, between the uncouth and the couth versions of their local speech (the couth being standard English with a local flavour and a mild accent) depending on where they are, who they are talking to, and the context of the conversation. Most of the time they do this from habit and unconscious imitation of others. Thus it would not be difficult for educated persons from South Wales to recite Kipling's verses in their own accent either in the original aitchless version preferred by Kipling, or in Orwell's social class-bowdlerized (which we may term orwellized) version with the aitches inserted. The gap in terms of language, psychology and social class is far smaller for them and far easier to bridge; it is not the chasm that separates the speech, manners and social position of old Etonians like Orwell from that of the Cockneys. Nor is the point limited to Britain for an Australian of any social class could recite Kipling in any version of Australian English without

difficulty or embarrassment, with sympathy and without a hint of facetiousness.

Nonetheless Orwell's comments do have a basis in British social reality. Even today in a society that is far less concerned with the status attached to different patterns of speech associated with social class than was true in Orwell's day, surveys of individual responses to the same recorded item spoken in different British accents show that they tend to place them in a hierarchy of acceptability. Cockney always comes at the bottom of the scale and 'received pronunciation' at the top<sup>19</sup>. The latter is spoken only by those with high levels of formal education whereas cockney is only spoken by the urban proletariat of London, England's capital and largest conurbation. Most regional speech by contrast occurs in many forms and is used across many classes. Accordingly the educated forms of regional speech are seen as acceptable. There is no educated form of cockney. Most upwardly mobile Cockneys try to abandon or at least dilute it because it is a social handicap. If a person with marked cockney speech were to take part in a formal discussion about an abstract matter he or she might well not be taken seriously. He or she would sound incongruous because cockney has never yet been successfully adapted for that kind of use and the speaker would *sound as if* he or she were displaying a form of incompetence. The audience would be tempted to laugh, whereas an educated Scotsman speaking 'Edinburgh' English and holding forth about philosophy or physics or jurisprudence to a lay audience would not be seen as laughable in this way. A Scottish accent is compatible with an image of general erudition and authority even when speaking and using straightforward English. For these kinds of reasons even mild cockney is not used in formal public communications such as the reading of a news bulletin on the radio or television. A cockney accent lacks prestige and acts as a distracter. When respondents are asked to explain why they have negative feelings about cockney they (including those who speak cockney) will say it sounds ugly or unpleasant<sup>19</sup> i.e. they will make an aesthetic statement out of a social judgement and the two are tangled together in a way that blurs the clear distinction made by Kant that was cited earlier. Cockney is *in practice* an inadequate form of English and the lack of significant levels of education, literacy and capacity for abstract thought that characterizes most of its users gives it a low status but why should that make it *sound ugly* except by association? Is it possible to divest ourselves of these associations and to judge cockney impartially as a set of sounds?

However, the argument deployed here is *not* about the use of cockney in a formal or intellectual setting but about its use (albeit in a

modified and diluted form) in a poem to express the grief of a soldier who has lost a close friend or the despair of an army deserter who has lost his identity and abandoned his society. Kipling was not in any sense a believer in social equality, and indeed he strongly upheld many forms of established social inequality but he was a believer in human equality. Kipling is clear that we are all equal in our capacity to suffer grief at human loss. Orwell's concern to do battle with a society in which social status is determined by the retention or the loss of an aitch has blinded him to Kipling's real concern and intention in "Follow me 'ome". Far from mocking the bereaved one, Kipling is sympathetic and is trying to blend aspects of accepted tradition with the markers of Cockney or other lower class speech as we can see from his line 'Oh, passin' the love o' women' which links the affection between these two comrades in the army with that of David and Jonathan as described in the *King James Authorized Version of the Bible*<sup>1</sup>. There is an assertion here of the equality of direct human feeling, the delineation of an area of person to person communication in which all patterns of speech are equal, since no sophisticated grappling for intellectual meaning and no striving for status is involved. It is surprising that Orwell can not understand what Kipling is trying to do given that he<sup>50</sup> has acknowledged the genuineness of Kipling's concern<sup>7</sup> regarding the harsh conditions of life of the ordinary private soldier in the British nineteenth century volunteer army and his indignation at those of higher standing who despised the enlisted man and failed to recognize his common humanity with themselves. Kipling is not deriding the mourner in "Follow me 'ome" whom he makes speak stylised cockney. Kipling knew that in proximity to death we are all equal as is made amply clear in his poem "A Recantation (To Lyde of the Music Halls)"<sup>33</sup>. Kipling here admits that he had formerly regarded 'Lyde' as his social and artistic inferior but now recants because his son and Lyde's son have both been killed in 1917 in the First World War and so they are united in a common grief. Kipling pays tribute to the stoicism of the comedian who had gone on stage with songs and jokes on the night of the day when 'Lyde' had learned of the comedian's own son's death.

