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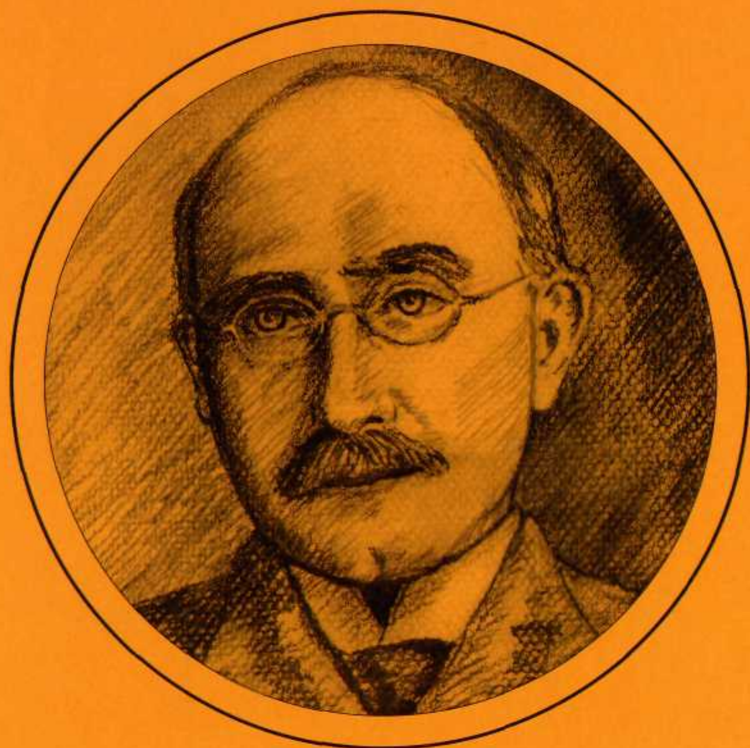

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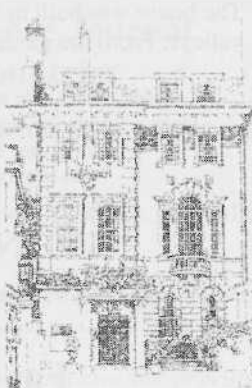

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SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 14 November 2001, at 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, the Royal Over-Seas League, Park Place, off St James's Street, London SW1, **Judith Flanders** on "Kipling and the Arts: A family tradition".

Wednesday 13 February 2002, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, the Royal Over-Seas League, **Professor Nora Crook** on "Kipling's Pictorial Daemon".

Wednesday 10 April 2002, 5.30 for 6 p.m., in the Mountbatten Room, the Royal Over-Seas League. Speaker and details to be announced.

Wednesday 26 June 2002, 12.30 for 1 p.m., at the Royal Over-Seas League, the Society's **Annual Luncheon.** The Guest Speaker, **The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres DD FSA, The Bishop of London,** will include in his talk "Kipling and Westward Ho!". [Details in December 2001 issue]

Wednesday 10 July 2002, after the Society's **Annual General Meeting,** at 5.30 for 6 p.m. Guest Speaker: Harry Ricketts. All other details will follow.

September 2001 JEFFERY LEWINS

AN INCIDENT ON THE GANGES IN 1857
[See page 8 for an explanation]

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Cover portrait by Sharad Keskar

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A NOTE ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 6

This sketch by Stuart Tresilian appeared in 1955 in a combined edition of *The Jungle Books* published by World Books, London. It illustrates an incident described in "The Undertakers" *(The Second Jungle Book)* and mentioned by Lisa Lewis (on page 56 of the *Journal,* June 2001) in her article, "Rikki-Tikki Revisited".

"The Undertakers", which Professor Karlin has aptly called a 'macabre comedy', centres upon a horrible old crocodile, known to generations of locals as 'the Mugger of Mugger-Ghaut' (i.e. 'the Crocodile of Crocodile Ford'), who despite his murderous habits has long been a sort of tutelary fetish for the village of that name. (Incidentally, *mugger* is anglicised from *muggur,* an approximation to the Hindi name for the formidable broad-snouted breed of crocodile that haunted the Ganges.)

