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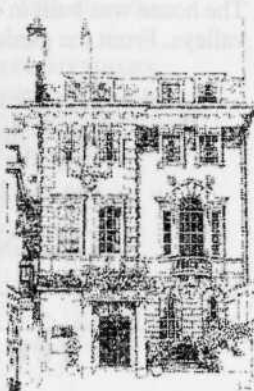
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SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 9 September 2009, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, **Amanda-Jane Eddleston**, University of Mainz, on "The Better Man: Kipling, Character, and Courage".

Wednesday 11 November 2009, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League – "Ruddy Songs': The Voices of Kipling" – **Brian Mattinson** presents an evening devoted to musical settings of Kipling's poems.

Wednesday 10 February 2010, 5.30 for 6 p.m. in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, **Speaker to be announced.**

Wednesday 7 April 2010, 5.30 for 6 p.m. in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League, **Speaker to be announced.**

Wednesday 5 May 2010, 12.30 for 1 p.m. in the Hall of India and Pakistan, the Society's Annual Luncheon: **Lady Townsend, details in the December flyer.**

September 2009

JANE KESKAR & ANDREW LYCETT

THE KIPLING JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD STUDY DAY

This *Actions and Reactions* event which Prof Daniel Karlin organised was very successful with three excellent papers followed by the perceptive comments of the Discussion Panel. There were about 25 attendees who came from several Universities, together with some members of the Society who cannot usually attend out London Meetings. Thus, this study day fulfilled our hopes, and I am pleased to say that I have agreement to publish the three main papers once they are released to me. We certainly owe a debt of gratitude to Prof Karlin for organising it.

ELGAR AND *THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET*

A new recording of Sir Edward Elgar's settings of *The Fringes of the Fleet* will be available as a CD later this year, which will also include settings for "Big Steamers" by Elgar and Sir Edward German. As Alastair Wilson records in his 'Parish Notices' for this year's Annual Luncheon, the Society made a donation towards the cost of producing the recording. We will publish details on how to obtain the CD as soon as possible.

A BELATED MARCH HARE

One of these beasts has been exercising John Walker, our Librarian recently. An edited extract from the email that he circulated recently runs:

Society members will know that I have been printing out discussion on the Rudyard-Kipling mailbase group for many years, and the transcripts are stored with the 'ephemera' files in the Society Library. The recent question from Jane [Keskar] about a Kipling quotation is a good example of the justification for this use of paper. [Jane had been asked for help by Lou Harrington, from California.]

The very quotable quote "**A man can never have too much red wine, too many books, or too much ammunition**" has a long history on the mailbase and on the internet is almost always attributed to Kipling, but without citation. Going back to 3 September 2005, we had a query from Doctor Martin G. Erikson, from Sweden, about the source of the quotation. To my knowledge, there were no replies, apart from promises to try to find a citation, from me among others, off list.

Then, on 27 February this year, I tried the mailbase again, stung into action by a query from a non-member, Peter Olausson (also

from Sweden). Martin Erikson replied to my plea, on list, saying that he had a memory of a reference to it in the works of Frans G. Bengtsson, By coincidence, Peter Olausson was an enthusiast for Bengtsson (who translated 'Paradise Lost' among other pieces of what Peter called "Anglo Saxon" literature). Peter has not returned with a citation, so we are little further in the chase.

Both Martin and I have tried the usual sources, including the *Kipling Journal* (using the word search system, as well as the excellent Index) and every biography in the Library.

I would suspect that this is yet another case of 'it must be Kipling, it is so well put', or perhaps something less worshipful. However, Martin, Peter, Lou, Jane and I would be grateful for something more definite. There must be a member out there who can shed some light.

This query is now presented to all members, so please can anyone help?

"NUDA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT"

The only reason for this small squib is that I need to fill a column inch or so, and to demonstrate that, to follow Kipling's example, a pleasure shared is a pleasure doubled. In the course of annotating "From Sea to Sea" for the NRG, at the end of Chapter III (first published in the *Pioneer*, 11 May 1889) I came across the phrase "Nuda est Veritas et prevalebit". The Editors of the ORG clearly had no trouble with understanding it, and consequently skipped over it without a mention. However, in our unClassical age, readers (including me) might have difficulty, and even more so in the future.

Although I managed to track down that it is Kipling's play upon "Magna est Veritas et prævalebit" but where "Truth is naked and will prevail" rather than "Truth is mighty and will prevail", I called for help from Sir George Engle, our former President. He, as I expected, found the source of the original Latin tag in his *Vulgate's* III Esdras, Chap. 4, v.41 which gives it as "Magna est veritas,et prævalet" – not "prævalebit" Duly prompted, I then found the translation in my O.U.P. edition of *The Apocrypha*, I Esdras, Chap. 4, v.41:

And with that he held his peace. And all the people shouted, and said, Great is Truth, and mighty above all things.

Such are the joys of annotation!

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY IN "THE GARDENER": AN IMPACT OF WAR

By AMRIT JOSHI, M.A.

[Mr Joshi is a lecturer in English Language and Literature at two of the campuses of Tribhuvan University where he originally earned his MA., and at the Acme Engineering College which is affiliated to Purbanchal University. These are all located in Khatmandu, Nepal. – Ed.]

Rudyard Kipling's short story "The Gardener" is often read by a wide range of readers for its mystic ending and the hidden identity of the gardener. The story can further be discussed to reveal the impact of war on daily life. The problem of identity is one of the most important themes of the story when analysed critically. Although almost all the characters are affected or influenced by this theme, the major problem lies with Michael Turrell, particularly due to his social status because of his putative parentage. In the story, Michael Turrell is a boy brought up as Helen's nephew with nothing but the feelings of rage and fury against the spoken and unspoken identity of his parents both unofficially and officially. In her NRG Notes to the story, Lisa Lewis makes a similar point: 'The annotator for *ORG* perceived a number of "difficulties", of which the most important is the question of Michael's parentage'. "The Gardener" drew my attention because it is an important work of the English literary canon. G. H. Newsom writes about the story in the words, '. . . I later met members of the Kipling Society who thought that "The Gardener" was one of greatest of Kipling's stories' (Newsom, p.5). Another reason for the choice is that it is a widely discussed and mature work, which can be examined to illustrate the impact of war on daily life.

Kipling, who had been brought up in India and educated in the U.K., had a taste of both Indian culture and English culture. With the expansion of British colonisation, Kipling spent part of his life in India, which sowed the seed of colonial elements and class discrimination in his literary writings, such as "The Gardener". More than the complexity added by the abruptly mystic ending, the story has the undercurrents of the impact of war, which disturbed the family lives of 1920s. Lisa Lewis quotes a few lines from an article by B. S. Browne in the *Kipling Journal* No. 136, Dec. 1960 to show what might have motivated Kipling to write "The Gardener":

This story was wrung out of Kipling, firstly, by the fact that his son was posted missing after the battle of Loos in World War I and his

body never recovered: . . . Secondly it arose out of the fact that he was appointed a member of the Imperial War Graves Commission and so was enabled to describe intimately the conditions under which our war cemeteries were erected and then visited by the relatives of "the Fallen" . . . (quoted in Lewis.)

"The Gardener" has its obvious connections with the countries and the people once colonized by the British. The incidents of the story do not occur in India, a British colony when the story was written. However, India is the backdrop for the entire plot of the story as it provides a rationale about Michael's parentage. At the same time the readers are taken to Belgium and France in the course of the plot development of the story. The story is written with a European setting but the Indian background, though of marginal relevance, is essential and instrumental in making the story colonial. Tyson might be of relevance in an attempt to explore "The Gardener" as a piece of postcolonial literature for her words: 'Perhaps one of the most important abilities critical theories develop in us is the ability to see connections where we didn't know they existed' (p.363). I intend to explore these social aspects minutely scrutinizing the trouble faced by the characters in the story.

The story begins with Helen Turrell back in her Hampshire village with a child, who, according to her is the son of her brother George by 'the daughter of a retired non-commissioned officer' (Kipling, p.167). Here is an obvious psychological operation of "othering". The woman is looked down on, and she is presented as being satisfied with a little money which she received in exchange for her child. Moreover, she has been portrayed as the representative character of marginalised women when Kipling writes 'people of that class' (p. 168). Helen establishes through her statement that her brother George, 'an Inspector of Indian Police, had entangled himself with the daughter of a retired non-commissioned officer' (p. 167). Helen cannot justly honour the said love affair between her brother and the woman of inferior civil status. Her choice of the word 'entangled' adequately indicates her hatred for the affair. Referring to the woman, who is said to be Michael's mother, Helen says: 'people of that class would do anything for money' (p. 168). Helen proudly makes a generalized announcement that women, who belong to the class of Michael's putative mother, exchange babies for money.

India was a part of British Empire, where Helen's brother George Turrell had been working as an Inspector of Indian Police. George is presented as 'a black sheep' (p. 168), who 'had tried his family severely since early youth' (p. 167). Helen easily convinces her neighbours that it was not impossible for an English man like George to have an affair

with the woman of low social repute. George deserved the woman and 'a fall from a horse' (p.167) made Michael a posthumous child. Moreover, the relation between George and the woman is assessed as a 'disgraceful affair' (p. 167).

Helen, according to her own narration, learns about the birth of Michael when she goes to the south of France for the treatment of her lungs. She is portrayed as sympathetic to the child: 'she most nobly took charge' (p.167) though she 'might well have washed her hands of the whole disgraceful affair' (p. 167). The portrayal of Helen as a noble English woman and Michael's supposed mother as a cruel and inhuman woman deserves special mention here. The supposed mother of Michael is presented as a woman, who 'would do almost anything for money' (p. 168). Michael's mother is presented as a woman who sounds similar to a Third World native, 'who is considered too degraded and inhuman to be credited with any specific subjectivity, is cast as no more than a recipient of the negative elements of the self that the European projects onto him' (Janmohamed, p.20). Kipling does not think her to be a woman worthy enough to be mentioned by her name in the story. She has no individual identity, but is simply a woman. Facts do not help us to draw any conclusion regarding her nationality – her identity. One is likely to jump to the conclusion that she is an Indian. But, no words in the story openly support or suggest this point. She is one of the two adult individual female characters who do not have a name in the story. Her relationship with George is nothing but sex trade as she gives her baby Michael to Helen without reluctance just for a little money.

Michael's pre-birth and post-death roles create and increase the complexities in the story. He is said to have been born in India as a son of British father and mother of a usually ignored class. Helen explains how she got the boy:

She arranged for the passage of the child and a nurse from Bombay, met them at Marseilles, nursed the baby through an attack of infantile dysentery due to the carelessness of the nurse, whom she had had to dismiss, and at last, thin and worn but triumphant, brought the boy late in the autumn, wholly restored, to her Hampshire home. (pp.167-68)

Helen tells how she had been to the south of France as she had trouble with her lungs. Michael, according to Helen, is carried from India through France to Britain. Michael, at the beginning, is presented as a hybrid child, who 'had his father's mouth to a line; which made something to build upon' (p. 168).

The story presents the integration not only of cultures but also of biology: '(George) had entangled himself with the daughter of a retired non-commissioned officer' (p. 167); and Michael was born – Michael as a hybrid child of the people belonging to both the elite and the common classes. This affair is the foundation for the story "The Gardener" to go ahead. 'Hybridity in particular,' writes Robert Young 'shows the connections between the racial categories of the past and contemporary cultural discourse:' (pp. 158-59). Michael, in his true capacity, has been a threat to Helen in the course of maintaining her prestige in her society. This episode is backed up by Young's concept in his words 'culture in its colonial operation becomes hybridized, alienated and potentially threatening to its European original through the production of polymorphously perverse people' (p. 160).

The affair between George and his beloved (or kept woman), who is seen to be living in India, has been mentioned as a 'disgraceful affair' (Kipling, p. 167), which is nothing but a way of gratifying sexual desire. It could have been nothing but sex trade because the woman does not stick to 'her right to keep the boy' (p.168) and exchanges the baby for money. Referring to the kind of love affair, Young writes:

For it is clear that the forms of sexual exchange brought about by colonialism were themselves both mirrors and consequences of the modes of economic exchange that constituted the basis of colonial relations; . . . , indeed, as much as an exchange of bodies as of goods, or rather of bodies as goods: as in that paradigm of respectability, marriage, economic and sexual exchange were intimately bound up, coupled with each other, from the very first. The history of the meanings of the word 'commerce' includes the exchange both of merchandise and of bodies in sexual intercourse. (p.161)

No matter what Helen tells the people in her village, Michael is her own son. Helen is 'thirty five and independent' (Kipling, p. 167). In the decades of the 1890s and early 20th century, it was not normal and natural for an English woman to be an unwed mother. Therefore, Helen had to invent a story which could hide the true story of her pregnancy. She explains that she got her brother George's son Michael from India while she was in France for treatment of her lungs. She tries to cover up the story of her affair and distort the truth of the birth of Michael. The common people are often exploited and are sometimes made scapegoats for the wrongdoings of the elites. The non-commissioned officer's daughter is the example of it. The whole story of Helen's affair with someone not stated in the story has been kept away from the readers' overt knowledge.

'Mummy' has been a secret code between Helen and Michael as it gives pleasure to both of them though she tells Michael that he, 'might call her 'Mummy' at bed time' (p.168) with her condition 'if it gave him pleasure'. Helen finds herself in a welter of confusion regarding her relationship with Michael. When Michael overhears Helen telling someone about the secret code of 'Mummy', he says, 'I won't call you 'Mummy' any more—not even at bed times . . . You have hurted me in my insides and I'll hurt you back' (p. 169). Michael's words are painful for Helen to bear and she responds, 'But isn't that rather unkind?' (p.169)

There should be no doubtful questions regarding Michael's parentage as he has been christened in the Church of England: his parents' names must have been openly recorded in the Parish Register. Michael struggles throughout life to obtain the correct information regarding his identity. Michael's identity as a member of the patriarchal Turrell family has been forcefully established in the following words:

As a matter of fact, it was the Turrell forehead, broad, low, and well-shaped, with the widely spaced eyes beneath it, that Michael had most faithfully reproduced. His mouth was somewhat better cut than the family type. But Helen, who would concede nothing good to his mother's side, vowed he was a Turrell all over, and, there being no one to contradict, the likeness was established. (p.168)

Helen establishes Michael's identity as her nephew, but this step makes his identity doubtful and life painful. Philip Gleason writes, 'the word identity was ideally adapted to talking about the relationship of the individual to society' (p. 194). Thus, a person's identity is not complete in himself, and it can be established in relationship with other people. Michael's painful feelings in the quest for his own identity are clearly felt in the words: 'At six, he wished to know why he could not call her 'Mummy,' as other boys called their mothers' (Kipling, p. 168). Michael feels himself rootless in the search for his identity. Gleason writes that the search for identity arises 'primarily from the individual's feeling of being rootless and isolated in swarming, anonymous throng' (p.194).