By contrast "The Sergeant's Weddin" is a mere piece of deliberately humorous vulgarity. Kipling's concern here, though, is not to make fun of the way the narrator speaks but to use a form of speech that is linked to humorous comment and performance in the popular mind. The respondents to the social surveys that revealed speakers of cockney to be widely perceived as lacking in intelligence, leadership and status relative to the speakers of more prestigious forms of English also rate them highly on their supposed sense of humour<sup>19</sup>. Cockney is and long has been the language of the comedian, in Kipling's day in the

music halls, later that of or used by British radio and film comedians such as Tommy Trinder, Ronald Shiner, Arthur English or Sid James and most recently of British television comedies such as *Steptoe and Son*, *Till Death Do Us Part* and *Only Fools and Horses* and of some of the characters in *Dad's Army* and *Porridge*. It is then entirely appropriate that the verse of a vulgar rollicking tale such as "The Sergeant's Weddin'" should be written in stage cockney, as long established stage convention demands. In writing "Wilful-Missing'" Kipling was defying the convention that the poetry of sadness had to be written in standard English about the tragedies of heroes but in his comic verse he can simply take up an existing strand of popular culture. Kipling is merely using a form of language popularly seen as appropriate in such a context and not specifically deriding the internal narrator.

It was and still is a normal feature of jokes and comedy in *all* cultures that those who speak what can be represented as a distorted version of the standard and accepted form of a language are laughed at<sup>14, 16, 17</sup>. Not only is rustic or plebeian speech comic in itself but it is also often used as a vehicle for absurd sentiments. Indeed the deliberate and facetious use of such speech in a context that is clearly comic is a way of *emphasizing* that what one is saying is farcical and *not* to be taken seriously. The writer or speaker is not indulging in facetiousness for its own sake but in order to show that he or she has moved firmly out of the world of everyday commonsense discourse and into that of comic fantasy<sup>52</sup>, a space where it is possible to play verbally with the forbidden indeed even at times with the obscene, the blasphemous and the violent but only on condition that all hint of seriousness is excluded. We can see Kipling using a bizarre, baroque, exaggerated form of synthetic cockney for just this purpose in the outrageous comic verses of his poem "Loot"<sup>34</sup> which could not possibly be written in standard English because of the danger that someone might take it seriously. Kipling's usual humorous technique of ironic comment and apparent endorsement<sup>35</sup> where he casts doubt by appearing to agree is far too mild and ambiguous a method to work here. Nothing short of farce will do. Kipling's "Loot" is a precursor of Joe Orton's *Loot*<sup>40</sup>

"Loot" is an account of a British soldier's boasting to the new recruits of how he has defied common morality and army regulations alike and forcibly deprived the local people of a newly occupied colony (probably late nineteenth century Burma) of their possessions. The utterly facetious language is necessary if the soldier's advocacy of looting is to remain pure farce; were the verses written in standard English they would be too close to seriousness for comfort given the repellent nature of the events that are being described.

## LOOT

If you've ever stole a pheasant-egg be'hind the keeper's back,  
 If you've ever snigged the washin' from the line,  
 If you've ever crammed a gander in your bloomin' 'aversack,  
 You will understand this little song o' mine.  
 But the service rules are 'ard, an' from such we are debarred,  
 For the same with English morals does not suit.

*(Cornet: Toot! toot!)*

W'y, they call a man a robber if 'e stuffs 'is marchin' clobber  
 With the—

*(Chorus)* Loo! loo! Lulu! lulu! Loo! loo! Loot! loot! loot!

Ow, the loot!

Bloomin' loot!

That's the thing to make the boys git up an' shoot!

It's the same with dogs an' men,

If you'd make 'em come again

Clap 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot!

*(ff)* Whoopee! Tear 'im, puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!

Now remember when you're 'acking round a gilded Burma god  
 That 'is eyes is very often precious stones;  
 An' if you treat a nigger to a dose o' cleanin'-rod  
 'E's like to show you everything 'e owns.

When 'e won't prodooce no more, pour some water on the floor  
 Where you 'ear it answer 'ollow to the boot

*(Cornet: Toot! toot!)*

When the ground begins to sink, shove your baynick down the  
 chink,

An' you're sure to touch the—

*(Chorus)* Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!

Ow, the loot! . . .