The Mugger was talking to two fellow-scavengers (an Adjutant crane and a jackal) about violent events that had made one year of his long-past youth unforgettable. He was referring to the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857. Though his understanding of that conflict was limited, he retained gloating memories of one of its consequences – the greatly increased number of massed corpses to be found and relished in the rivers.

He had also observed how, at first, most of the corpses had been 'white-faces', but later they had been predominantly Indians. From this he had deduced that an uprising against the English was in progress, but that, after initial successes, the rebels were being defeated.

However, the Mugger's interest was mainly associated with his voracious appetite, and it was greed that led him into the incident shown in this picture, when he confronted a "boatful of white-faces – women, lying under a cloth spread over sticks, and crying aloud." They were refugees, fleeing downstream from some place of slaughter such as Cawnpore (Kanpur). With them was a small white boy, whom the Mugger saw reaching over the side of the boat, to trail his hands in the river. The Mugger snatched at the child's hands – and missed! Though it was an easy target, and his jaws "rang true", the child managed to pull back, and the Mugger could only suppose that the hands were so small that they had slipped unscathed between his front teeth.

The Mugger had then been startled to be shot at close quarters by a white woman (the child's mother), who had fired five quick shots, which left him gaping and bewildered – it was his first and only experience with a revolver – but not seriously wounded.

After telling the crane and jackal that he would always regret failing to eat that child, the Mugger settled to sleep. It was the last thing he did, for he was soon shot dead, where he lay, by the engineer who had built the new railway bridge. A two-fold significance: the bridge, superseding the Mugger ford, stands for the forces of modernity; while the engineer was the lucky child of 1857, now grown up. [G.H.W.]

EDITORIAL

No one with any knowledge of North America will fail to chuckle at the opening lines of Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent:* "I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to." The words also have a ring of the tragic inevitability which dogs all human comedy. Adam Nicolson, our Guest Speaker at this year's Annual Luncheon – the script of whose talk is printed in this journal – posed a similar conundrum to suggest that had Kipling not married Carrie Balestier, he would have married someone else of Carrie's nature. There is no resolution to such speculations. A debate on the authorship of Shakespeare's sonnets led to the quibble that if they were not by him then they were by someone named Shakespeare. Could the same be said of the works of Kipling? I think not. He defies singular analysis, and it is a point that Jan Morris and Adam Nicolson touch upon, though not directly. I am convinced that if Kipling's writings were not by him, they would have had to be written by at least six other writers with different names. The range of the great man is staggering. The 'wonder boy', the arrogant youth, the poet, the artist, the weaver of tales for children, the short story writer *par excellence;* and hovering above all this, a poet of Empire with a moral conscience and a multicultural outlook. He is a writer some journey to set aside, only to meet him once again, wearing a new mask. Kipling never 'ceases from Kipling'; and no writer so wrong foots his critics as he does. Those critics who refuse to admit it, stub their toes. Like Shakespeare and the Bible, Kipling is always with us. Like both, he leaves his mark not only on paper but also on our minds. Even to deny him is to acknowledge that impingement. This magician, this wordsmith, this coiner of 'copybook headings' has had his prose and verse pinned on walls, carved on sports stadiums and military cemeteries. His words and pictures have inspired calligraphers and graphic designers to 'loud-hail' them in black and white and in colour. He has and will survive adverse criticisms. He was called a bore after the Boer War, yet he defined harmony and reconciliation most movingly:

> Here, where my fresh-turned furrows run,
> And the deep soil glistens red,
> I will repair the wrong that was done
> To the living and the dead.
> Here, where the senseless bullet fell,
> And the barren shrapnel burst,
> I will plant a tree, I will dig a well,
> Against the heat and the thirst. ("The Settler" 1903)

Or, these warning, even chastising, lines from "Recessional" (1897):

> Far-called, our navies melt away;
> On dune and headland sinks the fire:
> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

This champion of the ordinary man, this most democratic of writers who refused titles, honours and public acclaim, saw a raw morality that put pagan and Christian on an equal footing. This same man, never one thing at anytime, was a traveller on the 'long trail'. His literary career properly began before he was twenty and from then on it was in a state of transition, mentally and bodily, meeting 'triumphs and disasters' and discovering that we are, finally, insignificant beings in an indifferent universe, who must 'run the distance' that leads from certainty to doubt. Yet 'the Law' was immutable; and those who chose the path of obedience and magnanimity must also be prepared for sacrifice – whether they are prophets, saints, or sons of gods. In 1907, he told the Canada Club that he had done his best to make the nations of the Empire interested in each other, "was this [asks Hilton Brown] 'Imperialism'? If so, what was wrong with it?"