With age, Michael's life becomes more complex and painful than ever before. He has little pleasure by calling Helen 'Mummy' at bed time; but away from home he is often ridiculed because of his parentage. Kipling writes, 'At ten years old, after two terms at a prep school, something or somebody gave him the idea that his civil status was not quite regular' (p. 169). Michael is not satisfied with Helen's explanation and justification regarding his civil status, and he says, 'Don't believe

a word of it'. The readers are never told what Michael believes regarding his parentage. Although only a boy, he seems to have fully understood the world when he says:

'People wouldn't have talked like they did if my people had been married. But don't you bother, Auntie. I've found out all about my sort in English Hist'ry and the Shakespeare bits. There was William the Conqueror to begin with, and—oh, heaps more, and they all got on first-rate. 'Twon't make any difference to you, my being *that*—will it?'(p.169)

Michael is a promising student able to win a scholarship to go to Oxford. But, when the war breaks out, he goes to the war. Kipling writes, 'the war took him just before what was like to have been a most promising career' (p. 170). Michael is directly steered to a commission in a battalion completely ending his personal identity. War is one of the major ingredients for identity crises. In a war, people are known collectively; and an individual is not of prime concern. It is natural for the soldiers to kill or be killed in the war. Luck helped Michael for some time, but his death could come as no surprise for the people in the village and Helen. Kipling writes:

By this time the village was old in experience of war, and, English fashion, had evolved a ritual to meet it. When the postmistress handed her seven-year-old daughter the official telegram to take to Miss Turrell, she observed to the Rector's gardener: 'It's Miss Helen's turn now.' (pp.171-72)

The attitude to demean the low-paid or low-class people is obvious with the writer's reluctance to mention a character with her proper name but 'postmistress'. Moreover, the gravity of sorrow of the child (postmistress's daughter) has misused, highlighting that the child's love for Lieutenant Michael was simply for sweets she sometimes received from him. Kipling writes: 'The child herself came to the front door weeping aloud, because Michael had often given her sweets' (p. 172).

Michael is killed in France in the First World War. Michael, who is said to have been born in India, was taken to Britain through France nearly two decades before the time of his death. But, actually he was born in the south of France, where he ends his life in a war. Michael seems to be tied to France from birth to death. The whereabouts of his dead body also can hardly be ascertained: Michael's identity is absolutely lost. Kipling writes:

. . . a shell-splinter dropping out of a wet dawn killed him at once. The next shell uprooted and laid down over the body what had been the foundation of a barn wall, so neatly that none but an expert would have guessed that anything unpleasant had happened. (p.171)

The identity crises, which are seen in the story, keep the readers shocked and dumb leading us to Michael's death: 'Missing *always* means dead' (p. 172). No news is received until the Armistice, when Helen is officially informed that he is now buried in a military cemetery at Hagenzeele in Belgium. Thus, Michael's life (claimed to have originated in India) ends in the war in France. His dead body is carried to Belgium to be buried together with the countless number of dead bodies of soldiers in Hagenzeele Third Military Cemetery. This piece of news is conveyed to Helen through an official letter. Kipling writes:

Then there came to her, as next of kin, an official intimation, backed by a page of a letter to her in indelible pencil, a silver identity-disc, and a watch, to the effect that the body of the Lieutenant Michael Turrell had been found, identified, and re-interred in Hagenzeele Third Military cemetery—the letter of the row and the grave's number in that row duly given, (p.173)

The news of the death of Michael makes Helen restless and she prepares to visit Michael's grave. When Helen consults the officer for information to look for Michael's grave, 'a large Lancashire woman' (p.174) comes between them. The psychological operation of "othering" has been exploited regarding her identity: 'a large Lancashire woman'. She is the second of the two adult female characters not mentioned with her proper name. The woman wants to obtain information to look for the grave of her son. She says his proper name is Anderson, but, 'coming of respectable folk, he had of course enlisted under the name of Smith' (p. 174). The mother does not know which name her son might have used for joining the army. Moreover, she does not know with certainty where he was killed. His individual identity is questionable both during and after his life time. The boy has lost not only life but also the identity.

On the way to the Hagenzeele cemetery, Helen encounters Mrs. Scarsworth, who visits the neighbouring cemetery frequently. She says, 'This is my ninth time since the Armistice' (p. 175). She adds she has lost no one in the war, but she visits the graveyard for her friends, who have lost their relatives. She goes there to pay homage and tribute to a man who died in the war. However, she hides the identity of the person

until she admits her affair with the man in the words: 'He was everything to me that he oughtn't to have been—the one real thing—the only thing that ever happened to me in all my life; and I've had to pretend he wasn't' (p. 176). She explains the reason for confiding in Helen when she says, 'I can't go to him again with nobody in the world knowing . . . But, it isn't worthy of him' (pp. 176-77). The identity of this man is mysterious. However, he is the man probably in love with Mrs. Scarsworth – an instance indicating extramarital relations. She admits the affair in her own words: 'he was more to me than anything else in the world'(p. 176).

Helen confides in no one her true relationship with Michael. Helen is hyphenated in terms of her relationship with Michael. Her love for her child and her civil status in her village shatter her heart. Commenting on this relationship Sandra Kemp writes:

At the beginning of the story Kipling shows how the internalizing of love and the struggle to contain and measure it against conventional standards fracture the relationship between mother and son. They both suffer; they inflict pain in each other, and Helen feels a terrible sense of isolation because of her need to sustain the pretence outwardly, while strengthening their relationship in private . . . (qtd in Lewis).

She goes to offer flowers to Michael's grave; and makes her efforts to find out the same. She catches sight of a man 'evidently a gardener, for he was firming a young plant in the soft earth' (pp. 177-78). Though the identity of this man is mysterious, he ambiguously mentions Helen's relationship with Michael in the words: 'I will show you where your son lies' (p. 178). Helen does not pay attention to the man and leaves the cemetery 'supposing him to be the gardener' (p. 178).

Helen's explanation regarding Michael's parentage does not satisfy the readers. Despite Helen's justification, I draw conclusion that Michael's father's identity is mysterious, not the mother's. During war people's feelings of insecurity happened to yoke a man and a woman secretly at the closest possible level, which is not easily acceptable by society. Then, people weave a net to hide the true colour of their identities, and this does not let them live in peace. Michael dies before he learns truth about his parentage. Kipling has minutely observed the state of restless mind closely examining their words and deeds. Michael's trouble in life is obvious when he quotes Helen's maid Emma: 'Lots of little boys die quite soon. So'll I. *Then* you'll see!' (p.169)

"The Gardener" is a complex story with its ambiguities, which lie in the revelation, realisation and acceptance of the identity of

characters. The non-commissioned officer's daughter has been made a scapegoat to hide Helen's affair with a man of unknown identity. The absence of adult male functioning characters adds further doubt and suspicion. Lewis writes: 'The scarcity of adult males in the text has led some people to suggest that Helen had an incestuous relationship with her brother, or that her lover was the Rector's gardener'. Michael and Helen live together with the feelings of alienation. Whatever be the role and status, almost all the characters feel alienated and disturbed due to the identity crisis.

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ANNUAL LUNCHEON 2009

The Kipling Society's Annual Lunch was held on Wednesday 6 May at the Royal Over-Seas League, London. The Guest Speaker was Professor Richard Holmes. At his table were our new President, Field Marshal Sir John Chappie, Lady Chappie, Cdr Alastair Wilson (our Chairman) Mr Sharad Keskar (Deputy Chairman), Major Tonie Holt, Mrs Valmai Holt and Mr John Radcliffe.

Apologies were received from those who, unfortunately, were unable to attend: Dr Michael Brock and Mrs Brock, Mr J.L.A. Hartley, Sir Derek Oulton, Mr & Mrs Couchman, Mrs H. Barton, Dr G. Schmigalle, Mr W. Hoskings, Mrs V. Hollinghurst-Daniel, Mr & Mrs R. Kernick, and Mrs A.J. Smith. The occasion was a great success and was attended by some 112 guests including:

Admiral Sir P.C. Abbott, Mr M. Aidin, Prince Mohsin Ali Khan, Mrs Amina Ali, Mr John Ashwin, Mrs Mary Ashwin, Lt-Col R.C. Ayers, Mrs L.A. Ayers, Mr R.G. Bailey, Mr R. Baker, Mr H.D. Balls, Mr S.J.X. Beaumont, Major K. Bonny, Mrs D. Bonny, Mr B. Bouric, Dr Hugh Brogan, Mr A. Bruce, Mrs B. Caseley Dickson, Mr J.R. Carter, F.M. Sir John Chappie, Lady Chappie, Mr M. Clark, Mr P.G.W. Cook, Dr N.K. Cooper, Dr A.N. Cowan, Mrs S.A. Cowan, Mr J.H. Davie, Ms A.J. Eddleston, Lady Egremont, Mr G. Enstone, Sir George Engle, Lady Engle, Mr P. Fallart, Mrs H. Gray, Ms G.R. Gibbins, Mrs J. Habib, Miss A.G. Harcombe, Mr B.T. Harris, Mr N.A. Harris, Mr G.E.B. Harrison, Mrs H. Harrison, Dr T.A. Heathcote, Mrs M.M. Heathcote, Mr R. Hollinghurst, Mr D. Hunt, Mrs S. Hunt, F.M. Lord Inge, Mr J. James, General Sir G. Johnson, Mrs J.C. Kay-Robinson, Mr W.H.B. Key, Mrs C.A. Key, Mrs J. Keskar, Rear Admiral G.F. Liardet, Mrs J. A. Liardet, Dr T.W. Liardet, Mrs G. Liardet, Mr E.H. Marsh, Mr A. McCarthy, Mrs C.A. McCarthy, Mr D. MacKenzie, Mr D.E. Markham, Mrs R.A. Markham, Mr N.S. Mayhew, Mr R.L. Miller, Mrs A. Miller, Mr C.R.W. Mitchell, Mr N. Munro, Col C.J. Newbould, Mr Frank Noah, Mr P. Noronha, Mrs R. Nwume, Mr David Page, Mr M. K. Parker, Mr R.S. Parker, Mr R.G. Pettigrew Maj Gen J. Phipps, Professor T. Pinney, Mrs S. Pinney, Mr G.F.C. Plowden, Mrs F.A. Plowden, Brig. R.B.C. Plowden, Mrs R.P. Plowden, Mr M.J. Powell, Mr J.M. Raisman, Mrs E.A. Raisman, Mrs C.J.J. Reid, Mr G. Simmons, Mrs S. Simmons, Mr J.W.M. Smith, Mr G.A. Siphthorp, Col G.T. Spate, Mrs P.J. Spate, Mrs E. Travis, Mr H. Travis, Dr F.A. Underwood, Maj Gen C.G.C. Vyvyan, Mrs E.F. Vyvyan, Mr S.D. Wade, Mrs F.M. Wade, Mr John Walker, Mr R.H. Whatmoor, Ms E.C. Welby, Mr E. Wilson and Mr A. Wilton.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Prince Ali Khan, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen; distinguished and learned Guests, Members of our learned Society. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our Annual Luncheon, in this our 82nd year. Normally, the opening salutation on an occasion such as this can be suitably short so that the speaker can stand up, speak up, and shut up – and I expect you are beginning to feel sharp-set, anyway. But I feel that I must remark on the truly distinguished nature of our guest list today. In *The Gondoliers*, Gilbert described how, in the "wonder-working days of old", there was a King who believed in Equality (and No, I am not going to suggest parallels to today's politicians): in Gilbert's Kingdom, "on every side Field Marshals gleamed, small beer were Lords Lieutenant deemed, with Admirals the ocean teemed . . ." – well, that describes our situation today (though our distinguished Service lunchers emphatically do NOT owe their position to any Gilbertian topsy-turvy notion of equality) – oh, and we haven't actually got a Lord Lieutenant – so far as I know – though we have at least one Deputy Lieutenant, and next year, all being well, we hope to provide you with a real Lord Lieutenant. But we do have more than enough gold lace, and cap-peak scrambled-egg to gratify any naval and military tailor. (I tot it up to 26 stars in all, mostly military – as is very right and proper, given the subject of our Guest of Honour's address.) Nor are we lacking in academically distinguished lunchers – three professors by my count (well, actually, it's our Secretary's count). In that context, it is a particular pleasure to see Professor Tom Pinney here with his wife, who have come from the USA (and not a handkerchief in sight). And to continue the Gilbertian theme, we have, most appropriately, the Law represented among our lunching members. Welcome to all, from far and wide – "Hy Brazil and Babylon, Islands of the southern run, and cities of Cathaia".

That's enough for my opening – I am mindful of Belloc's *Lines to a Don*, who said that "there is a canon which confines, a rhymed octosyllabic curse, if written in Iambic verse, to fifty lines . . ." "It's got nothing to do with what I'm saying, other than I think they're splendid verse, and provide me with a reason for shutting up: I have had my fifty-lines-worth, and that's enough. But it does mean that I may have omitted some of our Members and Guests whom I ought to have mentioned – if so, my most sincere apologies. Ladies and Gentlemen, *Bon Appetit*.

GRACE, BY JANE KESKAR

First, in keeping with the theme of "Kipling's Soldiers" these lines from "To T.A." in *Barrack-Room Ballads*:

O there'll surely come a day
When they'll give you all your pay,
And treat you as a Christian ought to do;
So, until that day comes round,
Heaven keep you safe and sound,
And, Thomas, here's my best respects to you!

And now the grace:

We thank you Lord for,
Good food,
Good wine
And good company!

THE CHAIRMAN'S 'PARISH NOTICES'

The reason for the Chairman to address you is that this is the best opportunity in the year to tell our members personally what has been happening in your Society – a sort of Parish Notices. But first, a confession: in my brief – well, brief-ish – welcome before our excellent lunch (for which I shall ask Jane on our behalf to thank the Over-Seas League's Secretary), I mentioned that we had 26 stars-worth of assorted military and naval brass here today. Some of you may have wondered what this meant: is it some sort of esoteric classification, rather like hotels? I admit to being deliberately a bit Kipling-esque in that remark: it was the sort of knowing, insiders-only sort of detail such as Kipling delighted in. So I'll explain that today, within NATO, Flag, General and Air Officers are ranked by stars – this is so that one can easily define where in the pecking order, say, a French Vice-Amiral d'Escadrille comes – is he an "ordinary" Vice-Admiral (3 stars) or is he something more or less? We have today, as I indicated, two Field Marshals (who rate five stars each), and Admiral and a General (at four stars each) and so on down to two "mere" Brigadiers at one star apiece.

First of all, I must mention the regret we (your Council) felt when Sir George Engle intimated that he felt he should stand down as our President: and the relief which we collectively felt when Sir John Chappie accepted our request that he take over. It is particularly gratifying to see both of them here today.

Next, I must record our gratitude to the late John Slater, our librarian for nearly ten years, who left us a most generous bequest – more of that in a minute. Last year, I was able to tell those attending the luncheon that Sussex University had agreed the purchase of the Baldwin correspondence (for which we contributed a donation): the University gave a small reception in October to mark their acquisition to which the Society was invited and after which our long-time member Michael Smith gave a lecture. This year, I am able to announce that we shall be contributing to the cost of making of a new recording – the first since 1917 – of Sir Edward Elgar's settings of Kipling's poems from *The Fringes of the Fleet* and "Big Steamers". There will be an announcement about the recording, and the discounts available to members who wish to obtain a copy, in the next-but-one issue of the *Journal*.

In the hope of persuading young people at school that Kipling repays their study (and gives them enjoyment while doing it) Council has instituted an Essay Prize to be competed for among secondary schools within a 30-mile radius of Bateman's. The number of entries has been disappointing – one at the last count, and so we are extending the deadline by a month, because earlier indications had suggested a rather greater interest – and the prizes, £500 for the winning school, and £250 for the winning essayist, plus a discretionary £100 for worthy runners up) are not to be sneezed at (perhaps an unfortunate metaphor – let's say despised). The hard work has all been done by John Walker, our librarian, who deserves our thanks. When we discussed the sad lack of entries so far, he was able to reassure me that the one entry so far received was of a satisfactorily high standard, and so, come what may, we shall make an award – as much as anything else *pour encourager les autres – l'annee prochaine*. He also remarked that he had been in discussion with the administrator of a similar national prize for schools, on Shakespeare, who told him that, although their competition is now flourishing, in its first year it had attracted precisely zero entries. The prize money will come from John Slater's legacy, and we are assured that it is just the kind of thing which John would have wanted.