You can mostly square a Sergint an' a Quartermaster too,  
 If you only take the proper way to go;  
 I could never keep my pickin's, but I've learned you all I knew—  
 An' don't you never say I told you so.  
 An' now I'll bid good-bye, for I'm gettin' rather dry,  
 An' I see another tunin' up to toot

*(Cornet: Toot! toot!)*—

So 'ere's good-luck to those that wears the Widow's clo'es,  
 An' the Devil send 'em all they want o' loot!

(Chorus) Yes, the loot,  
    Bloomin' loot!  
In the tunic an' the mess-tin an' the boot!  
It's the same with dogs an' men,  
If you'd make 'em come again  
(fff) Whoop 'em forward with a Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!  
    Heeya! Sick 'im puppy! Loo! loo! Lulu! Loot! loot! loot!

It is easy to see that if taken seriously these verses would strongly offend many readers. The cynical advocacy of violence against, theft from and denigration of a local colonial population would have outraged Kipling's contemporaries, let alone the modern reader. Yet Kipling is clearly *not* being serious as can be seen from the ludicrous chorus 'Lulu, loo loo loot', with its inserted incitement to a puppy dog to attack someone or some beast and the bizarre interruptions from a man playing a cornet. Everything is a deliberate exaggeration to the point of farce from the sacrilege committed in a Burmese Buddhist temple to the soldier attacking a native with the rod used to clean the barrel of his rifle to force him to disclose where he has hidden his possessions. It is the obverse of the coldly severe disapproval of looting laid down in army regulations – 'But the service rules are 'ard and from such we are debarred'. The verses are wildly humorous because they play with the obviously forbidden.

The nearest parallels to "Loot" are to be found in the work of Kipling's contemporary Jaroslav Hasek, *The Good Soldier Švejk*<sup>21</sup> in which the Czech soldiers serving in the Austrian army in World War I behave with shameless contempt, hostility and rapacity towards many of the other peoples of Central and Eastern Europe whom they encounter. However, Hašek's use of language<sup>15</sup> is such as to make it clear that what would otherwise be objectionable incidents such as the humiliation of the Hungarian merchant Mr Kákonyi in Királyhida leading to a vicious brawl between Czechs and Magyars or Švejk's thefts from and depredations upon the local people<sup>22</sup> are mere farce. The Hungarians obviously understand this for in Budapest they have created a restaurant dedicated to the memory of Švejk complete with Josef Lada's drawings of Czechs beating up Hungarians. Kipling's "Loot" is to be understood in the same way and this is signalled through the use of a particularly crude form of generic lower class English. It is a comic poem whose raconteur defies authority and breaks all the rules of decent behaviour. He must be given a form of speech that is the very antithesis of that used by those who exercise legal-rational, controlled and considered authority and who design and administer the regulations of a liberal state based on the rule of law. "Loot" is written in the

language of carnival and disorder, of absurd time off from the constraints of normal life and normal language.

A good deal of humour consists of playing with the forbidden (for example sexual humour, humour about disasters and the death of celebrities) and in particular humour plays with aggression. However, it is necessary for Kipling to make it clear that this tale of looting is mere playful aggression and *not* a revelling in the real thing as happened with the (free) French army in Italy and particularly in Elba or when the Soviet army raped and looted its way across Central and Eastern Europe in 1944-5 with the full approval of its officers and their political masters. The way in which Kipling excludes such a possibility is by going for farce through a deliberate use of caricatured lower class speech patterns in a totally blatant and facetious manner and one calculated to make the speaker and singers look like buffoons. In relation to this particular poem Orwell's suspicion that Kipling is indulging in mockery are justified but the facetiousness is *not* a general feature of Kipling's depiction of the working man's speech but merely a technique used in this particular case in pursuit of a specific end.

In using a stylized Cockney, or a synthetic generic form of lower class speech as the language of comedy, Kipling is not doing anything unusual but merely following a general pattern and does not deserve Orwell's censure. Cockney is an agreed language of comedy and itself a source of comedy not only in Britain but even in America and Australia as we can see from jokes told in these countries in Kipling's own time.

#### Tuesday Must Have Been Worse

Out in Australia two Cockneys were sentenced to die for an atrocious murder. As the date for execution drew nearer the nerves of both of them became more and more shaken. Dawn of the fatal morning found them in a state of terrific funk.

As they sat in the condemned cell waiting the summons to march to the gallows one of the pair said :

'Me mind's all in a whirl. I carn't seem to remember anything. I carn't even remember what dye of the week it is.'

'It's Monday,' stated his companion in misfortune.