Kipling never quite understood the enmity between the "English of the Island" and the "English of the Empire". I don't either. As for those who have reservations about the man himself; let them remember the New Yorker who said to his critics: "what difference does it make if he was an insufferable Tory? He wrote the *Jungle Book.* Has everybody forgotten that?"

E-mail from Alastair Wilson to the Kipling mailbase:

Nice to see the following in an article by Paul Johnson in this week's [28 July] *Spectator:* "Chaucer was one of the four inexplicable geniuses of English literature, along with Shakespeare, Dickens and Kipling: that is, he had a daemon which enabled him to create works of stunning originality that sprang from nothing, with no precursor."

KIPLING and the BRITISH EMPIRE

BY JAN MORRIS

[This is a transcript of the talk given by Jan Morris to the Kipling Society on 11 April 2001. More than a year before, Jan Morris had kindly accepted my invitation to address the Society and so great was the response to this news, that the Society had to arrange to meet in the Hall of India and Pakistan at the Royal Over-Seas League for the evening. The occasion was an unqualified success and the audience of over 200 included many members of the Royal Over-Seas Club. The Society is grateful to Jan Morris for finding time in her crowded schedule to be with us and for travelling down to London from Wales to do so.

It is impossible to summarise and do justice to Jan Morris's prolific and glittering, literary career. She is one of our finest writers of English prose and, fortunately for me, needs no introduction. To those who wish to know more, I recommend her books, many of which reveal a lot about herself, as does the talk which follows this pedestrian and inadequate introduction.

On a cautionary note: to those Kipling fans who may be dismayed by her opening sentences, I say, be patient. Jan Morris's style is many things, and a refined subtlety is chief among them. What one never finds is outright condemnation. Note how, in my opinion, she weaves her way in the end to reinstate Kipling, this (to quote *The Times* in its Obituary of Philip Mason) most "baffling genius whose mysteries have never been solved." – *Ed]*

I feel a real imposter coming here to speak to you this evening. There isn't one of you here, I'm quite sure, who doesn't know more than I do about Rudyard Kipling. I am not at all a Kiplingian, if that's the right word – or Kiplingite, perhaps? He has never been one of my passions. I actually dislike much of what he wrote, and lots more I simply don't understand. I was brought up to think of many of his views as essentially distasteful. My late maternal grandfather, whom I never met actually, remained the literary arbiter of my family long after his death, and he had been of the opinion that Kipling redeemed his genius only after the first world war, in his late short stories. I myself was weaned like everyone else of my age upon the *Just So Stories,* but I thought they were far less magical than *Alice in Wonderland,* and so far as I remember I never returned to Kipling until I was in my twenties.

I do recognize, of course, that he was a truly prodigious genius, and what brought me back to him, and so, luckily for me, brought me to you this evening, was the matter of Empire. For years the names of Rudyard Kipling and the British Empire were of course more or less synonymous in the public mind. He was the poet of Empire, the Imperial Laureate, the one great creative writer who had made British imperialism the subject of his art, and inspired a whole generation with its ethos: so it was inevitable that when 30 years after his death I

became bewitched by the same subject, I should find myself metaphorically face to face with the master.

It was more than half a century ago that I was plunged for the first time into the ambiguities of the British Empire. The Second World War having ended, my regiment was transferred from Italy to Palestine, then a British Mandated Territory, by way of Egypt, which was a sort of British Protectorate. I had never been to any British overseas territory before, and I had no imperial connections. My Welsh paternal forebears were a million miles from any imperial interests or enthusiasms, and that opinionated maternal grandfather of mine had disapproved of anything that smacked of imperialism, even down to Boy Scouts.