There are two events to which I would particularly draw your attention. One is the Kipling study day being held at Sheffield University on Wednesday 20 May, run by our member, Professor Danny Karlin. Again, we are supporting this financially, because we hope that for some of our many members who live north of the Watford Gap ("Our Friends in the North" – as we're a literary society, I feel duty-bound to chuck in as many literary references as I can – rather like Kipling and the Agent-General in *The Vortex* who discovered that they were blood brothers – but you know the rest, don't you) it will provide an

opportunity for them to meet and have a Kipling-good day out. And second, a reminder that Saturday 20 June is the Society day at Bateman's.

Next, I would like to record the Society's thanks to Roger Ayers, who has managed to find a successor as Membership Secretary, John Lambert (to whom we are also grateful, though not half so grateful as Roger must be). The fates were kind to us, though much less so to Roger, because he just managed to complete the turnover before having a thoroughly horrid autumn and winter with pneumonia, followed by appendicitis. We are very glad to see him here.

This occasion marks the end of my time as your Chairman, and I must record my thanks to all the members of Council who have made my job so easy. Far and away in front is Jane (I hope she doesn't mind the use of her Christian name *tout court* in this context, but everyone on Council knows her as that). She keeps the whole show on the road. Next comes Frank Noah who very quietly sees to our finances in a rather understated way – but somehow seems to be able to persuade the accountants that we are still in the black. And David Page our superb Editor: I hope he will allow that adjective to stand for how we feel about him. I've mentioned Roger, and now John Lambert, and John Walker; they have been the mainstay among the officers, but all members of Council have contributed, and I thank them most heartily. It is also appropriate to make particular mention of my predecessor John Radcliffe, for not only maintaining our excellent web-site, but for having most worthily taken over George Webb's job as editor of the New Readers' Guide, cajoling and occasionally pushing the contributors, as well as laying out and formatting the text so that the work is now nearing completion, and will, we hope, stand the test of time.

INTRODUCTION OF OUR GUEST SPEAKER

To say that Professor Richard Holmes is well-known in the field of military history is like saying that George Stephenson was a pretty good engineer. His CV is extensive and varied, and many, if not most, of us will be familiar with his face as he has led us round the battlefields on which British soldiers have gained world-wide renown. What is more, he has the inestimable advantage in a military historian in being a professional soldier, albeit part-time, himself. (I have been trying to persuade him to undertake another series, following in the steps of Wellington as he smeared Napoleon's Marshals over the landscape of Portugal and northern Spain – and I've even volunteered to go as his naval adviser!) All too often, Chairmen of meetings and such-like have

to introduce speakers with whose work they are totally unacquainted, and they have to mouth platitudes which sound insincere. I can say that I have two of Professor Holmes' works on my own bookshelves, and that I learnt more about the war on the Western Front from *Tommy*, than from the rest of about fifty years' pretty extensive reading of the history of that campaign, from the regimental history of my father's own regiment to *Journey's End*, via Ian Hay's *The First Hundred Thousand*. I haven't yet read his book *Sahib: the British Soldier in India*. After today's talk, entitled "Kipling's Soldiers", I intend to go along Piccadilly to see if I can find a copy in Hatchards. Ladies and Gentlemen – Professor Richard Holmes.

KIPLING'S SOLDIERS

By PROF RICHARD HOLMES, C.B.E., T.D., J.P.

We have long been ambivalent about our soldiers. For much of the army's history – now coming up for 350 years – it was argued that a large standing army in peacetime was a waste of money. The navy was a different matter altogether, for it protected the maritime commerce upon which our prosperity depended. It was not simply economists who worried about the army. Whigs and then radicals saw it as a device for converting the nice young man into layabout and killer, whose aim, as John Dryden warned us, was 'to break some maiden's and his mother's heart.' Soldiers, recruited from the lowest elements in society, were by definition 'brutal and licentious.' They were content to be 'class traitors,' supporting a narrowly-based government against its opponents. Worse, while sailors were either confined to major ports or absent on voyages, soldiers, mewed up in the barracks which became a feature of the 19th Century townscape, were all too present, reeling back to their barracks in time for Lights Out, leading young male civilians astray, and trying to impress girls with their flash uniform.

This was an army that few outside it understood. Although the systematic expansion of the militia during the Napoleonic Wars meant that more and more men served in uniform, the great majority were able to escape going overseas, and most middle class men were able to hire a substitute to serve on their behalf. Certainly, few authors wrote about private soldiers or NCOs: many of Jane Austen's heroes are either naval officers or gentlemen serving on full-time call-out as militia officers. There is scarcely a private in sight.

Kipling began to change this. Norman Page has argued that 'nowhere since Shakespeare's *Henry V* has the British private soldier been depicted so fully and sympathetically.' Kipling would deserve remembering even if had only written "Tommy":

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They send me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fighting, Lord! They shove me in the stalls!
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, wait
outside";
But it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the
tide—
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the
tide,
O it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Kipling had never served in the regular army, and a brief stint as a private in an Indian volunteer battalion led to his being fined for non-attendance. In *Something of Myself* he maintained that he had been shot at, 'entirely without malice,' by a Pathan sniper when he ventured into the mouth of the Khyber Pass, but there is no mention of the incident in material he wrote at the time. His eye for the soldier, like his eye for the Indian Civil Servants who colonise *Departmental Ditties*, was the result of close observation. He told Margaret Mackail that he had 'mixed with fighters and statesmen, administrators and the women who controlled them all. . . . I've tried to get to folk from the barrack room and the brothel, to the ballroom and the Viceroy's Council, and I have in a little measure succeeded.'

Much of his military research was carried out in the early 1880s in Mian Mir, then as now the military cantonment for the great city of Lahore. The two battalions he spent most time with were the Northumberland Fusiliers and the East Surreys, the later 'a London-recruited confederacy of skilful dog-stealers, some of them my good and loyal friends.' His social class gave him access to the officers mess: he once pretended to be the orderly officer and turned out the quarter-guard for a prank, rewarding the men for the trouble he had put them to. But he made a conscious effort to spend time with private soldiers, who were more than happy to exchange conversations on a blazing Indian afternoon for a little beer-money.

It is easy to maintain that Kipling's relationship with soldiers was shallow and stagey. Richard Le Gallienne called him 'a war correspondent in love with soldiers', and there is an element of truth here. But only an element. With our access to Kipling's papers we can now see that there was a level of knowledge that rarely surfaced in polite poetry or prose. Anyone writing about soldiers (even now) will be aware that they are defined by language: slang, professional terms (virgin or corrupted), everyday working-class expressions, and phrases which veer between the impossibly hackneyed and the really original.

There is a real problem with what politeness compels me to call the f-word. 'Thomas isn't a brute,' wrote Kipling. 'He really ought to be supplied with a new adjective to help him express his opinion.' Kipling was well aware that he stood on the edge of a world that men of his sort rarely entered, the world of:

The red-coats, the pipe-clayed belts and the pill-box hats, the beer, the floggings, hangings and crucifixions, the bugle calls, the smell of the oats and horse-piss, the bellowing sergeants with foot-long moustaches, the bloody skirmishes, invariably mishandled, the crowded troop-ships, the cholera-stricken camps, the 'native' concubines, the ultimate death in the work-house.

Kipling does not avoid the heroic battle-piece, though it is usually in the minor key. In the story "The Taking of Lungtungpen" twenty-six British soldiers, led by Lieutenant Brazenose, strip 'as nakid as Vanus' to cross a river and storm a Burmese town. "With the Main Guard" describes a pitched battle on the Frontier, in which one of Kipling's favourites, Captain 'Crook' O'Neil of the Black Tyrone plays a leading part.

He is wonderful on the commonplaces of campaigning, like the infantry's stock in trade, marching:

We're foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin' over Africa—
 Foot—foot—foot—foot—sloggin' over Africa—
 (Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down again!)
 There's no discharge in the war!

He knows that the British soldier is generally bad at hating:

I do not love my Empire's foes,
 Nor call 'em angels; still,
 What is the sense of 'atin' those
 'Oom you are paid to kill?

He writes so well about forming up for battle that you could swear he'd done it. Here 'the backbone of the army', an infantry colour-sergeant, is getting ready to shepherd his company into action.

'E feels 'is innards 'eavin', 'is bowels givin' way;
 'E sees the blue-white faces all trying 'ard to grin,
 An' 'e stands and waits an' suffers till it's time to cap 'em in.

An' now the hugly bullets come peckin' through the dust,
 An' no one wants to face 'em, but every beggar must;
 So, like a man in irons, which isn't glad to go,
 They moves 'em off by companies uncommon stiff an' slow.

Kipling wrote about the understains of soldiering as well as any man could. In "Danny Deever", one of his best poems, a man is hanged, with the regiment standing round the scaffold in hollow square, for shooting a sleeping comrade in what were known as 'hot-weather shootings'. The short story "In the Matter of a Private" deals with the same topic, with Private Simmons shooting the bully Private Losson and going on to swing for it. He admitted that British soldiers sometimes ran away. In the poem "That Day" a badly disciplined battalion broke under attack.

I 'eard the knives be'ind me, but I dursn't face my man,
 Nor I don't know where I went to, for I didn't 'alt to see,
 'Till I 'eard a beggar squealin' out for quarter as 'e ran,
 An' I thought I knew the voice an'—it was me!

Much the same thing happens in the short story "The Drums of the Fore and Aft", but this time Jakin and Lew, two young band-rats, the hoodies of their day, who swore, fought and drank, struck up "The British Grenadiers" on fife and drum and marched straight into the fire. They rallied the battalion at the cost of their lives, but Kipling crafts in a little ambivalence by noticing an empty bottle of rum behind them.

Kipling's soldiers did not do all their fighting against the Queen's enemies. The poem "Belts" describes an inter-regimental fight in Dublin, spoiled for all when one combatant draws his bayonet and stabs a man: 'An' so we all was murderers that started out in fun.' The narrator in "Cells" admits that he has been ruined by drink. And although he is 'cut hard' by the fact that 'my wife she cries on the barrack-gate, my kid in the barrack-yard,' he admits that 'as soon as I'm in with a mate and gin, I know I'll do it again!'

There is a generalised sense of patriotism, but Kipling's soldiers are not politically engaged.

"What was the end of all the show,
 Johnnie, Johnnie?"
 Ask my Colonel, for I don't know,
 Johnnie my Johnnie, aha!
 We broke a King and we built a road—
 A court-house stands where the Reg'ment goed.
 And the river's clean where the raw blood flowed
 When the widow give the party.

These days we would call them institutionally racist, though the term would have made little enough sense at the time. In the poem "Loot" the

narrator observes that 'if you treat a nigger to a dose o' cleanin'-rod / 'E's like to show you everything 'e owns.' But in " 'Fuzzy-Wuzzy' " there is unstinted admiration for the Dervish fighting man:

We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square.

"Gunga Din" begins with bits of soldiers' Hindi, for Kipling's characters liked to show that they could 'sling the bat' with the best of them.

He was "Din! Din! Din!
"You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
"Hi! Slippy *hitherao!*
"Water, get it! *Panee lao,*
"You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."

When the narrator is hit, Gunga Din drags him away to a mule-drawn stretcher, before he himself is mortally wounded.

Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

British officers of the Indian army do not appear as often as British rank and file, but when they do it is often to point up the intimate connection between the best of them, for many of whom serving in the same regiment was a family tradition, and the men they led. Thus 'Stalky was a Sikh.' In the short story "The Tomb of his Ancestors", young John Chinn joins his family regiment, where 'The officers talked to their soldiers in a tongue not two hundred white folk in India understood; and the men were their children.' Bukta, his father's old bearer, at once reports for duty: 'I am your servant, as I was your father's before you.' Personal knowledge – and an identifying birthmark – enables him to persuade tribesmen to be vaccinated, and he kills a dangerous tiger that has taken up residence in a family tomb.

Kipling's command of military detail is often excellent. He knew that the Martini-Henry rifle came in different butt sizes. Private Ortheris, one of the Soldiers Three, is anxious not to accidentally pick up Private Mulvaney's long butted rifle, for fear that 'she will kick my heart out.' Kipling knew that the upswing 'Haymaker's lift' with rifle and bayonet might make the blade, bearing the weight of an opponent's body, snap short at the locking-ring where it joins the rifle's muzzle. In

the story "Black Jack", Mulvaney overhears a plan to ruin him by using his rifle to shoot an unpopular sergeant, and so removes the pivot at the back of his Martini-Henry's breech-block and conceals the hole with grease. When the weapon is fired, the block flies off and hits the would-be murderer agonisingly in the face. When discussing the action in a frontier defile Mulvaney observes that close-quarter combat is a very personal business: 'Each does ut his own way, like makin' love.'

For me, though, where Kipling really scores is in his portrayal of private soldiers as three-dimensional characters. It is easy to imagine Private Mulvaney, who can never hang onto his stripes and whose cod-Irish sometimes goes well over the top, as so typical of Irish soldiers without whom the 19th Century army could not have survived. But the short story "The Courting of Dinah Shadd" reveals the full dimensions of his misfortune. While he was courting his life's love, the sergeant's daughter Dinah Shadd, he dallied briefly with another woman. Her witch-like mother cursed him: he himself would never be a sergeant, and they would have no living children. And so it was, love and tragedy inextricably interwoven.

In what I think is one of Kipling's very best short stories, "On Greenhow Hill", our three heroes are lying out, waiting to snipe an Indian deserter who has been creeping down nightly to yell insults at the camp, making his former comrades unsteady. As they wait for him to appear, the Yorkshire man Private Learoyd, his memory jogged by the fact that the landscape reminds him of home, talks about the personal tragedy that led him to sign on. The recruiting sergeant asked him to forget her and, says Learoyd, " 'I've been forgettin' her ever since.' " The deserter eventually appears and begins to creep down a gulley 700 yards away. " 'See that beggar? . . . ' " says Ortheris. " 'Got 'im.' " The man rolls downhill, comes to rest with his face in a clump of gentians, and a raven flaps lazily across to see what has happened. " 'That's a clean shot, little man,' " says Mulvaney. " 'Happen there was a lass tewed up wi' him, too,' " muses Learoyd.

Like many of his contemporaries, Kipling believed that the colonial campaigns he described were the forerunners to a war of national survival. In *The Army of a Dream*, published in 1904, he gives 'a vision of England trained and prepared for war by freely offered service.' He argued that the Boer War of 1899-1902 was a terrible warning:

*Let us admit it fairly, as a business people should,
We have had no end of a lesson: it will do us no end of good.*

And when war came in 1914 he made no secret of his support for it.

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

The loss of his only son Jack, killed as a lieutenant in the Irish Guards at Loos in September 1915 struck Kipling a blow from which he never really recovered. 'I'm sorry that all the years' work ended in that one afternoon,' he wrote. 'But – lots of people are in our position – and it's something to have bred a man.' He last wrote about soldiers in his two-volume regimental history *The Irish Guards in the Great War*. Captain Cyril Falls, professor of the history of war at Oxford liked it – in fact he thought it better than Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All That*. But poet and infantry officer Edmund Blunden was less impressed, and complained of Kipling's 'sheer want of comprehension' of the war's character. Perhaps we should not be surprised. What happened on the Western Front in 1914-18 was light-years away from the experience of war on the North-West Frontier, in Burma or even in South Africa.