'Ow!' said the first one, 'wot a rotten wye to start the week!'<sup>12</sup>

'And when Mrs Gubbins sez you wasn't no lidy, wot did yer say!'

'I sez, "Two negatives means an infirmiry," and I knocks 'er down. She is now in the 'orspital.'<sup>13</sup>

The American soldier stood on a London street corner.

A pretty blond from Soho passed by, and a gust of wind lifted her dress higher than was decent.

'A bit 'airy,' remarked the friendly soldier.  
 ' 'Ell yes!' retorted the Cockney girl. 'What did you expect – feathers?'<sup>20,53</sup>

The above jokes are all cited with their original wording and spelling from American anthologies; one of them has an Australian setting and possibly an Australian origin. Synthetic stage cockney was and is a vehicle for humour throughout the entire English speaking world, one used by peoples outside the British system of stratification by status and speech patterns altogether and having no interest in its perpetuation. Stylized cockney has long been comic to joke tellers in all three countries because it is the best known English departure from the mutually intelligible forms of speech that people in all these three countries share. It was not something invented by Kipling in order to mock those lower in the social scale than himself.

What *is* unique to Kipling is his willingness to use stylized Cockney in a dignified context to describe universally felt situations of grief, loss and despair in "Follow Me 'Ome" and "'Wilful-Missing'" and in this way to give it dignity for a broad audience, many of whom might well have seen Cockney as *intrinsically* comic. In using stylized, inauthentic cockney to express the deepest of human feelings in "Follow Me 'Ome" and " 'Wilful-Missing' " , Kipling has not patronized or made of fun the speech of those at the bottom of the social order but treated it with a new respect. That he was able both to do this *and* to use cockney in a conventionally comic way is an index of his breadth of skill and of human sympathy.

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## JOHN HENRY CHILCOTE BROOKING

By IAN WHITEMAN

[This article first appeared in *The Brooking Family Historian*, Vol.10, No.5, August 2003, pp.242-5, the Journal of the Brooking Society, and to whom our grateful thanks are extended for permission to reprint it. Written by Ian Whiteman, a grandson of J.H.C. Brooking, it gives a very interesting overview of the life of the man who effectively founded the Kipling Society.

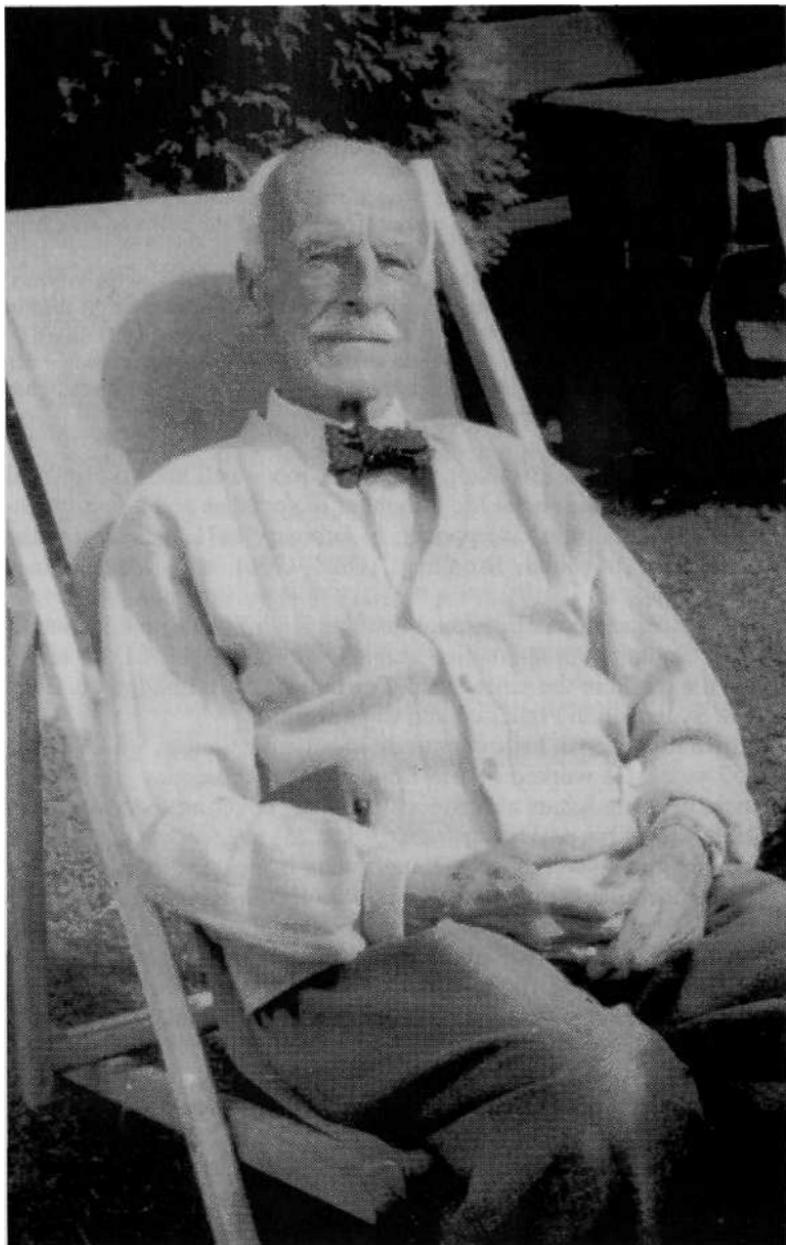
To get a feel for the work that he undertook on formation in 1927, at the Inaugural Meeting on 4 February 1927 he was elected to be the first Hon. Secretary; in the absence of an Editor, he undertook this role for issue Nos.1 and 2 of the *Journal* until relieved by Mr W.A. Young for issue No.3. He was also arranging the first Annual Luncheon which was held on 22 June that year, and whilst this was going on, circumstances which he had not foreseen involved a change of residence. – *Ed.*]