Well, we disembarked at Port Said and then boarded a train to cross the Suez Canal to the Holy Land. As it happened it was my 21st birthday. I was travelling with my commanding officer, a young lieutenant-colonel of particularly sweet temperament, very gentle, a very nice man, as popular with his soldiers as he was with his officers. He had served in Egypt before and so, as we used to say, knew his way around. We clambered on to the train and walked down the corridor to find seats, but after a time my colonel found our way blocked by the back half of an Egyptian, in a *gallabiyah,* who was leaning into a compartment talking to somebody inside. An astounding thing then happened. To my astonishment my colonel, without a moment's hesitation, without a second thought, *kicked* that Egyptian quite hard out of his way. He didn't say a word. He didn't say excuse me. He certainly didn't say he was sorry. He just gave the unhappy man a hefty kick in the arse.

I was really taken aback. I had never seen such a thing before: a cultivated English gentleman, naturally kind and considerate, not in the least chauvinist, behaving in such a way to a perfect stranger. I couldn't imagine him doing anything like that anywhere in Europe. But he was not in the least abashed. He seemed to think it perfectly natural, and when he found us a compartment and we resumed our conversation he didn't allude to the incident at all. He appeared to suppose that I would accept it as perfectly normal. It was only an Egyptian he had kicked, he seemed to imply, and it was just part of an organic relationship between rulers and ruled, in the dominion I'd read about where the sun never set.

In fact it had affected me profoundly. I had not really thought much about the British Empire before, and like most Britons then assumed it in a hazy way to be a generally grand and benevolent institution. Kicking people in train corridors had not entered my idea of it, least of all just because they happened to be people of a particular race: I doubt if even my grandfather would have thought in such crude terms of the

Empire – in fact he probably really didn't know much about the subject either. The incident queered and sharpened my imperial conceptions, and in its petty way made me feel that the British Empire was a more complex organism than I had ever supposed. I was disturbed that such a good man should be so debased by its relationships, and I was ashamed too, when I thought about it, that I had not gone back myself and apologized to the Egyptian – although as a matter of imperial fact, he probably wouldn't have known what I was talking about.

Hardly had we arrived in Palestine, though, than another face of imperialism was revealed to me. I was the regimental intelligence officer, and as such I had to make contact with the local British district commissioner. This introduction gave me another kind of *frisson* altogether. I had been in the army for most of my brief adult life, and I had met very few civilians. They had seemed to me in general rather a colourless kind of being, as of course they all too often were in wartime, and the civilian state of existence struck me as being essentially rather plodding. This man, though, undeniably had dash. I very much took to his hat, which was a battered and dusty trilby, and to his attitude, which was a bit sort of raffish – a laughing raffishness. His Arabic was fluent, his conversation was knowledgeable and entertaining, his expertise seemed to range from economics to land surveying, and he was evidently on excellent terms with both the Arabs and the Jews of his district.

He was a new *kind* of man for me. He had a sort of extra freedom to him. His horizons seemed wider. His authority was franker. His hat was more fun. Once or twice I drove him to desert destinations in my jeep, and I liked the way he sat in it, not in the way that we sat in jeeps, with one foot out negligently and showily on the running-board, but with a composed sort of civilian self-possession. He seemed to know just what he was, what his job was, what his duty ought to be. So, said I to myself, this is Empire too! It does the worst to our dear colonel, it seems to bring out the best in the District Commissioner. What would it do to me? My introduction to it had certainly been instructive enough, travelling from an Egypt which did not want the Empire to a Palestine the Empire did not much want.

Over the next few years, when I became a civilian myself, and a newspaper correspondent, I became ever more fascinated by the spectacle of this immense organism, then beginning to withdraw from its possessions one by one across the world. I was amazed by its sprawl, its diversity, its colour, its clout. Sometimes I watched it fighting rearguard actions. Sometimes it was negotiating a peaceful retreat. Sometimes it looked as though it was going to stay just where it was for the rest of history. Here it invented new sorts of political

mechanisms, to try to staunch the flow of power. Here it showed off its *noblesse oblige* by handing over sovereignty to this subject people or that, with ceremonial flag-lowerings, and visits from royal personages, and decorations for local patriots with whom it had been, only a year or two before, at daggers drawn.