Kipling was the first great author to put the British soldier centre-stage. He encouraged a whole generation of officers to behave like the officers he admired. There is even a suggestion that although soldiers did not actually sound like Kipling when he wrote about them, they did soon afterwards. Times have changed in a way that he could scarcely have imagined, but there are still some constants in our relationship with our soldiers. We rarely grasp what they have been through on our behalf, and leave them struggling with memories of what they have done and what they once were. Ex-Troop Sergeant Major O'Kelly, waiting by the Metropole Hotel on Northumberland Avenue, hoping to be given a letter to deliver, tells us:

I'm old and I'm nervis
And cast from the service
And all I deserve is a shilling a day

No more than two hundred yards away there used to be a *Big Issue* seller from my own regiment. He begged me to get him back into the army (he exaggerated my influence) for the first Gulf War. He missed soldiering, he missed his mates, and nobody outside really understood him.

Sometimes our liberal sympathies induce us to applaud the very folk our soldiers are fighting against. Folk like that nimble Burmese dacoit, Boh Da Thone.

He shot at the strong and he slashed at the weak
From the Salween scrub to the Chindwin teak:

He crucified noble, he scarified mean,
He filled old ladies with kerosene:

While over the water the papers cried,
"The patriot fights for his countryside!"

But little they cared for the Native Press,
The worn white soldiers in khaki dress,

Who tramped through the jungle and camped in the byre,
Who died in the swamp and were tombed in the mire,

Who gave up their lives, at the Queen's Command,
For the Pride of their Race and the Peace of the Land.

I'm sure that there is a good reason for paying a police Community Support Officer around five thousand pounds a year more than a private soldier. It makes perfect sense that a well-known banker's pension is much the same as the pay of an infantry platoon. And of course it is perfectly understandable that we should rely upon charity to build a swimming pool for wounded soldiers. Let me go out as I came in.

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that Tommy sees!

I have great pleasure in inviting you to be upstanding and to drink to
The unfading genius of Rudyard Kipling.

REPORT ON THE VOTE OF THANKS BY THE SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT

FIELD MARSHAL SIR JOHN CHAPPLE, G.C.B., C.B.E., D.L.

The President, in offering the thanks of all present to Richard Holmes, drew attention to his distinguished military record and commented on how well he had linked together the various Kipling quotations regarding the British soldiers. The President also picked up on a remark by the Chairman who stated that he owned only two of Richard Holmes' extensive publications. The President was able to say that he owned the whole set of Richard's books – adding *sotto voce* that he hadn't yet read them all.

RUDYARD KIPLING & SELMA LAGERLÖF

By THORSTEN SJÖLIN

[Thorsten Sjölin, born in Sweden 1936; engineer, translator, writer, has lived in the UK since 1975, married to a Brooking, hence the connection with the Kipling Society; one barrister daughter, interested in nearly everything. – *Ed.*]

Around 1900 the Swedish school authorities thought it was time for some new books that could be used as an aid to teach the children to read aloud and at the same time teach them things they needed to know. Sven Hedin, the famous Asian explorer, wrote *From Pole to Pole* as an international geography book with a difference, with exciting accounts of large cities like London and Paris and an even more exciting journey through Taklamakan where Hedin was the only survivor. Verner von Heidenstam (Nobel Prize 1916) wrote *Sweden and her Leaders*, giving the children the historical background albeit mainly seen from the leaders' point of view, but what was needed was a book that taught the children about their own country, its varied geography, industry, agriculture, forestry and a lot more.

It was clear from the outset that these books had to be written by literary people, not academics, and the choice of Hedin and von Heidenstam proved a success. The men behind the project had certain ideas on how to approach the problem with a book on Sweden and thought Selma Lagerlöf was the obvious choice. She had been a successful and much loved teacher at a girls' school and was now well established as one of the great Swedish authors and is today probably the best known and most widely read alongside August Strindberg and Henning Mankell. After some hesitation she accepted, but what she did not accept was the preliminary plan or outline of the book. The idea was a number of shorter and longer stories describing various aspects of the country preferably fairy tales, legends etc.

Selma Lagerlöf would have nothing of it. She was one of the best story tellers that the country ever produced and she had her own ideas. At least she was looking for an idea, something to hold it all together. 'It is so difficult for me to write truthfully', she said when she was first asked to consider. She had an incredible imagination and a wealth of stories from her childhood. Some of those she had transformed into very successful books and eventually she was translated into a large number of languages and is still widely read. (Many years ago we stopped to fill the tank in eastern Slovakia – very few garages with anything better than 85 octane in 1966 – and when the elderly lady saw the "S" on the car she started talking at a fast pace in the local lingo where I only recognised the words Selma Lagerlöfova and Marbacka. A true fan! We later saw her books in bookshops.)

The problem for Selma Lagerlöf was to find the winning formula. This she eventually found after having read Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Not that she decided to copy the story or anything like that, which was very far from her thoughts, but her idea of a boy living with animals she got from Kipling. Kipling happened to be in Stockholm in 1907 to collect his Nobel Prize at the same time as part II of *Nils* was published and he was celebrated in a long article in the teachers' journal as "A Nobel Prize Winner and A Children's Book" which of course was *The Jungle Book*. Whether Kipling ever realised that Selma Lagerlöf was inspired by his idea is not known.

What Selma Lagerlöf especially appreciated in *The Jungle Book* was that the animals were animals and not doing human things like harvesting, washing up and tending the fields. They talked and were clever, but they behaved like animals.

Now she had the boy and the animals and from there it was Selma Lagerlöf all the way. She could not have a fully grown boy roaming the country, it did not make any sense, so he had to be transformed into a miniature version of himself and then travel with the wild geese. Her first idea was to use a Sami (Lap) boy from up north, but she soon realised that it would not work and instead used a rather unbearable teenager from the very south. Now things started to fall into place and after a lot of travelling around the country collecting stories, geographical facts etc, she was ready to start.

'Once upon a time there was a boy' runs the first sentence. Every child knows what that means: an exciting story, highly likely full of magic, will follow which would appeal to the child's imagination. Anything could happen. And so it turned out. *Nils Holgerssons Underbara Resa* (The Wonderful Adventures of Nils) soon captured the imagination of the Swedish children and was translated into numerous languages and is still in print in many countries.

What happened in the first chapter was that Nils decided to stay at home instead of going to church but was told to read the sermon as the parents would check when they got back that he had read it. Well, Nils had other ideas. He was going to fire his father's gun, but fell asleep over the long and tedious sermon and woke up seeing the farm pixie sitting on the open chest. He caught him in a bag net and the pixie promised him all sorts of things if he was let out, but just when he had almost crawled out Nils changed his mind. Bad decision! He was suddenly transformed into a pixie himself, only 4 inches (10 cm) tall.

Out to the cowshed to find out where the farm pixie lived. Another bad decision! He had never cared much for the animals and now they saw their chance to get their own back.

Just then a flock of lesser white-fronted geese (*Anser erythropus*), but in the book usually referred to as wild geese, flew past trying to

make the farm's geese join them. One of them decided to, and to try to stop him, Nils jumps on to his back. As it turned out, the wild geese were only joking, but the farm goose decided to show them what he could do and thus starts the long journey through Sweden to the breeding grounds in the far north. As a pixie Nils can talk with the animals and he can also see in the dark which the geese cannot, but he has not got the magic touch that pixies normally have.

But Selma Lagerlöf certainly had the magic touch. It is difficult to imagine how she could describe Sweden seen from the air at a time when the Wright Brothers were still thinking about how to get up there. Fly over Sweden today and it looks the way that Selma Lagerlöf described it. If that is not magic touch, I don't know what is!

During the long journey Nils helps the geese and other animals and eventually returns home after having seen and learned about Sweden and just when he is going to shout to his mother not to kill the goose he had travelled with – you just do not abandon friends – the spell is broken and he is back to normal. But the lazy and uncaring boy that left in March is now full of life and he has learned valuable lessons from the animals, not least from Akka, the leader of the flock, an old and wise bird.

Thus ends the wonderful adventures which have enchanted children over the last 100 years and the book is still in use in schools. Selma Lagerlöf was awarded the 1909 Nobel Prize in literature and, contrary to many authors who have been awarded the Prize, she went on writing until her death in 1940. Strangely enough many people still do not regard *Nils Holgersson* as "real" literature which is odd because it is one of her best and most loved books and one that she was very proud of.

I did not come under the spell of Nils Holgersson and Selma Lagerlöf until well after basic schooling. Sitting listening to ten-year-olds reading aloud when you could read five times as fast put me off Nils for a number of years. Now it is one of my favourite books.

There are a number of similarities between Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgersson* and it is interesting to see how Kipling inspired his slightly younger colleague. Both used a small boy who grows up to be a responsible youngster. But the books are entirely different although both are masterpieces in their own rights. It is possible to find parallels in both books, but many of them are of the kind any author would use to create conflict and excitement like a villain and a mentor.

Two Nobel Prize winners, two books that never seem to go out of fashion, more than you can say about a fair number of the winners over the years.

RUDYARD KIPLING AND SAKI COMPARED

By PROF TIM CONNELL

[Tim Connell is Professor of Languages for the Professions at City University, London. He presented this paper to members at the London meeting of 12 November 2008, hence the reference to the date of the death of Hector Munro. – *Ed.*]

Hector Munro, who wrote under the pen name Saki, was a man of many parts, and although he died relatively young, he lived through a time of considerable change, had a number of quite separate careers and a very broad range of interests. He was also a competent linguist who spoke Russian, German and French. Tomorrow will be the anniversary of his death in action on the Somme and this week, of course, is the 90th anniversary of the Armistice. The First World War took an appalling toll on that particular generation, and of all the parallels and points of comparison between Munro and Kipling, the War itself must stand out.

However, I would like to begin with the parallels in their background and then move on to their professional lives. I also intend to look in some detail at their development both as journalists and writers. I plan to give more detail about Munro than Kipling, but then I would hesitate to go across obvious ground with Kipling in such an eminent gathering as this!

EARLY YEARS

Like so many Victorians, Hector Munro was born into a family with a long record of colonial service, his most famous ancestor being the original for a well-known piece now in the V&A: Tippoos Tiger, an Eighteenth Century mechanical toy of a man being eaten by a tiger.¹ Hector's grandfather was an Admiral, and his father was in the Burma Police. The family was hit by tragedy when Hector's mother was killed in a bizarre accident involving a runaway cow. It is curious that strange events involving animals should form such a common feature of Hector's writing² but this may also derive from his upbringing in the Devonshire countryside and a home that was dominated by the two strangest creatures of all – Aunt Augusta and Aunt Tom. Even Hector's sister Ethel (who wrote a valedictory for her brother in the 1920s) concedes that they were eccentric to a fault, though this almost certainly gave Hector one of his other key themes – the overbearing aunt who appears as a figure of menace. In this, of course, he is not unique, and "Baa Baa, Black Sheep" must be one of the most harrowing tales of a Victorian childhood in literature.³

Be that as it may, Ethel is defensive of their upbringing, crossing swords with later commentators such as Graham Greene about how bad their childhood really was. It was certainly different; Hector did not go to school till he was twelve, (he was a sickly child and not expected to live) and he left school at fifteen. His education really came from his father, who retired and spent several years teaching the children and travelling round Europe with them. This would explain Hector's taste for mid-European settings, the Gothic castles, the wolves and eerie Brothers Grimm-type tales. It would explain his command of French and German, though why he should be fluent in Russian is less clear. Kipling's education, on the other hand, is a formative influence once he goes to the United Services College at Westward Ho! (another curious crossover with Munro, whose family lived only a few miles away at Pilton, near Barnstaple). This time is clearly evoked in the *Stalky & Co.* stories, and Kipling was heavily influenced by Cornell Price, the headmaster who was also a family friend and who positively encouraged the young Kipling to write.⁵ He goes out to Lahore just short of his seventeenth birthday, for what he refers to as "Seven Years' Hard".⁶

At 23, Munro follows his father and brother into the colonial service in Burma, as a police officer. He writes original, witty and perceptive letters to his sister, in which he seems to be quite aware of the inconsistencies of colonial rule, the vagaries of the Far East, and the wealth of wild life to be found. There is a wonderful episode where he seems to have acquired a pet tiger cub, and he takes it back to his hotel, which upsets the old English lady in the next room:

The situation was awful—in my room a noise like the lion-house at 4p.m., while on the other side of the door rose the beautiful Litany of the Church of England. Then I heard the rapid turning of leaves, she was evidently looking for Daniel to gain strength from the perusal of the lion's den story; only she couldn't find Daniel so she fell back on the Psalms of David. As for me, I fled, and sent my boy to take the cage down to the stable. When I came back I heard words in the next room that never came out of the Psalms; words such as no old lady ought to use; . . ."⁶

Strangely enough, he does not seem to be attracted to colonial life as a literary theme, as Kipling is doing almost at the same time, and as Somerset Maugham will do only a few years later. Admittedly, the colonies appear regularly in the short stories of Saki, either as a destination for ne'er do well young men, or something to be remembered wistfully by older men in retirement. He tells of a military Johnny he found hanging around at a loose end at the club:

"He'd spent most of his life on the Indian frontier, building roads and relieving famines and minimizing earthquakes, and all that sort of thing that one does on frontiers. He could talk sense to a peevish cobra in fifteen native languages, and probably knew what to do if you found a rogue elephant on your croquet-lawn; but he was shy and diffident with women." ⁷

Munro is also aware of the hidden human tragedies. There is Judkin, one of those men

who have breathed into their lungs the wonder of the East, have romped through life as through a cotillion, have had a thrust perhaps at the Viceroy's Cup, and done fantastic horsefleshy things around the Gulf of Aden. And then a golden stream has dried up, the sunlight has faded suddenly out of things, and the gods have nodded "Go." And they have not gone. They have turned instead to the muddy lanes and cheap villas and the marked-down ills of life, to watch pear trees growing and to encourage hens for their eggs.⁸

And then there is Bertie Steffink, the ne'er do well who can settle down to nothing:

He had gone to grow tea in Ceylon, and fruit in British Columbia, and to help sheep grow wool in Australia.⁹

All of which is reminiscent of Phil Garron in "The Pride of His Youth" who is sent out to Tea, although in his case he is reformed by the intervention of Dunmaya, the Assam hill woman, and daughter of a Rajput ex-Subadar Major of our Native Infantry. She also shows up the weaknesses of both her husband and his former admirer Miss Agnes Laiter who are, of course, her social superiors.¹⁰

Worst, and most autobiographical of all is Comus Bassington – "the Boy who never" of fever, having been sent out to one of the less healthy colonies because everyone has despaired of him. But then Kipling has no end of failures – Lieutenant Golightly, the Bronckhorsts, and Jevon T.G. and for every Bobby Wicks or George Cottar there is a Porkiss or Lieutenant Davies.¹¹

In reality, Hector Munro suffers seven bouts of malaria in fourteen months and has to be repatriated. Kipling, by contrast, seems to have soldiered on, refreshed by annual visits to the Hills and buoyed up by living (somewhat belatedly) with his parents. Fever is very much part of life even so:

I had fever too, regular and persistent, to which I added for a while chronic dysentery. Yet I discovered that a man can work with a temperature of 104, even though next day he has to ask the office who wrote the article.¹²

Once he has recovered, Munro decides to become a writer, and chooses the rather curious theme of Russian history. It takes three years for *The Rise of the Russian Empire* to get published, and it was not well received. Edward Garnett, who became a commissioning editor for publishers like Unwin and Jonathan Cape, slated it, but then his wife was the first person to translate Dostoevsky and Chekhov into English.¹³

It is not certain when Munro began to write his short stories, but the first seems to come in *St Paul's* magazine in 1899. The following year he finds a new direction when he teams up with Francis Carruthers Gould and the prestigious *Westminster Gazette* to produce an early form of political satire. "The Westminster Alice", a blend of clever cartoons that turn contemporary political figures into characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, are combined with stories that transfer the topsy turvy logic of Lewis Carroll into tales that highlight the shortcomings of the politicians of the day. They cannot be understood by the modern reader without a lot of footnotes about the politics of the time, but it is curious that the complete set was re-published in the USA in the 20s, and sold far better than anyone had ever expected. There were also five editions of the *Not So Stories*, satirising political figures as characters from Kipling's *Just So Stories*, but they failed to catch the public imagination.