John Henry Chilcote Brooking was, in his job a well known electrical engineer, and in his social life a founder of societies and a family historian. He was born in Liverpool on 13 February 1871, the eldest of the six children of John Brooking (1828-1906) and Mary James (1839-1907).

He was educated at Liverpool Institute High School, and his working life began as an apprentice seaman. In 1888, aged 17, he sailed round the world in the sailing ship *Cypromene*, from London via Cape Town, Sydney, San Francisco and Cape Horn.

In 1890 he began his career as an electrical engineer, which lasted for 57 years. He worked first in London as an apprentice and then in Manchester. His "chart of business progress" covering the years 1890 to 1906 shows his pay rising from 5/- [£0.25] to £5 a week. After his apprenticeship he worked as a draughtsman in a cable works, and then superintended the laying of power cables all over the U.K. As well as doing electrical work, he also wrote about it. During his life he had articles published in thirty journals and newspapers, and in these early years there were over 100 in the *Electrical Engineer* alone. In 1908 he began on the second strand of his life by helping to found a society, in this case the Institution of Mining Engineers and Electrical Engineers. With this background, he was invited, in 1909 aged 38, to become general manager of the St Helen's Cable and Rubber Company in Warrington, Lancashire. The company was in financial trouble, because of cut-throat competition in the rubber industry. Written on the outside of the factory in large letters was the hopeful request: "Warrington Workers and Rates you will aid / by purchasing Goods which are Warrington-made".

Electrical cables need to be covered in a sheath. Brooking invented



J.H.C. BROOKING, M.I.E.E.

a way of putting them inside a sort of hosepipe, which gave much longer life than previous methods. The pipe was called CTS, or cab tyre sheathing, as it was based on the rubber that went round the wheels of a cab. In the trade Brooking became known as C.T.S. Brooking.

In 1921 he helped form and became the first president of the Institution of the Rubber Industry. The same year he became a member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. In the early 1920s the work became too big for the factory, so Brooking looked around for a new site and in 1923 the factory moved 150 miles south from Warrington to Slough in Buckinghamshire. Brooking quickly founded the Slough Manufacturers' Association and became its secretary.

He left St Helen's in 1927 to join the Croydon Cable Works (which became part of BICC) and moved to Mitcham, Surrey. In 1934 he stood for election to Mitcham Borough Council, apparently without success. He retired in 1947.

As well as his professional articles and letters about matters that interested him, he wrote ballads in the style, but without the effect, of Kipling. Some of these were published in about 1907 as the *Electrical Engineer's Ballad Book*. This is an example:

When the Final Trump has sounded, and the Dead have all arose  
When the passing of the Verdicts but remains  
There will surely be a Handicap apportioned out to those  
Whose work in life has had to do with mains.

Brooking had a long-term devotion to the works of Kipling. For ten years he tried to start a society but Kipling was unwilling. Brooking worked on Major[-General] L.C. Dunsterville ("Stalky") and eventually got him on his side and with his help the Society was founded in 1927.

The Society's main aim was 'to honour and extend the influence of a Writer, in our time the most patriotic, virile and imaginative in upholding the ideals of the English-speaking world'. The other aims were to issue a magazine, read papers, provide speakers, and to maintain a Kipling library.