It was an enthralling historical spectacle, already gradually fading away into that estimable but unexciting epilogue called The Commonwealth. Actually I don't think observing it greatly changed my attitudes. I perhaps got into the habit of thinking, as Alan Moorhead once said, that we British might all wander the world like the children of rich parents. But I never acquired the particular confidence of purpose, the sureness of duty, that gave that District Commissioner his dashing poise. On the other hand I never did get into the habit of kicking people. Anyway, I remained always the outsider, looking on.

I was back in Egypt again, on some assignment or other, when the news came that Winston Churchill, the heroic epitome of Empire, had died in London. The Egyptian who gave me the news told it to me with infinite sympathy, as though I had suffered a personal loss: and to my surprise, when I examined my responses, I found I had. It was not just the loss of the old champion himself, it was the loss of the idea of Empire. For better of for worse, I felt, nothing would ever be the same again, when there were no more sweet-natured colonels anomalously humiliating strangers, or diligent young men in dusty hats pursuing the course of imperial domination, or that proud sweep of the dominions themselves, stretching across the continents, which the British had acquired over the centuries with such mixed intentions of greed, goodwill, vainglory and high adventure.

So in the middle of the 1960s I decided to write a book about the British Empire, between the accession of Queen Victoria and the death of Winston Churchill. It occurred to me how wonderful it would have been if a young centurion, say, in the last years of the Roman Empire, had written a book about *it* – not just retrospectively describing his empire, but expressing, if only between the lines, his own personal feelings about its style and its meaning. Well, I thought, that's just what I'll do for *my* Empire – write a book, or in the event a trilogy, that would be an amalgam of truth and imagination – a subjective history of an extraordinary institution, frankly evoked as it was seen and fancied in its last years by the eyes of one peripheral participant.

I didn't think of it as history, but as art. Heaps of historians had dealt with the British Empire, as they have been dealing with it ever since. It would not be a moralizing view of Empire, either, for my feelings about the morality of it all were far less well-defined than my grandfather's. Certainly I was concerned about the incidental brutalities of the thing,

from punitive bombing raids to racial rudeness, but the question of whether Empire itself could ever be good, the forcible imposition of one people's power over another – I tended in those days to look past, over, or under this ultimate question. Mine was to be an aesthetic view of Empire. It was the flare and boldness and pageantry of the idea that appealed to me, the range of it, the sacrifice, the beauty. It seemed to me that even bad things could be beautiful, and that the Empire was often at its most fascinating when it was behaving most outrageously. I was young, I was young, and I was more impressed by panache than by high principles – more attracted by Nelson than I was by Wilberforce. Still am!

My book would be deliberately dated, because it would be a picture of the Empire and its past specifically from the viewpoint of a particular moment – the moment I had experienced for myself. And there was, of course, a great precursor for such a project – the one towering literary genius that the Empire had produced, who had seized the moment of his own youth to immortalize the sensations of Empire at that time. So I hope you won't think me impertinent, or presumptuous, if this evening I try to perceive how Rudyard Kipling's responses to the British Empire paralleled, resembled or belied my own. I'm sorry if you find there's too much about the Empire and me, as you perhaps have already, and not enough about Kipling and the Empire. But there we are, the relationship between the three of us is the only aspect of Kiplingism that I know more about than you do!

His introduction to Empire was, of course, very different from mine. He didn't have to be introduced to it. He was born to it, spending his childhood years amid all the sights and smells and contradictions of British India, in a household where Indians were always familiars, and where Indian culture never was considered inferior to the culture of the west. Like so many colonial children – like Kim, like Tod of Tod's Law – he was undoubtedly closer to ordinary Indians than his seniors were; and similarly when, years later, he returned to India to become a newspaper reporter, like most reporters he was certainly nearer the earth than your average Army officer, bureaucrat, businessman or clergyman. I spent a few months of my own youth working for a British equivalent of the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, a daily paper in Bristol, and my memories of the experience, the almost indistinguishable rogues and cops of the police court, the poor victims of tragedy I had to interview, the sad unforgettable smell of the coroner's court, the provincial pomposities, the squalors I was privy to and the petty backstreet scams I heard about – all these gave me inner advantages when I later joined the mess of the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, or later still settled into my rooms in Peckwater Quad at Oxford.