This was when Munro must have come to public notice for the first time, and this is when he begins to publish under his pen name "Saki".

THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

Hector Munro spends nearly five years abroad as a foreign correspondent, firstly in the Balkans, then in Warsaw and St Petersburg, and finally in Paris. The *Morning Post* styles him as "Our special correspondent" and Ethel Munro recounts her adventures when staying with him in St Petersburg, during which time they both witness the massacre at the Winter Palace in January 1905 – and a bullet misses Hector by a few inches. Ironically, she comments on the quality of his reporting:

Hector was the only foreign correspondent whom General Trépoﬀ, Governor of Petersburg, did not send for. The others had given to their papers very high figures for the casualties, and Hector, from information supplied by his spies, put the number of dead at about 1500.¹⁴

Perhaps Munro just knew a lot of people. It would certainly be in character for him to be sociable and have a wide range of acquaintances. It would also be quite characteristic of him to perform his work with particular care. Kipling, too, appears to have had a sense of adventure during his travels in the United Provinces as a journalist, and some of his letters also read as well as the short stories – and are at times almost as implausible!

LONDON AND THE LITERATI

Munro and Kipling were both fortunate in that London was very much a focus for literature in this period. Higher literacy levels as a result of the Education Acts of 1870 and 1902 had led to an explosion in popular magazines, while the municipal libraries funded by Andrew Carnegie overtook the longstanding subscription libraries of the sort run by Boots the Chemist. And what a time it was for literary output – writers who have stood the test of time like George Bernard Shaw, prolific authors who are less remembered today like G.A. Henty and Edmund Gosse, or young hopefuls like Joseph Conrad and W.B. Yeats.

And writing was breaking the boundaries – new poetic movements, a vibrant London theatre, and a move away from the three-decker and ponderous high Victorian novel to the more exploratory themes of Samuel Butler or E. Nesbit.

It seems unlikely that Munro as a young man about town would have spent all his time in the British Museum reading Russian history books and he must have made contact with other aspiring writers. One friend who undoubtedly had an influence was Anthony Hope, better known as the author of *The Prisoner of Zenda* and who also wrote some lighthearted pieces for the *Westminster Gazette* as early as 1894.

So who does Munro know? What circles does he move in? He belonged to a gentleman's club, the Cocoa Tree in St James's Street, which was for medium business types, rather than the Savile or the Reform, where the leading literary figures of the day would meet.¹⁵ He also seems to have been something of a protegee of Lady St Helier, a leading social figure and patron of the arts.

He had his connections via leading publishers. His first publisher, Grant Richards, was also the publisher for George Bernard Shaw, not to mention G.K. Chesterton, John Masefield, A.E. Housman and Arnold Bennett. The major figures for Munro, however, were J.A. Spender (editor of the *Westminster Gazette*) and subsequently John Lane at Bodley Head. In his role as a newspaperman, especially a political commentator, celebrities might have wanted to know Munro for their own cautious reasons. But they would also have been wary of

the damage he could cause. Winston Churchill, for example, is lampooned in *The Westminster Alice* and in "Ministers of Grace" where he appears loosely disguised as Quinston.¹⁶

Kipling, by and large, landed on his feet in England as an instant literary phenomenon: initially with articles in *Macmillan's Magazine* and then the *St James's Gazette*. While he was still living the life of a Grub Street scribbler in digs opposite Gatti's Music Hall and over the premises of Harris the Sausage King, he was put up for membership of the Savile Club by none other than Thomas Hardy and Walter Besant. The latter introduced him to his own agent, A.P. Watt. As Kipling put it, "In the course of forty years I do not recall any difference between us that three minutes' talk could not clear up."¹⁷ In the United States, he was lucky to be found by a young Frank Doubleday who went on to create a publishing empire, doubtless helped (as Kipling must have said) by the apparent laxity of American copyright laws. Kipling's relationship with the Press, oddly enough, was not so cordial. He was heavily criticised by the *Manchester Guardian*, had a difficult working relationship with *The Times* and did not get on with Frank Harris, a major newspaper editor of the time.¹⁸ He was, however, a regular contributor to the *Morning Post* as, of course, was Munro.

Munro was presumably out of circulation in London during his time as a foreign correspondent but after 1908 his short stories begin to appear regularly in the *Bystander*, he writes book reviews for the *Spectator* and the *Athenaeum*, and becomes a parliamentary correspondent for the *Morning News*. Satire seems to work with light-hearted verse for the *Daily Express* and a kind of Commons sketch in the *Outlook* called "The Potted Parliament". In the *Bystander* he begins a series of unlikely interviews, like the deposed King of Portugal being interviewed by Oscar Hammerstein. He attempts a reprise of *The Westminster Alice* in the *Bystander* but this does not get very far as the illustrator (who is only known as 'Pat') is not as accomplished as Carruthers Gould. Perhaps Munro is acquiring a certain level of gravitas, given his role as a parliamentary reporter and his standing with publishers. He is interviewed for the *Bodleian* in 1912 and makes the telling remark, "A humorist is almost invariably expected to be funny for life."¹⁹

THE MERE ACT OF WRITING

Kipling writes at some length in *Something of Myself* of his professional techniques. Little is known of Munro's though archive material at his publishers suggests that he wrote quickly and accurately, and did little by way of revision, although the stories that first appeared in magazines did tend to re-appear in collected form between 1904 and 1914.

Clearly Kipling and Munro have much in common as reporters and short story writers, although Munro draws very little on his experiences in the Far East. Instead, many of his themes and motifs derive from his travels in Central Europe and his time as a foreign correspondent – the woods and mountains, castles and wolves, interspersed with tales that may have been legends or ideas worked up from his early research on Russia. The Empire appears constantly in the background, largely by way of contrast to the hedonistic lifestyle of the young man about town who inhabits most of the short stories. This can appear in a lighthearted form, as when the "military Johnny" mentioned earlier tries to get young Clovis out of the way:

"I hear he told someone at the club that he was looking out for a Colonial job, with plenty of hard work, for a young friend of his, so I gather he has some idea of marrying into the family." . . .

Clovis wiped the trace of Turkish coffee and the beginnings of a smile from his lips, and slowly lowered his dexter eyelid. Which, being interpreted, probably meant, "I *don't* think!"²⁰

Some of Kipling's tales have a light touch to them, as in "His Wedded Wife" where the junior subaltern plays a trick on his senior by pretending to be someone to whom he is secretly married: 'Perhaps the Senior Subaltern had been trapped in his youth. Men are crippled that way occasionally.' It ends in laughter, but Kipling relates ominously, 'Later on, I will tell you of a case something like this, but with all the jest left out and nothing in it but real trouble', which is of course "In the Pride of his Youth", also from *Plain Tales*. Both authors in fact tend to return to similar themes, Saki perhaps more so, although Kipling revisits the theme of socially unacceptable marriages with "Beyond the Pale" and "Without Benefit of Clergy".

These stories reflect a common theme again: transgressions from what is socially acceptable, the fear of social ridicule and even disgrace. Munro tends to focus more on goings-on at weekend house parties of the sort that would be more in line with P.G. Wodehouse. Two stories which again reflect each other are "Reginald's Christmas Revel" and "Bertie's Christmas Eve" where two bored young men (Bertie being the same one as the black sheep being packed off to the colonies again) carry out japes to amuse themselves and infuriate the others. The former ends with 'I hate travelling on Boxing Day, but one must occasionally do things that one dislikes', and the latter, 'It was the happiest Christmas Eve he had ever spent' (having locked the entire house party in the stables on the pretext that an ancient Russian tradition says that you can hear the animals talk at midnight) in order to

have the house to himself for an impromptu party. But (to quote his own words) 'he had a rotten Christmas.'

Oddly enough, Kipling is actually mentioned in "Reginald's Christmas Revel" with direct reference to "At the End of the Passage" and a curious assertion (from a fictional character) that she had never liked Rudyard Kipling. But there are indirect references and digs in his general direction more than once, most notable with "The Recessional". This is satire bordering on sheer cheek. Now Kipling's "Recessional" is a solemn piece, cited with care to this day, whilst Clovis is actually sitting in a Turkish bath, betting his chum Bertie van Tahn that he can write a serious poem on the subject of the Durbar. It is incomplete, but gives some idea of Munro's ability with words:

" 'Where the coiled cobra in the gloaming gloats,
And prowling panthers stalk the wary goats.' "

Slightly more picturesque is a take on *Mandalay*:

" 'The amber dawn-drenched East with sun-shafts kissed,
Stained sanguine apricot and amethyst,
O'er the washed emerald of the mango groves
Hangs in a mist of opalescent mauves,
While painted parrot-flights impinge the haze
With scarlet, chalcedon and chrysoptase.' "²¹

Saki is not known to have written any poetry, comic or otherwise, but this does suggest that he had a certain talent.

Kipling and Munro do actually coincide in some of their story lines: the supposed accident in "Aunt Ellen" has its parallel with "Esmé" where a hyaena is accidentally run over, and passed off as a dog of rare pedigree. Lester Slaggby in "The Easter Egg" has a rare chance to show courage:

For that stray fraction of his life some unwonted impulse beset him,
some hint of the stock he came from, and he ran unflinchingly
towards danger

has its parallel with "His Chance in Life" where the telegraphist Michele wins the hand of Miss Vezzis by quelling a riot single-handed. Kipling notes:

Which proves that, when a man does good work out of all proportion to his pay, in seven cases out of nine there is a woman at the back of the virtue.

The two exceptions must have suffered from sunstroke.²²

The young officers in "A Conference of the Powers" bear an uncanny resemblance to Basset Harrowcluff,

who was only thirty-one, but he had put in some useful service in an out-of-the-way, though not unimportant, corner of the world. He had quieted a province, kept open a trade route, enforced the tradition of respect which is worth the ransom of many kings in out-of-the-way regions, and done the whole business on rather less expenditure than would be requisite for organizing a charity in the home country.²³

Of course, *The Unbearable Bassington* provides a harsher view of the public school system with an unjust and institutionalised form of bullying, somewhat in contrast with the 'three lawful cuts with a ground ash' mentioned in "The Brushwood Boy".

Both writers do a fairly good line in eerie tales, Kipling with "The Phantom Rickshaw", Saki with tales of country witchcraft, such as "The Peace of Mowsle Barton" or "The Cobweb". Supernatural beings appear, such as the werewolf, who one unfortunate wretch introduces into his Aunt's living room, and has to explain away as a poor lad who has lost both his memory and his clothes (whilst covering his modesty with a copy of the *Morning Post*).²⁴ More sinister is the flouting of the laws of Nature, when a city dweller offends the great god Pan and who then pays the price when she fails to avoid the horned beasts on the farm.²⁵

Both Kipling and Saki are accomplished at writing about animals, although *The Jungle Book* and the *Just So Stories* are in a class of their own. Few of Saki's animals have the gift of speech, although when Tobermory the house cat is taught to speak, he horrifies everyone by recounting the things that he has seen around the house:

Mrs Cornett, who spent much of her time at her toilet table, and whose complexion was reputed to be of a nomadic though punctual disposition, looked as ill at ease as the Major. . . . Bertie van Tahn, who was so depraved at seventeen that he had long ago given up trying to be any worse, turned a dull shade of gardenia white, but he did not commit the error of dashing out of the room like Odo Finsberry, a young gentleman who was understood to be reading for the Church and who was positively disturbed at the thought of the scandals he might hear concerning other people.²⁶

The beast and super-beast who recurs in both dramatic and comic contexts throughout Saki's writing is the wolf. The hostess at a weekend house party is unwittingly turned into one, leading to the wonderful exchange:

"If our hostess has really disappeared out of human form . . . none of the ladies . . . can very well remain. I refuse to be chaperoned by a wolf!"

"It's a she-wolf," said Clovis soothingly.²⁷

Both writers excel themselves in farce. "The Vortex", "The Puzzler" and "The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat" all spring to mind with Kipling, whilst Saki can offer "The Schartz-Metterklume Method", "The Unrest-Cure" and "The Guests", which is set in an unspecified colony where the hostess has to cope not only with a flood, but also the visitation from the local bishop, with whom she is not on speaking terms. As she says:

"I think any one will admit that it was an embarrassing predicament to have your only guest-room occupied by a leopard, the verandah choked up with goats and babies and wet hens, and a Bishop with whom you are scarcely on speaking terms planted down in your sitting-room. . . . Then there arose some awkwardness from the fact that the Bishop wished to leave sooner than the leopard did, and as the latter was ensconced in the midst of the former's personal possessions there was an obvious difficulty in altering the order of departure."²⁸

Saki probably exceeds Kipling on one respect: the one-liner. He is, of course, the originator of 'She was a good cook as good cooks go, and as good cooks go, she went', but he also provides us with:

Brevity is the soul of widowhood.
 Beauty is only sin deep.
 More dined against than dining.
 I love Americans, but not when they try to talk French. What a blessing that they never try to talk English.
 The Quaker man who is always agitating for a smaller Navy.
 A meeting ground for naked truths and overdressed fictions.
 Her frocks are built in Paris, but she wears them with a strong English accent.

THE COMING OF WAR

By 1912 Munro is clearly diversifying, experimenting with theatre and moving towards becoming a novelist. *The Unbearable Bassington* appears in 1912 and then *When William Came* a year later in 1913. We can only speculate where his literary career would have led after that. He knew that war was becoming inevitable, and his writing indicates his

own private view emerging. There is a curious quotation from *William*, when the German conquerors decree that only the British will be exempt from military service in the new Empire as they have made such strenuous efforts to avoid it in the past. He writes almost longingly for:

The martial trappings, the swaggering joy of life, the comradeship of camp and barracks, the hard discipline of drill yard and fatigue duty, the long sentry watches, the trench digging, forced marches, wounds, cold, hunger, makeshift hospitals, and the blood-wet laurels.²⁹

As with so many men of that rather pampered generation, Munro knew where his duty lay, almost as if the Spartan life and sacrifice were a price to pay for what had gone before. Ironically, although only five years younger than Kipling, he became that eponymous Kiplingesque figure – a gentleman-ranker:

Oh, it's sweet to sweat through stables, sweet to empty kitchen
slops,
And it's sweet to hear the tales the troopers tell,
To dance with blowzy housemaids at the regimental hops
And thrash the cad who says you waltz too well.

Not that Munro was running away from anything other than what one of his stories terms the Mappin'd life. But there is a tone to the end of the poem that might have made Munro nod with self-understanding:

We have done with Hope and Honour, we are lost to Love and
Truth,
We are dropping down the ladder rung by rung,
And the measure of our torment is the measure of our youth.
God help us, for we knew the worst too young!