There were branches in New York, in North Kew, Victoria, Australia, in Victoria, Canada, and in Takapuna, New Zealand. The Society flourishes today, as a glance at its website [www.kipling.org.uk](http://www.kipling.org.uk) will show.

In a recent biography (*Rudyard Kipling* by Andrew Lycett, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999) two pages are given to the Kipling Society. Andrew Lycett is highly critical of Brooking, whom he sees as tiresomely forcing himself on Kipling. However, Kipling objected to the Society in principle, not wanting to be turned into 'an anatomical specimen' before he was dead.

In 1932 Brooking organised a holiday tramp along the Pilgrims' Way, 130 miles from Winchester to Canterbury. This was before such walks were popular and the pilgrimage was described as the first march for 500 years. Brooking called the dozen travellers the Pilgrim Wayfarers Society. This event seems to have run for a few years. In 1934 there was a leader in *The Times* on pilgrimages to cathedrals to raise money for the unemployed and the writer referred to a published letter from Brooking in which he 'engagingly set forth the charms of going on foot'.

In January 1933 Brooking was at the Proms when an *outré* piece was played. People began talking to each other and the question arose about the shortness of the Proms season. Brooking later wrote: 'Having had experience in founding business associations, clubs and societies, it struck me that I might be able to help in the formation of an organisation which would enable enthusiasts to get together more frequently to enjoy music such as they were given at the Proms'. With this modest thought, he himself took the lead, went in the interval to see Sir Henry Wood who at once agreed to become the president, and on 4 February one hundred people turned up at the Queen's Hall to found the Proms Circle.

On 14th December 1899 he married Frances Maud Mary White (born 1873), the daughter of James White, who lived in Helsby, Cheshire and had a small oil works in Runcorn trading under the name Velvene. The wedding was extensively covered in the local papers, one reporting: 'the interesting event created considerable animation in the otherwise quiet village, and charm was lent to it by the snowy mantle which invested the majestic hill and expansive undulating plain'. Among the long list of presents were James White's gifts of a cheque, Elswick bicycle and ink stand. As the train departed taking the couple to their honeymoon in London, station officials placed fog signals on the rails, 'which gave an appreciable parting salute'.

Like so many Brookings, he was interested in family history drawing up charts for his part of what is now Branch B and for his mother's family, and corresponding with other Brookings. Surprisingly, perhaps, he did not found the Brooking Society.

He and Frances had four children: Miles (1901-71) who went into the oil works; Colin (1903-75) who followed his father in being an electrical engineer; Nesta (born 1906) who became a ballet teacher; and Nancy (1909-2001) the wife of Frank Whiteman, this writer's parents. In the 1930s Brooking struck up a friendship with a schoolteacher, Dorothy Harrison (born 1890). Frances died in 1945 after a long illness and Brooking married Dorothy in 1946. They lived in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, New Maiden, Surrey and finally retired to Burwash in Sussex, near Kipling's house Bateman's. Brooking called his own house Rudyard Cottage. He died on 8 March 1962 aged 91. Dorothy lived on there for many years and died in 1984

## PRESERVING THE NEW READERS' GUIDE

By JOHN RADCLIFFE

In the past thirty or so years we have experienced the 'information revolution', based on cheap and ever faster digital computers, linked together in the Internet to make more information more widely available to everyone than ever before, with retrieval systems which make it possible to find one's way through this mass of data simply and painlessly. In planning the Society's web-site and the New Readers' Guide we have taken advantage of this to make our work instantly and cheaply available to anyone in the world within reach of a computer and a phone line, and keep it constantly up to date. The data is held on the big computers of British Telecom, and mirrored on the little PCs on which the Society's On Line Editor works.

It would have been impossible to create massive hard-backed volumes like those of the old Harbord *Guide* at a price that people could afford. But these do still exist, thirty years later, in fifty or so libraries around the world. As the timely letter from Shamus Wade ("The End of History") in the *Journal* for September 2003, No.307 pointed out, present-day electronic storage systems may not be capable of storing information reliably even this long. What can be done to ensure that our work on the New Readers' Guide is there for future generations ?

First, of course, there is immediate electronic back-up. The data held by British Telecom for us is backed up on other computers, as is the working data held on the On Line Editor's PC. Both are constantly regenerated as new material is added. We are also instituting a routine of storing successive versions of the Guide on CDs, which will held in the Kipling Library, and at the University of Sussex.