So, *a priori,* it seems to me, Kipling was not brought up to what I might call the imperial kicking syndrome, the crudity and the racial condescension that I had first sensed on that train at Port Said. But he had suffered the influences of an English boarding school education, back in England, and there he learnt other attitudes. It seems almost incredible now what a lasting impact the public school system had upon English boys of the Victorian age – and afterwards. Gladstone said, didn't he, that nothing in life ever equalled the glory of becoming a member of Pop at Eton. P.G.Wodehouse apparently thought that all life was a disappointment after Dulwich. And Kipling permanently absorbed, I think, some of the ethos of his own schooldays. Of course, most young people are naturally conformist, aren't they? I remember hearing one of my own sons complain about the cruel fagging system at his public school, with its brutal penalties of corporal punishment by prefects, and I asked him how he would behave, when he was a prefect himself. "O", he said, "I shall be just the same. One has to be, doesn't one?"

Victorian family life could be very cruel anyway (as I've been learning lately, by the way, from a brilliant forthcoming book about the Macdonald sisters, Kipling's mother and aunts: it's called *A Circle of Sisters,* and it's to be published by Viking later in the year. It is by a friend of mine, Judith Flanders, but quite apart from that it's so good that I can't resist giving it a plug). Kipling himself, of course, had famously been exposed to harsh cruelties from the English foster-parents he was originally placed with at Southsea, and by the time he went on to his public school, Westward Ho!, he was perhaps already acclimatized to its values. Anyway even young geniuses, it seems, want to be "cool" among their peers.

It was not one of your ancient public schools, whose traditions had at least mellowed, and it had been specifically set up for the education of the sons of army officers, many of them themselves future officers of the imperial armed forces. It was designed to produce hard, able young men with very stiff upper lips and a strong sense of their own superiority. The prefect system flourished. Blind eyes were evidently turned upon ragging or getting one's own back. Short-sighted, intellectual and no good at games, Rudyard Kipling evidently loved it anyway, at least in retrospect, and his stories in *Stalky & Co,* which immortalised his responses to it, seem to tell us something about the imperial attitudes of his maturity. I hate most of these stories. I hate the maddening schoolboy jargon which Kipling evidently found amusing. I hate the fawning hero-worship which they seem to display towards higher authority – the Headmaster in this case. As Kipling put it:

> There we met with famous men
> Set in office o'er us;
> And they beat on us with rods –
> Faithfully with many rods –
> Daily beat us on with rods,
> For the love they bore us.

Yuk! But most of all, of course, I hate the taste for punishment which Kipling describes, with every sign of approval, in these once-beloved stories. I know the beatings were then a universal part of the public school system, and of course things that may seem horrible to one generation may have been perfectly acceptable to another. Even so there seems to me something timelessly unpleasant about a story like "The Moral Reformers". This is ostensibly a tale about the appropriateness of rough justice, when a group of boys take it on themselves to punish a notorious bully, but it comes out as an almost erotic account of punishment as revenge – tyings-up, interrogations, beatings with a cricket stump, tears, appeals for mercy, all described with apparent relish. The character called Beetle, which is really Kipling, is the worst of all because he remembers how he was bullied himself, and the whole episode is justified, it seems, by the argument that two wrongs can make a right – certainly the School Chaplain, another representative of Higher Authority, approves of what the vigilantes have done.

Just as the experience of Westward Ho! can be seen as an adjustment of Kipling's sensibilities towards the 'kicking syndrome', so that particular story can be interpreted as a sort of microcosm of British imperialism. H.G.Wells certainly thought so – it was an unintended revelation, he said, of the wickedness of the British Empire. Kipling himself thought of the Stalky stories, I gather, as tracts or parables, but there's no denying that he seems to have had a lifelong taste for cruel practical joking and vengeance, which perhaps carried over into his imperial attitudes. There's not much moral difference between schoolboy revenge and the burning of rebel villages, an imperial technique he often casually mentions. In the generally entertaining story called "Little Foxes", Higher Authority, in the person of a provincial Governor, does not hesitate to threaten his subjects with "most immeasurable beatings" – with altogether satisfactory results, of course.