Our shame is clean repentance for the crime that brought the
sentence,
Our pride it is to know no spur of pride,
And the Curse of Reuben holds us till an alien turf enfolds us
And we die, and none can tell Them where we died.³⁰

Kipling, perhaps, suffered the greater torment in that he pulled strings for his son John (undersized and shortsighted) to join the newly-formed Irish Guards, only for the boy to be killed at Loos on his first day in action.³¹

When William Came was Munro's contribution to the Literature of the Coming War, which begins to appear as early as 1871 with George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking*. Munro's knowledge of both Germany and Austria-Hungary led him not to under-estimate what he viewed increasingly as the enemy. His hypothesis was that there would be a minor frontier dispute over colonies. Ironically he foresaw the war with Germany, not the stalemate of 1915 but the blitzkrieg of 1940. A sudden attack, a quick checkmate and Britain is knocked out of the War, overwhelmed in particular by German air superiority. The situation is summed up with the thoughtful phrase about the sons of a once-great family:

Her eldest son lived invalid-wise in the South of France, her second son lay fathoms deep in the North Sea, with the hulk of a broken battleship for a burial-vault.³²

Apparently Munro was anxious to get the book finished while it was still topical. It is quite possible that his role as a parliamentary correspondent made him sensitive to the political climate. (He was actually in the House of Commons on the day war was declared.)

Kipling too had long foreseen the danger of War. He is often dismissed as some kind of warmonger, but that is an over-simplification, if not actually an untruth. He feared Germany, and he was perpetually concerned at the lack of preparedness on the part of Britain.

For all we have and are,
For all our children's fate,
Stand up and take the war.
The Hun is at the gate!
Our world has passed away,
In wantonness o'erthrown.
There is nothing left today
But steel and fire and stone!
Though all we knew depart,
The Old Commandments stand:—
"In courage keep your heart,
In strength lift up your hand."³³

Despite the perceived threat from the growth of the German Army and Navy, the Liberal government was opposed to conscription (which, in the event, was not introduced until 1916). Even in April 1914 the Mayor of Kensington noted that the local territorial battalion was too far below strength to go on manoeuvres. In August 1914, however, the

queue to join up stretched endlessly down Kensington High Street, the local battalion was over strength and so the Mayor got permission to raise a new one – the 22nd Battalion, part of the Royal Fusiliers, a London regiment which Hector Munro joined promptly.

Despite early attempts to form platoons by social class, there was a curious egalitarianism in this particular push and the mixture of educated men and slightly older men seems to have been quite congenial, and in contrast to attitudes in this period. Major Stone, for example, whose archive of letters has provided us with a very clear picture of life (and death) in the Battalion was an Old Etonian, son of an Eton master. But then so was one of the sergeants, a man named Drew who was killed at Vimy Ridge.³⁴ Many older men in fact falsified their age in order to be accepted for service abroad, as (rather more famously) did many youngsters. The officers in the 22nd Battalion were thirty years old on average so Munro might not have been such an exception after all. However, it would be wrong to create some rosy image of a band of brothers. Life at the front was hard and often brutal. A sentry was shot dead on Christmas Day 1915. A private was executed for desertion on Boxing Day 1916, which calls to mind one of Kipling's Epitaphs:

I could not look on Death, which being known,
Men led me to him, blindfold and alone.³⁵

Hector Munro was involved in three major actions: First Vimy Ridge, Delville Wood, and Beaumont Hamel, the last action of the Battle of the Somme and the end of the line for Munro. Eye witness accounts record that Munro distinguished himself in the chaos of the fighting line, holding men together even from different units. One of them wrote of Delville Wood:

Hector on this occasion surprised even me, who had always tried to emulate some one worth while; he stood and gave commands to frightened men, in such a cool, fine manner that I saw many backs stiffen, and he was responsible for the organization of a strong section, giving them a definite "front" to face, and a reassuring word of advice.³⁶

The experience does not seem to have altered his view of life as a soldier, and having survived two fairly bloody actions, he may have felt lucky, or finally confident to lead men in battle. His sister Ethel records seeing him off at Waterloo station for the last time in July 1916 with the cheery cry of, "Kill a good few [Germans] for me!" which would hardly be a sisterly farewell to some shell-shocked wreck of a Tommy.

Then Fate took a hand, as befits the author of such short stories as "The Hounds of Fate" or "The Lost Sanjak". Munro suffered a relapse of the malaria that had cut short his career in Burma. However, he knew that the Battalion was due for the front, and did not want to be thought of as a shirker, even though weather conditions at the time were atrocious. (The Battalion War Diary indicates that no fewer than 103 men reported for sick parade on 2 November 1916.)³⁷

One of Munro's superior officers recounts what happened:

You will see in the papers that Sgt. Munro (sic), Hector Munro 'Saki' the writer was killed, one of the men that I really and honestly admire and revere in this war. He steadfastly refused a commission, and loved his friends in A Coy.

From being a smart man about town he became the dirtiest looking old ruffian you ever saw; and when he got really ill two months ago, instead of going home and making the most of it as those other blighters do, he managed to get back to us about a week ago. He was sitting in a shell-hole talking to two men and was actually in the middle of a sentence when he was shot clean through the back of the head. He did very finely for us all.³⁸

In fact A Company had been put out to guard the left flank in a night attack on the village of Beaumont Hamel. It was a foggy night, and the fighting had died down by the early hours. Munro and some other men had taken cover in a shell hole and began to relax. An English officer called across to a friend. A man struck a match, Munro snapped, "Put that bloody cigarette out!" whereupon he was shot through the head by a single round from a sniper. Irony was added to Fate. Saki the short story writer depended for effect on the final punch line. The whole story would lead up to one final twist, and in this one last real-life instance it was his being the epitome of third match unlucky. The sniper must have seen the match, heard the voice, and fired. It is a grim irony that would have appealed to the Saki in Munro.

One can only speculate what might have happened had Munro survived that night. He might have relented and finally gone for officer training (he had been offered a commission in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) but apparently was concerned that he lacked experience and did not want to be sent on a lengthy officer training course when everyone knew the War would be over by Christmas. He had written quite forcefully in the papers about the need for military training, and was publicly scornful of younger men who had not joined up. Despite his experiences, Munro seemed committed to military service throughout. He could have been drawn into the propaganda

mission, like Anthony Hope, author of the *Prisoner of Zenda*, and who got knighted for his contribution to the war effort. He might even have gone into Intelligence, given his skills as a linguist and his knowledge of Central Europe.³⁹ Kipling, on the other hand, was increasingly scathing about military incompetence and the wanton sacrifice of his son's generation. In 1916 he wrote about the disaster of Kut-el-Amara on the River Tigris:

They shall not return to us, the resolute, the young,
The eager and whole-hearted whom we gave:
But the men who left them thriftily to die in their own dung,
Shall they come with years and honour to the grave?

They shall not return to us, the strong men coldly slain
In sight of help denied from day to day:
But the men who edged their agonies and chid them in their pain,
Are they too strong and wise to put away?

Our dead shall not return to us while Day and Night divide—
Never while the bars of sunset hold.
But the idle-minded overlings who quibbled while they died,
Shall they thrust for high employments as of old?⁴⁰

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

It is perhaps fruitless to speculate on what might have happened had Munro survived the War – or not even joined up in the first place. So many good men were killed that every walk of life lost its best talent. What would Munro have come back to do? He would have been 50 in 1920, so it seems unlikely that he would have continued writing about spritely young men of the sort he had seen slaughtered in their thousands. He would happily have passed that mantle on to the much gentler stories of P.G. Wodehouse, and may well have encouraged his nephew Dornford Yates in his writing career. He would undoubtedly have enjoyed the more acid style of Evelyn Waugh and perhaps sharpened up his own wit with satirical comment on the country's rulers by returning to his pre-War job as a parliamentary reporter.

Munro may not have been embittered by his war experiences, but he would have been relentlessly critical of the generals and war leaders whose errors of judgement had led to the deaths of so many good men. He might have found his place in public life, like Kipling, who played a leading role in the Imperial War Graves Commission. He might even have become a Member of Parliament himself in the Conservative persuasion, and joined in the hounding out of Lloyd George from public

life. As a popular figure and as one who had served in the ranks he would have attracted a wide-ranging vote. With his writing talent and fine voice he could have gone far as an orator. His old CO in the Fusiliers might even have got him a job with the B.B.C., where he was the gramophone correspondent and founding editor (with Compton Mackenzie) of *The Gramophone* (which oddly enough, my grandfather wrote reviews for in the 20s and 30s.) Munro might even have aligned himself with Winston Churchill as a critic of appeasement. Whatever the circumstances, I doubt whether he would have faded into obscurity.

Kipling certainly never did; but in many ways he fell out of favour as a writer. Yet he is one of the few to treat shell shock as a literary topic⁴¹ and his *Irish Guards in the Great War* provides enormous insights into the experiences of the rank and file. It is interesting (though hardly surprising) to note that he and Munro coincide on the subject of mud:

In narrow-dug support-trenches, when thaw and heavy rain have come suddenly atop of a frost, when everything is pitch-dark around you, and you can only stumble about and feel your way against streaming mud walls, when you have to go down on hands and knees in several inches of soup-like mud to creep into a dug-out, when you stand deep in mud, lean against mud, grasp mud-slimed objects with mud-caked fingers, wink mud away from your eyes, and shake it out of your ears, bite muddy biscuits with muddy teeth, then at least you are in a position to thoroughly understand what it feels like to wallow . . .⁴²

To be heroic at a walk is trying enough, as they know who have plowtered behind the Dead March of a dragging barrage, but to struggle, clogged from the waist down, into the white-hot circle of accurately placed destruction, sure that if you are even knocked over by a blast you will be slowly choked by mud, is something more than heroism. Equally, to lie out disabled on a horror of shifting mud is beyond the sting of Death.⁴³

It is interesting to note that the Battalion War Diary recounts that on 2 November 1916:

The mud in the front line trenches was thigh deep and waders were worse than useless. Water was knee deep in places and men had to be dragged out of the mud with ropes.

CONCLUSION

Hector Munro was remembered with affection and respect by his peers. *Punch* said in 1919, 'When the literary Roll of Honour of all the belligerents comes to be considered quietly, in the steady light of Peace, not many names will stand higher in any country than that of our English writer HECTOR MUNRO,' and it goes on to refer to his 'subtle and witty satires, stories and fantasies'. It adds, 'There is in every story a phrase or fancy marked by his own inimitable felicity, audacity or humour.'⁴⁴ His works were re-issued at regular intervals through the 1920s and who wrote the introductory notes is significant: writers like G.K. Chesterton, A.A. Milne and Hugh Walpole; old Russia hands like Maurice Baring, H.W. Nevinson and Rothay Reynolds; Sir John Squire, a key poet in the Georgian movement, and the Liberal Peer Lord Charnwood.⁴⁵ Evelyn Waugh did a retrospective on Saki in 1947 and as late as 1967, so did Noel Coward, for the Penguin *Complete Saki* (which is actually far from being complete).⁴⁶ Saki has never been out of print in 100 years. He still appears in anthologies and collected editions. Oddly enough, he has only been serialised once on TV, and a drama documentary starring Roger Davenport was broadcast on BBC4 in 2007.⁴⁷ Emlyn Williams did some sound recordings in 1978 and even produced a one-man show.⁴⁸ There is currently an audiobook out on CD containing some of the stories. Kipling, of course, is a publishing phenomenon, doubtless assisted by Walt Disney, though his short stories tend to appear in anthologies, and *Plain Tales* in various paperback editions.

As the war generations pass on, and that long Indian Summer of Edward's reign fades into folklore and myth, so the record of a society on the verge of the modern world becomes somehow more attractive, and the piercing observations of human frailty and the acerbic wit add an extra touch to hold the reader's attention. I believe that Saki was in fact a far more significant contributor to English Literature than we realise, more than a newspaperman, though not quite a man of letters. But he has stood the test of time better than Maurice Baring, who wrote novels and published collections of poetry or Hugh Walpole, who was knighted for his services to Literature, let alone G.A. Henty, who wrote 122 books between 1868 and 1902.⁴⁹ Hector Munro was writing a novel a year by the start of World War One. There are technical shortcomings but he may well have matured and written something more heavyweight than his novels and perhaps something deeper than his short stories. He was collaborating on plays; again there seems to be evidence that he was having some trouble with technique, but his quick-witted one-liners and polished style may have allowed him to develop as a playwright, someone perhaps like Ben Travers who had known him at Bodley Head.

So he lives on in his work, which has now acquired additional value because of the insights into the world that he inhabited. But the rebellious young men, the overbearing aunts, the absurdity of the humour, the sharpness of the wit, all seem to survive in the modern age. I think there is something there for everyone even today. He may be seen as one of those writers whose world sums up the period along with P.G. Wodehouse, Dorothy L Sayers or even Dornford Yates. The underlying cruelty of some of his writing may include him among the group that Alan Bennett terms 'Practitioners in the School of Snobbery with Violence that run like a thread of good-class tweed through Twentieth Century English Literature.'⁵⁰

Kipling himself probably falls inside both schools. *Plain Tales from the Hills* is a paean to the young district officers who seem to have sacrificed themselves so readily for the Empire, and the confusion and hurt of the post-War comes through all too clearly in his short stories. It is perhaps in his poetry where he achieves the grandeur which led to his being offered the role of Poet Laureate. And yet he always looked on himself as a "journo", a man of the press as much as he was a man of letters. In that respect he would doubtless have respected Munro for his work as a foreign correspondent and they were close enough in their politics for *The Westminster Alice* to have raised a wry smile. But perhaps he was also spared the grief and suffering that so overshadowed Kipling's final years and which (via the ulcer that caused him so much physical pain) ultimately led to his death.

It is interesting to speculate what line Munro's writing might have taken had he survived the war (like Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves or Edmund Blunden) or had he even been invalidated out, like Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. His ironic, incisive style of writing might have leant itself to the cynicism of the post-War; he might have written in the more sombre chiaroscuro style of the later Kipling, though he is most unlikely to have focused as much on the ordinary working man. Munro was the perfect chronicler of a bygone age and despite the fictitious nature of his characters and the frequently outrageous situations they find themselves in, his was a very complete world, one that he relished with all its imperfections and which we can recognise even today.

As a short story writer, his technique has few rivals, even if his plots are sometimes contrived and formulaic in comparison with Kipling. His output is prolific, even though his writing shows a tendency to settle comfortably and uncritically and not to mature in his twenty years of writing, though he does display a high level of technical skill in an admittedly accomplished style. But there are those who contend that Kipling developed as a poet more than a prose writer, and some of his

later stories do not stand comparison with his Indian writing. Perhaps Kipling also found himself falling into a style with which he was comfortable. Possibly the passage of time had also deprived him of the context he needed, a world in which to place his characters, in much the same way that he frames so many of his stories before proceeding with the main theme. Anyway, if we quite rightly toast the Unfading Genius of Rudyard Kipling every year, it only seems right not to forget Hector Hugh Munro, alias Saki, who died in action on the Somme almost ninety-two years ago to the day.

NOTES

1. The V&A has a video clip on its website, showing how it all works.
2. "The Music on the Hill" or "The Stalled Ox", for example.
3. In *Wee Willie Winkie*.
4. See Roger Lancelyn Green's piece (1961) at http://www.kipling.org.uk/kiplingsociety/rg_stalky_characters.htm
5. *Something of Myself* chap.3.
6. Written from Mandalay, 30 October 1893. *The Short Stories of Saki*, Bodley Head 1930, p.667.
7. "The Match-Maker", p.108.
8. "Judkin of the Parcels", p.62.
9. "Bertie's Christmas Eve", p.436.
10. In *Plain Tales from the Hills*.
11. "Only a Subaltern", and "The Brushwood Boy".
12. *Something of Myself* p.41.
13. Garnett encouraged young writers like Conrad, Galsworthy, D.H. Lawrence and Steven Crane, but he did turn down Somerset Maugham and James Joyce.
14. In Ethel Munro's "Biography of Saki", *The Short Stories of Saki*, Bodley Head 1930, p.685.
15. Founded in 1698, it was a haven for Jacobites in 1745 and a club with Tory leanings thereafter. Lord Byron was a member.
16. Churchill was also a regular visitor at Lady St Helier's, as Clementine Hozier was her niece, and they were first introduced to each other at Lady St Helier's house.
17. *Something of Myself*, pp.80-86, Macmillan 1937.
18. As editor of the *Saturday Review* Frank Harris collaborated with such luminaries as H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw. He was editor of the *Strand Magazine* for a while, though he was also a controversial character.
19. A.J. Langguth, *Saki*, Simon & Schuster 1981, p.190.
20. "The Match-Maker".
21. *Mandalay* also appears in "The Story-Teller": 'the smaller girl created a diversion by beginning to recite "On the Road to Mandalay". She only

knew the first line, but she put her limited knowledge to the fullest possible use.'