All these systems do, though, depend on storing data digitally, on discs or tape, which – as the articles cited by Shamus Wade point out – may be vulnerable to decay. We are therefore also planning to create printed copies of the pages of the Guide, held in the Kipling Library and at Sussex, which will be kept in secure conditions, updated as the Guide develops, and kept under review on behalf of Council by the group managing the project. If the ink should start to fade we will make new copies. We will also keep closely in touch with the work that is going on to make electronic archives more secure. If in a small way we are making history, we are hoping by these means to preserve it.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### NEW MEMBERS

- Prof J.A.S. Abecasis-Phillips (*Okayama, Japan*)  
Dr M.D.S. Ayers (*Adel, Leeds*)  
Mr T.J. Ayers (*Salisbury, Wiltshire*)  
Mr William P. Bennett (*Alford, Florida, U.S.A.*)  
Mr Noel Buckley (*Co. Tipperary, Ireland*)  
Ms Kathy Chamberlin (*Westchester, Illinois, U.S.A.*)  
Mr David Curtis (*Eastbourne, East Sussex*)  
Dr Roberto Di Scala (*Marina di Carrara, Italy*)  
Mrs J.H.M. Fahie (*Whaddon, Salisbury, Wiltshire*)  
Captain S.L. Harris, QARANC (*Catterick Garrison, North Yorks.*)  
Mrs W.A. Irving (*Arborfield Garrison, Reading, Berkshire*)  
Dr Jill Jameson (*London, SE9*)  
Mr and Mrs T. James (*Farrington Gurney, Bristol*)  
Dr J. Lee (*St Paul's, Bristol*)  
Dr David Pear (*Canberra City, ACT, Australia*)  
Mr P.J. Reader (*Petts Wood, Kent*)  
Lt Cdr A.D. Roake (*Rotherfield, East Sussex*)  
Ms D.E. Sheridan (*University of Sussex, Brighton*)  
Mrs Frances Thetford (*Rottingdean, Brighton*)  
Dr Ralph B.N. Wilsdon (*Great Ayton, Middlesborough, Cleveland*)  
Dr Birte Zeigert (*Itzehoe, Germany*)

### SUBSCRIPTION REMINDERS

The Membership Secretary is grateful to those members who pay by Standing Order or who pay promptly when reminded that their subscription is due **by the note carried on the address label of each *Kipling Journal***. It would be appreciated if all members who send subscriptions annually would check their address labels and pay them when due, obviating the need for further reminders. If the subscription crosses in the post with the *Kipling Journal*, please ignore the reminder.

The subscriptions for those who pay in this way are still £22 (plus £7 for airmail) or \$35US (plus \$10 for airmail) and should be sent to: **The Membership Secretary, 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, SP1 3SB, England.**

Members who cannot pay by British or US cheques are asked to transfer the subscription in sterling direct to the Society's bank account, notifying the Membership Secretary by letter. If a cheque drawn in sterling on a foreign bank has to be used, please add £7.60 to cover bank charges. Our bank details are:

Lloyds TSB, Old Bond Street, London; Bank Sort Code: 30 96 24;  
Account No: 0114978, The Kipling Society.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### COMMENTS ON "THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

From: Mr S. Keskar, 6 Clifton Road, London W9 1SS

Dear Sir

I was sorry to read the obituary of John Morris Roberts, former Warden of Merton College, Oxford, in the *Daily Telegraph* of Monday 9 June 2003. For me he will always be remembered as the presenter of that excellent television series, in the late 1980s, *The Triumph of the West*. But more importantly, from our Society's point of view, in that series, and in the book of the series, he says this of Kipling's "The White Man's Burden", after quoting the fifth verse:

Such a very purposeful, very moral vision of empire (sic) shows the complacency of cultural arrogance. Kipling tapped old western myths of pilgrimage, suffering for righteousness' sake, the need for self-protection and self-discipline, the image of Exodus itself. He did not invite Americans to take up the White Man's booty; the entitlement was to a task, not a reward. The White Man, runs the message, is not justified by being white, by his possessions or power, or even by his intellectual and moral superiority, but by what he does by these, by his works. There was a need for some such creed. [p.320, *The Triumph of the West*, by J.M. Roberts, BBC, 1985.]

Elsewhere in the book, Roberts refers to *Kim* and Kipling's kindly portrait of the Babu, that otherwise absurd figure of fun.

Yours sincerely  
SHARAD KESKAR

### FOR READING KIPLING ... STARVATION

From: Miss A.J. Pain, 110 Hampstead Way, London NW11 7XY

Dear Sir,

People may ask 'Is Kipling a really important poet in the 21st Century? He wrote after all in the days of Empire, when Britain and Germany were enemies, not joint members of the E.U.'