I don't think, though, that Kipling ever degenerated into imperial racism. Do you? Perhaps his Indian childhood saved him from that – it is hard to imagine his schoolmates at Westward Ho! being very racially tolerant. Kipling might have condoned a kick in the corridor now and then, but not because the man in the way was an Egyptian. It is true that

in a less specific way he regarded the people of the third world as proper material for imperial expansion, if only for their own good ("fluttered folk and wild.. . Half devil and half child") the silent "sullen peoples" of the world. But he really agreed with Burns that a man was a man for all that (unless in later years he happened to be a German), and when he wrote that East was East and West was West, and never the twain should meet, it was only to make the point that individuals of any race, if they came from the ends of the earth, were equal when they met face to face. He may not have been keen on what they used to call "the educated native", but his stories are full of admirable Indians, from scholars to mulemen, and in fact one of the most endearing and impressive characters of *Kim* is that very epitome of an "educated native", the Bengali Hurree Babu, who was apt to say comical things like "it was jolly beastly cold up there", or "it is. . . the most reprehensible laxity on your part": but it is babu-talk which Kipling reports only with affection, mercifully free of political correctness.

So 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man;

I really think, as only an ill-informed reader, that Kipling can be acquitted of the worst of the imperial social attitudes. He was not innocent, though, especially in his youth, of the vain-glory that was then endemic in the Empire, and which alas is still particularly associated with his name. He waved the flag all right. Sometimes he could play the tear-jerker. –

Never the lotos closes, never the wild-fowl wake,
But a soul goes out on the East Wind that died for England's sake –

Sometimes he could play the jingo. "Let us annexe China", he grandly wrote, when he was in his early twenties and visiting the further east for the first time in his life (although to be fair he wrote that line mostly in fun, and the phrase made a neat one-line ending to an essay – I know how he felt!). When he got to San Francisco, his first arrival ever in the United States, and his ship steamed through the Golden Gate: "I saw with great joy that the block-house which guarded its mouth could be silenced by two gunboats from Hong Kong with safety, comfort and dispatch". ("Protect me from the wrath of an outraged community", he also wrote, "if these letters be ever read by American eyes", and I knew just how he felt then, too – it's very dangerous writing about other peoples' countries!)

Jingoism is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as exaggerated and bellicose patriotism. It was certainly a generic element of imperialism,

and two aspects of it are illustrated with approval in Kipling's story "The Man Who Was" – a marvellous story I think concerning the Anglo-Russian rivalry of the day, which was the original inspiration of jingoism. Kipling describes drinking the toast to the Queen in a regimental mess. He calls it "That Sacrament of the Mess". It was only a toast to the Head of State, but "That Sacrament", he says (embarrassingly to a Welsh republican taste) "never grows old, and never ceases to bring a lump to the throat of the listener wherever he is by land or sea".

That's one side of the exaggerated patriotism, a sort of neo-religious devotion to flag and monarch. The belligerent side of it is expressed by a song he includes in the same story, and which he says is popular among the officers of the White Hussars:

> I'm sorry for Mister Bluebeard,
> I'm sorry to cause him pain;
> But a terrible spree there's sure to be
> When he comes back again.

And this sounds, it must be said, all too like the vulgar song which gave the very word jingo to the language:

> We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,
> We've got the ships, we've got the men,
> We've got the money too.

But there we are, he was young, he was young – younger even than I was when I first ventured into the imperial mysteries. He responded to the swagger and the conceit of patriotism, and the pull of the old flag. So did I, when I was that age, and so I dare say did you. It must have been especially hard for any child of the Victorian age, even the least imperialist, not to feel the thrill of being British. It wasn't Rudyard Kipling, after all, but the passionately anti-imperialist Wilfred Blunt, who wrote of a sea-passage past Gibraltar:

> At this door England stands sentry. God! To hear the thrill
> Sweet treble of her fifes upon the breeze,
> And at the summons of the rock gun's roar
> To see her red coats marching from the hill!

And don't you yourselves remember, as I do, a century later, seeing the Union Flag flying above some prosperous Pacific seaport, or over a fly-blown African settlement, or watching the guard changing outside Government House in Hong Kong, or hearing a bugle blow on a

warship's quarter-deck, and feeling an altogether irrational, in some ways immature, but still irresistible sense of pride and complacency?