22. *Plain Tales from the Hills*.

23. "Cousin Teresa".

24. "Gabriel-Ernest".

25. "The Music on the Hill".

26. "Tobermory".

27. "The She-Wolf".

28. "The Guests".

29. *When William came* p.762.

30. "Gentlemen-Rankers" from *Barrack-Room Ballads*. The Curse of Reuben is in *Genesis* 49 v.4: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel . . ."

31. You could almost expect Kipling to have written a poem based on the great lament of King Saul, "would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" See *2 Samuel* 18 v.33.

32. *When William came* p.745.

33. "For all we have and are". Published in *The Times*, 2 September 1914.

34. G.D. Sheffield & G.I.S. Inglis (ed.), *From Vimy Ridge to the Rhine. The Great War letters of Christopher Stone*, Crowood Press 1989, p.52.

35. "The Coward" in *Epitaphs of the War*.

36. In Ethel Munro's "Biography of Saki".

37. WO 95/1372, National Archives.

38. C. Stone, *A History of the 22nd (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers (Kensington)*, 1923, p.75.

39. One mystery is why he did not join the shadowy Tenth (B) Battalion, which concentrated on intelligence gathering and undercover operations.

40. "Mesopotamia". First published in the *Morning Post* 11 July 1917. (It was actually turned down by *The Daily Telegraph!*)

41. "A Madonna of the Trenches" in *Debits and Credits* is perhaps the best known.

42. "The Square Egg", collected in 1924.

43. *The Irish Guards in the Great War*, 1923, vol.2, pp.114-115.

44. *Punch* vol.156, 26 February 1919.

45. Lord Charnwood was a writer himself under his pen name Godfrey Rathbone.

46. J.W. Lambert wrote a perceptive introduction to the *Bodley Head Saki* in 1963. Tom Sharpe also wrote an introduction to collected stories in 1976.

47. By Gerald Savory. The series was shown once in 1962 and again in 1986. "The Double Life of Saki" was broadcast on BBC4 in March 2007. More information is at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/documentaries/features/double-life-saki-int.shtml>

48. The show appeared at the Apollo Theatre in London as "Saki" and at the Playhouse Theatre, New York as "The Playboy of the Weekend World".

49. G.A. Henty also wrote for *Boys' Own Paper*.
50. Alan Bennett in *Forty Years On*, 1972.

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References to Ethel Munro's "Biography of Saki" comes from *The Short Stories of Saki*, Bodley Head 1930 edition.

BIOGRAPHIES OF HECTOR MUNRO ARE:

- S. Byrne, *The Unbearable Saki*, Oxford University Press 2006.
C.H. Gillen, *H.H. Munro (Saki)*, Twayne Press 1969. This is strong on the writing and press context of Munro's work in particular.
A.J. Langguth, *Saki*, Simon & Schuster 1981, has very interesting information supplied by Munro's descendents, though care should be taken with some of the data concerning his military career.

MUNRO'S MILITARY CAREER

There are two seminal works on the 22nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers:

- H.C. O'Neill, *The Royal Fusiliers in the Great War*, Heinemann, 1922.
C. Stone (1923) *A History of the 22nd (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers (Kensington)*, published privately 1923, and now in the Imperial War Museum.

Stone's letters have been edited in a very sympathetic piece of work by Gary Sheffield:

- G.D. Sheffield & G.I.S. Inglis (ed.) *From Vimy Ridge to the Rhine. The Great War letters of Christopher Stone*. Crowood Press, 1989.

See also Sheffield's chapter "A very good Londoner and a very good type of Colonial" in B. Bond et al., *Look to your front*, Spellmount, 1999.

THE KIPLING SISTERS

By JEAN M. ROBINSON

[Jean Robinson is a retired Solicitor whose interests in Kipling and the local history of Skipton (in pursuit of an M. Phil.) have combined to produce this article. She wishes to thank John Walker, our Hon. Librarian, for his help in carrying out her research. – Ed.]

It is well known that Rudyard Kipling, on his mother's side, had four surviving aunts, the celebrated Macdonald Sisters: Georgiana (Georgie), Agnes (Aggie), Louisa (Louie) and Edith (Edie). Much is known and written of them, including *The Macdonald Sisters* by their great-nephew Earl Baldwin (1960); *As A Tale That Is Told* by their brother, Frederic Macdonald (1919); *Victorian Sisters* by Ina Taylor in 1987 and more recently, *A Circle of Sisters* by Judith Flanders in 2001. Three of them married, making glittering connections: Georgiana to Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Aggie to Sir Edward Poynter and Louie to Alfred Baldwin, M.P., their son becoming Prime Minister. Only one, Edie, did not marry and was the last surviving sister.

But what of Rudyard's four Kipling aunts, the sisters of his father, John Lockwood Kipling: Jane (Jenny), Ann Elizabeth (Lizzie), Hannah and Ruth? Few will know these names and there are no books or articles about them. They, with others of the Kipling family, have been almost "airbrushed" out of Kipling's story to the point where, in a 1965 *Sunday Telegraph* article, the distinguished Professor A. L. Rowse describes Kipling as "not an Englishman at all; he was a Celt, who took after his mother's family, the remarkable Macdonalds".¹

This article seeks to shed light on four women who are as worthy of mention as the Macdonald Sisters and, hopefully, to add some balance to Kipling's family background which has been weighted too long in favour of his mother's relatives. Reasons for this will be considered below, but current information is patchy, scant and sometimes contradictory.

To begin with, there are similarities between the Macdonald and Kipling Sisters: their fathers were Wesleyan Methodist Ministers who travelled around the various circuits; they had two surviving brothers, in the Kipling girls' case their elder brother, John Lockwood, and Joseph; their mothers were widowed – Frances Kipling in 1862 and Hannah Macdonald in 1868; and both women received a small annuity from the Methodist church.

All the girls were similar in age: Jenny, born in 1839, being two years younger than her brother John Lockwood and sister-in-law,

Alice; Lizzie (born 1841) was a year older than Georgiana; Hannah (1842) a year younger than Aggie; Ruth (1846), a year younger than Louie, but two years older than Edie. As with the Macdonalds, three of the Kipling aunts married and one, Jenny, did not.

Whereas the Macdonald Sisters had their famous marriages and lasting record in the letters and papers of Rudyard, the Kipling Sisters were marrying modestly and more or less disappearing from the story of their famous nephew even though they were making their own way in the world and achieved much by their own endeavours, rather than their connections.

The Kipling Sisters' story is taken up in Skipton, North Yorkshire, which was the last place to which their father, the Rev Joseph Kipling, was assigned. He had broken the mould of his farming ancestry near Whitby, North Yorkshire to become a Methodist minister. Before Skipton, he worked the remote and wild circuit of Pateley Bridge, which included Greenhow Hill, later to be featured in his grandson's story. His area covered 24 miles in length and 16 miles in breadth over some of the wildest moorlands in the country. Clambering 13 miles above Pateley Bridge over a monastic mule track in a poor winter in February 1860 to the remote hamlet of Lodge took its toll on his health. By the time they moved to Skipton later in 1860, his health was failing and Ruth recalled how he would only let 'little Ruthie' wash his face, saying she was 'the best little nurse in Skipton'.²

After his death in 1862, Frances Kipling and her daughters moved to 23 Otley Road (now an office and named Kipling House). At this time, Jenny, Hannah and Ruth, were schoolteachers. It is not known where they themselves had their education but when the Rev Joseph was posted to Howden, West Yorkshire, John Lockwood Kipling attended local schools and it is possible the older girls may also have received some education here. It is also possible that the women ran a school in Pateley Bridge before moving to Skipton. Such schools were known as "Dame Schools", an early form of private elementary school, often located in the home of the teacher. The Kiplings took in boarders and Mrs. Kipling helped out, not necessarily in the teaching but in pastoral care of the pupils.

John Lockwood Kipling had left the family in 1845 for school at Woodhouse Grove, near Bradford and then subsequently moved to Burslem where, as is well known, he met Alice Macdonald and became engaged in 1863. When they married in March 1865 in London, it is difficult to see whether any of the Skipton Kiplings attended the ceremony, although a formal announcement was made in the local Skipton paper.



A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH OF 24 OTLEY STREET, SKIPTON, FORMERLY
KNOWN AS 23 OTLEY ROAD.

Contradictory accounts appear as to who attended. It has been suggested that Mrs. Kipling, Jenny and Ruth attended³ or that only the 'Misses Kipling' were present⁴ whereas another notes that none of the Kiplings attended.⁵ Writing to Louie, Aggie Macdonald says that before the wedding 'Alice is driven wild to find something for the Misses Kipling. She will go forth and never return till she has found something'.⁶

What does appear to be clear is that John Lockwood and Alice honeymooned in Skipton with his mother and sisters before sailing for India. It is suggested this may indicate that, with the purchase of presents for the new sisters-in-law and another one (of which more below) for Mrs. Kipling, these were gifts on arrival in Skipton and that none of the Kiplings attended, the honeymoon venue saving the cost of travel and intending to show the new Mrs Kipling to her husband's relatives.

As is well known, Rudyard was born in December 1865 and took the first name of Joseph, which seems to have been a particular wish of Mrs. Kipling. John Lockwood wrote to Louie Macdonald ' . . . would you object to god-mothering the name of Joseph Rudyard? My mammy would be so delighted with the first of these names that it is hard to baulk her in our minds'.⁷

However, Hannah Kipling was also a godmother to her new nephew. Alice had returned to England for Trix's birth in June 1868 and from February of that year until November, Alice remained here and it is likely that she visited Skipton. At about this time, Hannah was invited by John and Alice to assist them with their housekeeping in India, perhaps as a way of helping with her godson.⁸ Apparently, her parents (although only her mother was alive at the time) did not want her to go and so she refused. Perhaps the Kipling story would have been different if she had, although there was some merit in her decision as when Edie Macdonald went in 1891, she caught a fever which nearly killed her.

In 1876, Hannah married her Yorkshire farmer cousin, Joseph Kipling Rawlings, moving to East Yorkshire where the Kipling family originated. Mr Rawlings was described as 'a very dear man, though not very successful'. Hannah herself was described by those who knew her as 'a sweet and loveable soul' and her sister Jenny conceded that she was 'a clever woman and a better judge of character than myself.' Hannah and Joseph had no children.

At around the time when John and Alice were engaged, in Spring 1863, Lizzie Kipling married William Crump, a Skipton chemist, druggist and tea dealer who, like her own family, was from strong Methodist stock. William appears to have been a successful businessman and was one of the earliest qualified chemists to be registered with the Pharmaceutical Society.

They had seven children and Trix Fleming, recalling these relatives, said

Aunt Lizzie had five daughters – blue eyed, apple blossom-faced girls – Frances, Hannah (*sic* Anna), Louie, Alice and Lily – two of whom were as fair as Rud's Josephine – and they all inherited

their grandfather's gift of song. I stayed there, with mother, in October 1883 and have never forgotten how Lily, aged five and very spoilt, would suddenly throw aside her doll, empty her mouth of toffee and sing as loudly as a choirboy soloist 'Though friends spoke with rapture of Christ on the Tree, Jehovah Shekenzie was nothing to me.' I asked her what the last line meant and she said 'Mummy knows'. They seemed a happy, kindly family.¹⁰

The other two children were Robert and Joe who, like Rudyard, carried the first name Joseph and a full one of Joseph Kipling Crump.

William Crump built on his success, moving twice in Skipton each time to larger premises and manufacturing his own medications, such as "Crump's Tamarind Cough Elixir" and "Crump's Stomachic Mixture and Powders", which were sold not only at his own shop in Sheep Street, Skipton but also at various other chemists in the locality.

However, he died unexpectedly in 1872 at the age of 36, leaving Lizzie with a business, pregnant and with six children to care for. It must have been a very difficult time for her but she continued to run the business successfully and expanded it by opening a shop in Grassington in the Yorkshire Dales and taking over another chemist and dentist business in Skipton in 1883. She was also selling agricultural chemical products – not surprising in a large farming area – such as "Crump's Lambing Oils". She was described as 'a smart little business woman'.¹¹

Although not a fully-trained chemist herself, under the Pharmaceutical Society conditions as a married woman, she could have registered herself but did not to do so, keeping within the rules by employing qualified chemists. She also took on apprentice chemists, including her eldest son, Robert, and nephew, Joseph B. Kipling, (son of her brother Joseph) who was five years younger than his famous cousin of the same name.

When Rudyard was on holiday from school, he stayed with his grandmother and three aunts, but their home (and school) were only two minutes' walk away from the Crump household. Apparently he spent much of his time with them, being particularly friendly with his cousin Robert, who was only a year older.¹²

Eventually, in the closing years of the 19th century, Robert Crump took over the family business, although he never became a fully qualified chemist. He married but in 1902 he died at the age of 38, leaving a pregnant wife who gave birth in December 1902 to Robert Kipling Crump. It is ironic that Robert died of a perforated gastric ulcer, the same problem which dogged his famous cousin and ultimately led to his demise.

Lizzie had already moved to Birkenhead by this time and following Robert's death, the chemist's business was taken over by a Mr

Illingworth in 1903. Lizzie later moved to Morecambe, where she died, aged 83 in December 1925.

Jenny and Ruth continued to run the school themselves after Hannah's marriage. Their advertisement in the Educational column of the local Skipton paper, the *Craven Herald*, on 2 September 1882 reads:



23, OTLEY ROAD
THE MISSES KIPLING will re-open their School,
(D.V.,) TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 5TH, 1882.
Lessons in Music and French.¹³

It is noted that there was a "family tradition" of John Lockwood Kipling earning extra money by giving French lessons, as his sisters did.¹⁴

One of the issues of Rudyard Kipling's life is why his parents sent him and Trix to Southsea to live and be educated when family members on both sides offered to help. In particular, it is difficult to know why the Kipling children did not come to Skipton to be educated by their aunts, especially when it is noted that Lizzie's son, Joseph, was educated by them.

Trix clearly knew this as she later wrote, rather plaintively, of her grandmother that she was 'always alert, active and merry – what a lot of misery Rud and I should have been spared if mother had left us with her. She had a nice little house in Skipton and Aunts Jenny and Ruth were both with her there and I know they would have been kind to us . . .',¹⁵ Trix goes on to describe her Aunt Ruth as 'a sweet young woman with a soft voice, fine eyes in a plain dark face and the lovely expression some old nuns have, but she had it from early youth'.¹⁶

After leaving school and before travelling to India in October 1882 to take up his first post, Rudyard came on a visit to Skipton. During this visit, on 3 August 1882, he went for a walk with his Aunts Jenny and Ruth (the School being closed) and a young Skipton girl, Miss Stockdale, whose family were Methodists and had a grocer's shop next to the Crumps. The party walked to Carleton, about a mile and a half away, where they found the whole village celebrating the wedding of a son of the local mill owner. Work had been suspended and the village

was bedecked with two triumphal arches. The church was open to all and the Kipling party went in. It appears to have been quite a spectacle. However, Rudyard got into trouble when a churchwarden noticed him sketching caricatures of local dignitaries and, as a consequence, he was ejected from the church!¹⁷

Ruth and Jenny continued to run the school together until on 5 March 1885; at the age of 37, Ruth married George Dryden, aged 32. He was a bookkeeper at Skipton Castle, having come with the Thanet Estates from their main base at Appleby Castle, Cumbria where his father was a coachman. He was a widower with one son aged 4 years, the child remaining with George's parents. They were married in the Methodist Church, Gargrave by the Rev Alfred Levell, son of the late Rev William Levell, who must have been a family friend as the Rev Joseph Kipling and the elder Levell died within a day of each other and are buried, with identical gravestones, side by side.