The other day I came across an old newspaper cutting which gave the lie to this and pointed to how Kipling had inspired in post-war years. It told the story of Jaroslav Brodsky, a Czech teacher and trade

unionist in the days of suppression prior to the rise of the short-lived Dubcek Government. He was imprisoned because he supported the Liberal Jan Masaryk; when his guards discovered he was learning Kipling's poem "If—", he was punished by being given only one meal every three days and having to sleep on the concrete floor.

Thankfully the Czech Republic and Slovakia now have freedom and are joining the E.U. However there are sadly still too many repressive regimes in the world and hopefully the writings of Kipling and other Masters still give hope to those refused free expression.

. . . No freeman shall be fined or bound,  
           Or dispossessed of freehold ground,  
 Except by lawful judgement found  
 And passed upon him by his peers. . .  
           [*"The Reeds of Runnymede", A History of England*]

. . . If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
           But make allowance for their doubting too;  
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
           Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
 Or being hated, don't give way to hating, . . .  
           [*"If—", Rewards and Fairies.*]

How lines such as these must disturb those who rule by censorship, repression and propaganda.

Yours faithfully  
 AILSA PAIN

### "THE GREAT GAME"

*From: Mr G.F.C. Plowden, 22 Prince Edward Mansions, London W2 4WA*

Dear Sir,

This phrase of Kipling's has caught on, and is still used by journalists to describe events in the area around and beyond the North-West Frontier. There is a possible source for it, and if not a source, an earlier use of it, in Walter Scott's *Waverley*. At the end of Chapter 58 the Young Pretender, or Chevalier, is made to say, as his last speech in the book, at a rather critical point in his fortunes, "*Ah, Beaujeu, mon cher ami, que mon métier de prince errant est ennuyant, par fois. Mais, courage! c'est le grand jeu, après tout.*"

Kipling, as we know, loved Scott. In 1889 he 'talked Scott' at lunch at Macmillan's, and in 1898 he declared that 'everyone should read Scott once a year, by way of medicine', most excellent advice (Lycett,

pp.197 and 303). It is quite possible that Kipling was struck by, and remembered, these words from a poignant moment in the epic novel. While on the subject of Scott and Kipling, and remembering the recent interest in Kipling's parodies, I should like to recommend Kipling's delicious squib "The Fall of Jock Gillespie". How Scott would have laughed!

Yours faithfully  
GEOFFREY PLOWDEN

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#### NEW BOOKS DUE IN DECEMBER

I have been advised by Palgrave Macmillan Ltd that they expect to publish three new books in December that are likely to be of interest to Members. Most exciting is the release of the latest two volumes of Prof Thomas Pinney's *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling. Volume 5: 1920-30* has 704 pages (ISBN 1-4039-2131-8) whilst *Volume 6: 1931-36* has 656 pages (ISBN 1-4039-2132-6) and also includes a comprehensive index to all six volumes. Individually they are £70 each, but taken together (ISBN 1-4039-2133-4) they will be £110.

The third book is by Andrew Hagioannu of the Department of English, University of Leicester, and titled *The Man who would be Kipling*. The publisher describes this study as placing Kipling's fiction in its original cultural, intellectual and historical contexts, and suggests that Kipling's political ideas and narrative modes are more subtly connected with lived experience and issues of cultural environment than critics have formerly recognised. The book of 240 pages is priced at £45 (ISBN 1-4039-2029-X). – *Ed.*

#### KIPLING: POET OF EMPIRE

A course is being held at the Farncombe Estate Adult Learning Centre, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7IJ, on 26-28 March 2004, conducted by Dr Geoff Hales. The weekend starts on the Friday evening with a one-man show about Kipling's life, "Private Kipling", and in the following days, aims to look at a number of Kipling's works with the object of provoking lively discussion before finishing at 2 p.m. on the Sunday.

The organiser, Mr W. Reddaway, offers a discount of £25 per person to Members of the Society from the full residential fee of £175 per person (£160 per person sharing a room) or the non-residential fee of £125. Full details of the programme can be obtained from Mr Reddaway, email: [bookings@FarncombeEstate.co.uk](mailto:bookings@FarncombeEstate.co.uk), tel: 01386 854100 or by post at the above address. – *Ed.*

## 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 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,
- running the web-site at **www.kipling.org.uk** for members of the Society and anyone else around the world with an interest in the life and work of Rudyard Kipling,
- 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, 32 Merton Road, Harrow HA2 OAB, England or email to [davpag@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:davpag@yahoo.co.uk)**