Following Ruth's marriage, Jenny continued to run the school alone. Her advertisement of 14 January 1886 adds "Drawing etc." to the Music and French lessons but 13 days later, on 27 January 1886, Frances Kipling died and with her, the Methodist annuity. This is likely to have been a difficult period for the school and no further advertisements appear for it. Apart from the loss of their mother, the end was coming for Dame Schools with the introduction of compulsory education in 1880 and schools found to be below the government-specified standards of tuition could be closed. However, it says much about the Kipling women's ability and local reputation that the school in Skipton ran for nearly 25 years.

In March 1891, Ruth also became a widow when George Dryden died. By this time, Jenny had left 23 Otley Road and at some stage, both women retired to Thornton-le-Clay, near York, next door to where their sister Hannah and Mr Rawlings now kept a shop and a small-holding. The house in which Jenny and Ruth lived was provided for them by Rudyard, who also apparently gave them 10 shillings a week to live on to prevent them having to apply for the old age pension.¹⁸ Similarly, Edie Macdonald, on the death of her mother in 1875 was helped by her family, being taken into the Baldwin household where she helped Louie.¹⁹

How often Kipling saw them is not clear, but he seems to have struck up a friendship with a local man, Mr Fridlington, to whom he gave a 1901 sixpenny piece from his watch-chain; in the centre of the chain was a small turquoise.²⁰

However, one person does seem to have acted as a contact between Kipling and his family. Editha Plowden, John's old friend from India, visited both the Kipling aunts and Edie Macdonald. She visited the

latter on a yearly basis²¹ and it is possible she did the same for the Kiplings. In a wistful letter in 1925 to Editha, Ruth writes:

Have you seen Rudyard or Mrs. K. yet? If you do, give him my dear love. He does not know how deeply grateful I am to him for his kindness in providing us with our little house. How I should like to see him, but he has a busy life and I know we are not forgotten . . . ,²²

After this visit, Miss Plowden notes 'Aunt Jeanie (*sic*) is about 87. Ruth Dryden is younger than Edie Macdonald she tells me, but looks much older, about 76-77'.²³ Ruth would be 79 and was older, not younger, than Edie.

Jenny died in late 1925, soon after Joseph Rawlings. Ruth and Hannah then moved to Barton-le-Street, still in East Yorkshire, to be near Rawlings relatives, although Ruth died shortly after in summer 1926.

Hannah, now alone, moved into the home where she and Joseph had lived when first married and which was now occupied by a niece of the Rawlings family. Hannah died in 1935, aged 93.

However, despite the lack of information about the Kipling aunts, Rudyard does seem to have kept up to date about them. In a letter of 7 September 1933 to Edie Macdonald, he says 'But *do* remember that you are relatively a chicken – a *poulet* – compared with my Aunt Hannah.'²⁴ Edie Macdonald, who had taken to her bed for the last 12 years of her life, died in 1937 aged 89.

So why do the Kipling aunts not appear in the family story of Rudyard Kipling? Part, it has to be said, because of Kipling's own reticence in mentioning his Yorkshire forebears. In a letter to Craven Museum in Skipton in the 1930s, he denied ever coming to Skipton after the age of 5, but this is untrue as he certainly visited, at the latest, in 1882.²⁵

In addition, Kipling was notorious for destroying family papers. He acknowledged this himself. . . I make a reprehensible habit of burning all my personal correspondence . . .'.²⁶ Trix said 'If Rud had been a criminal, he could not have been fonder of destroying any family papers that came his way – especially after the parents died'.²⁷

Moreover, he complained about those who sought his ancestry and when a Burne-Jones relative, Angela Thirkell, wrote about her family connections, he regarded such things as a shameless exploitation of private matters – the "Higher Cannibalism" as he called it.²⁸ He put off those who would seek his Yorkshire background, telling one (Mrs. Sunderland) 'Yes, the family is certainly Yorkshire . . . I don't think a genealogical hunt would be of much use . . . I abandoned

my search long ago . . . My knowledge of my family is of the sketchiest'.²⁹

In addition, perhaps it is only in relatively recent times that a humble background in a famous person is something to be lauded rather than overlooked. Moreover, the Yorkshire Kiplings appear to be very modest people and even up to modern times, did not wish to parade their association with their famous relative. Aunt Jenny was interviewed in 1899 when Kipling was seriously ill in New York, but the reporter confessed that he had great difficulty in persuading her to speak about her famous nephew. Although proud of him, 'it was in a quiet and modest way'.³⁰

The relationship which Alice had with her in-laws probably distanced her son from his Kipling aunts. At some stage, Alice seems to have reached the conclusion that the Kiplings were 'no more than dreary Yorkshire Methodists'³¹ which is ironic in that she herself was born in Yorkshire (Sheffield) of a Methodist family!

She thought her mother-in-law was dull and seems to have dismissed her as 'a mere knitter of socks'.³² In any event, Alice's view is not born out by those who knew Frances Kipling, including Trix. Frances was not without a sense of humour. Even when nearing death, the doctor took her hand, asking 'Whose hand am I holding?' she replied 'The hand of youth and beauty'.³³ Like her grandson, she was also a story-teller: one of the Kipling school boarders said 'What stories she can tell! Of phantom coaches, of ghostly ladies in green silk and pearls, of nymphs and sprites and old-world saints'.³⁴ Perhaps Kipling's gift for story-telling also owes more to this side of the family than has otherwise been acknowledged.

A further illustration of Alice's approach to her mother-in-law is given in a letter between her sisters Aggie and Louie. Speaking of John Lockwood and Alice's forthcoming wedding, Aggie says 'Alice's present came yesterday from Mr. Bytheway . . . It is an electro-plated palm tree out of which rises a tall glass of flowers. But it is most ugly and tasteless and they can't take more glass, so Alice will bestow it, with all our approval, upon Mama Kipling . . .'³⁵ What Mrs. Kipling thought of her 'ugly and tasteless' gift is unknown.

Moreover, it is suggested that Alice persuaded her husband to maintain family ties which were dutiful rather than affectionate. Although she was high-spirited and talented in witty conversation, music and creative writing in the manner of young girls of her day, she liked to be at the emotional centre of any scene and it has further been suggested that it was in keeping that she should persuade her husband – not to mention her son's audience in posterity – that the Macdonald family were

really interesting, especially compared to the Kiplings. It has been suggested she had considerable reserves of malice, played down by biographers.³⁶

In addition, both Alice and John distanced themselves from their Methodist backgrounds whereas the Kiplings continued to be closely associated with the local church. Ruth married in the Methodist Church and Lizzie's husband, William Crump, was from a close-knit Methodist family, all three of his brothers becoming Methodist ministers.

However, as with sisters, Alice is likely to have been closer to her own than John Lockwood was to his, if only because of the shared social issues of being wives and mothers. Kipling grew up close to his Macdonald relatives and so retained that into his adulthood, whereas the Skipton Kiplings may have been more distant, both geographically and personally, especially after his grandmother died.

If Alice Kipling distanced herself from her in-laws, so Carrie Kipling, who was not especially liked by John Lockwood and Alice, was remote from hers,³⁷ making the distance between Kipling and his aunts even more acute. In 1920 Ruth, in answer to a letter she must have received from Carrie apparently asking about the family background, addresses her niece-in-law as 'Dear Mrs. Kipling' and writes quite formally, ending her letter with 'Yours sincerely, Ruth Dryden'. By contrast, the letter to Miss Plowden is addressed 'My dear Miss Plowden' and ends 'Yours very affectionately'.³⁸

And so the Kipling aunts do not appear in the main story of Rudyard Kipling, but it is hoped that this neglected side of his family will be brought more into the open as further research continues.

The final words will be left with Aunt Jenny. When asked by the press from whom she thought Rudyard had obtained his great intellectual abilities, she said 'That is a difficult question. The Macdonalds are bright and witty, but his most striking characteristic was his naturalness and that he must have inherited from the Kiplings'.³⁹

NOTES

1. The *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 December 1965.
2. University of Sussex, RKP 20/1.
3. Ankers, Dr A.R., *The Pater*, Pond View Books (1988) p.33.
4. Wilson, Angus, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling*, Granada Pub. (1977) p.24.
5. Ricketts, Harry, *The Unforgiving Minute*, Pimlico (2000) p.4.
6. Baldwin, A.W., *The Macdonald Sisters*, Peter Davies, London (1960) p.85.
7. *ibid.*, p.112.
8. Ankers, *ibid.*, p.64.
9. *ibid.*

10. University of Sussex, RKP 20/1. **Note:** This was an early 19th century Scottish Presbyterian hymn called "Jehovah Tsidkenu", anglicised Hebrew meaning "the Lord Our Righteousness".
11. *Craven Herald and Pioneer*, 27 January 1976.
12. *ibid.*, 19 January 1979.
13. There is a discrepancy in the name and numbering of the street, which is now 24 Otley Street, but at the time the Kiplings lived there, Otley Road comprised the whole of the street, which is now divided into the two names and this also affected the numbering.
14. Craig, W., *Kipling Journal* No.192, December 1974, p.8.
15. RKP 20/1.
16. Birkenhead, Lord, *Rudyard Kipling*, p.13.
17. Bateson, Dr V., *Yorkshire Post*, 14 January 1937 and *Craven Herald and Pioneer*, 15 January 1937, p.6.
18. Ankers, Dr A. R., "Kipling Was a Tyke", *The Dalesman*, Vol.41, May 1979, No.12, p.135.
19. Baldwin, *ibid.*, p.211.
20. Ankers, *ibid.*, *The Dalesman*.
21. Baldwin, *ibid.*, p.227.
22. RKP 20/1.
23. *ibid.*
24. Letter to Edie Macdonald, *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, (ed.) Thomas Pinney, Macmillan, Vol.6, p.212.
25. Private correspondence.
26. *Letters*, Pinney, Vol. 4.
27. Birkenhead, *ibid.*, p.253.
28. *Letters*, Pinney, Vol. 6, p.230.
29. Carrington, Charles, *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work*, Pelican (1970) p.31.
30. Ankers Papers, Kipling Society Library. Unattributed newspaper cutting.
31. Fido, Martin *Rudyard Kipling*, Hamlyn Pub. (1974).
32. Taylor, Ina, *Victorian Sisters*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson (1987) p.86.
33. Ankers, *ibid.*, *The Pater*, p.7.
34. RKP 20/1.
35. Baldwin, *ibid.*, p.85.
36. Fido, *ibid.*
37. Nicholson, Adam, *The Hated Wife*, Short Books (2001).
38. RKP 20/1.
39. Ankers Papers, Kipling Society Library. Unattributed newspaper cutting.

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John Lambert, Hon. Membership Secretary

EDITORIAL *continued from p. 7.*

WORKS ON THE WEB

In what is hoped will be its last move, the Kipling Works that were scanned and made available on the internet by Russel Tayler in Australia are now to be found at:

<http://www.telelib.com/words/authors/K/KiplingRudyard/index.html>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TWO COMMENTS ON THE MARCH 2009 JOURNAL

From: Major T.C. Thornton, 24 Abbey Croft, Pershore, Worcester WR10 1JQ

Dear Sir,

I am writing to comment on two articles in the *March Journal*.

Firstly in " 'Across Our Fathers' Graves' ", page 13, 'a few-three-year-olds'. I do not think that these men were necessarily short service soldiers. This is rather borne out by Mulvaney's summing up at the end of the story, 'wud fifty seasoned sodgers have taken Lungtung-pen . . . ? No! They'd know the risk av fever and chill'. I think that the young men in question had not long experienced service in the East.

Secondly, in " 'The Church that was at Antioch' ", page 34, 'Home! Quick! I have it!'. I prefer a simpler answer. I think that Valens has realised that his wound is fatal (in modern parlance 'I've had it!') and wants to get back home quickly before he dies.

Yours faithfully
TERRY THORNTON

"THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN"

From: Mrs Margaret Muir, 20 Lancaster Park, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6AB

Dear Sir,

In her letter in the March 2009 issue of the *Journal* (No.330, p.66), Josephine Leeper commented on the seemingly odd fact that in his writings about South Africa, Kipling never mentions the natives of South Africa, despite having spent every winter there between 1898 and 1908 and acted as war correspondent during the Boer War. Renee Durbach's book, *Kipling's South Africa* gives an explanation. "Kipling himself admitted to his young journalist protegee, Stephen Black, that he had failed to make literature out of South Africa, though it was his view that a man could not write anything of value unless he had been born there. In his stories about the Boer War . . . what is missing is any sense of continuity with the past, the magical dimension that underlies Kipling's writings about England or India . . . He did not have sufficient understanding of or sympathy for either its Boer or its black inhabitants."

He had been born in India and spent his first five years there, and then, at nearly seventeen, had returned to work as a journalist there. He had been very fully involved there as a young working man and apparently often spent much of the night wandering in the bazaars and

observing and talking to people there. He would also have got to know Indians employed as servants in his parents' home there. Though sometimes critical of British administrators there he had become increasingly convinced of what he saw as Britain's unique ability to govern the people there fairly and effectively.

His time in South Africa was very different. By then he was a celebrity; his interest in South Africa was in the opportunity it offered to extend British influence across Africa too and his conviction that Rhodes was the man to achieve this dream. He was excited by the war and by the way it demonstrated Britain's tragic lack of preparedness for such conflicts, for he had also observed ominous signs of the growing threat that Germany presented. He spent most of his time in Cape Town, where Rhodes had built him a house on his mountainside estate, and his visits to the interior, to Kimberley, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein and even to Bulawayo had been fleeting. He would have seen few Africans in Cape Town, for there were very few there until late in the 20th century. In the early days of Dutch settlement they had encountered only the nomadic Bushmen and Hottentots and it was not until late in the 18th century when Dutch farmers had penetrated far into the Eastern Cape that they first encountered the Xhosa tribe who had been moving slowly southwards. Their further advance had then been stopped by the Boers who had also had their own advance halted by the Xhosa. In Cape Town Kipling would only have encountered the Cape Malays and Coloureds, mixed race descendants of the slaves the Dutch had brought in from their Indonesian colony and elsewhere. He would certainly have seen Africans when he went north, mine-workers in Kimberley or Johannesburg, but would have had little or no contact with them.

It has only recently come to be acknowledged, since the ending of apartheid, how great an effect the white man's war had also had on the blacks. Afrikaners had objected to its being named the Boer War, thereby putting the blame on them and it came to be more politically correct to call it the Anglo-Boer War. Recently, Africans too have objected to *that* name, for it ignores the fact that thousands of them also died in the conflict, though they were not combatants. It is now officially known as the South African War.

Yours faithfully
MARGARET MUIR

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- 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.

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John Lambert, Membership Secretary, can be contacted at **31 Brookside, Billericay, Essex, CM11 1DT, U.K.**

or by e-mail: john.lambert1@btinternet.com