Even when the Empire had died the regret of its memories could be more sentimentally nostalgic than apologetic. It wasn't Kipling who wrote this, either:

> Say farewell to the trumpets,
> You will hear them no more,
> But their sweet, sad silvery echoes
> Will call to you still
> Through the half-closed door.

No, that certainly wasn't Kipling. It was me!

My own first patch of Empire was very small, and very unrepresentative: Palestine, which had been British only for a quarter of a century, and as it happens was to remain British only for another two years. Kipling's first patch was of course immense. He didn't know the whole of India, but he knew a lot of it, and for years it satisfied his conception of Empire. It gave him material for his art, and of course in many ways it was the true-epicentre of the Empire, around which all else revolved. However, it was getting away from Palestine, and glimpsing the immense horizons of the Empire as a whole, that sparked my interest in the grand idea of it: and similarly Kipling, having travelled much of the world by then, and made himself world-famous by his Indian stories, evidently felt the time had come for him to contemplate the Empire in a wider perspective. For me it was more or less an end in its itself: for his astonishing talents, it was an entry into greater and profounder fields of art.

He had come to see the Empire, he wrote, in terms of "a vast, vague conspectus of the whole sweep and meaning of things and efforts and origins". So did I, but he in his genius carried the conception further . "I visualised it", he said, "as I do most ideas, in the shape of a semi-circle of buildings and temples projecting into a sea – of dreams". He was becoming, in fact, a writer who would rise above empires, to explore higher realms of human experience – a writer whom my grandfather himself recognized in the end as a great artist.

I suspect Kipling's was fundamentally an aesthetic view of Empire, too. He never did discuss in print, so far as I know – you'll know better than I do – the ultimate right or wrong of imperialism, whether one people could ever be justified in posing its rule upon another. He did it perhaps in allegory, as in the Stalky stories, but never explicitly. And he came to marvel at the world-wide spectacle of the British Empire, so much freer of feeling, more hopeful, more multi-ethnic as we would

say now, than the antique structure of the British Raj he had grown up with. *Kim* itself, the one undeniable masterpiece the Empire produced, while unforgettably expressing the immemorial feel of India, seems to me to be celebrating too the joy, challenge, glory and strangeness of the imperial adventure more or less in the abstract. And Kipling's poem, "The Song of the Cities" delightfully encapsulates the same sensation. In it all the great British cities of the world declare themselves to their English Mother.

"Talk to your grey mother, that bore you on her knees!" says London to its children, and one by one the cities of the Empire respond. The arrangement reminds me of the moment of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, which I chose as the celebratory climax of my own trilogy. Then the Queen herself sent out a message in Morse code from the palace telegraph room, distributing her greetings to the quarter of the entire world's population who were her subjects. She apparently tapped the last dot on the machine herself, a sort of electric signature, and the telegraph people later reported that her dot was followed by a couple of unexpected clicks: indicating, they thought, "a certain amount of nervousness on the part of the aged Sovereign at that supreme moment in her illustrious career".

If we are to imagine Kipling's "The Song of the Cities" to represent the Empire's various replies, as they might have been a little earlier in the 1890s, there was certainly no sign of reciprocal nerves. It's a wonderfully exuberant little anthology. "Hail England! I am Asia – " cries Calcutta. "From East to West" sings Victoria, British Columbia, "the tested chain holds fast". Capetown dreams of extending the Empire as one land from the Cape to the Equator. Sydney says "Success" with a capital S lies at its feet. Halifax claims to be "The Warden of the Honour of the North". It's true that Hong Kong asks its rather unlikely parent to look after it well, in case something ominous comes from the mainland – one of the more prescient verses of the piece – but in general "The Song of the Cities" is a chorus of exhilarating pride and confidence. I think of it myself as Kipling's crowning tribute to the idea of Queen Victoria's Empire.

For if he was the great celebrant of that idea, he was also an early visionary of its conclusion. He must have known in his heart that it depended partly on morale, and partly on bluff, and partly on technique, on being the very latest thing. He was always concerned with the imperial techniques of his day. He cultivated the company of soldiers, engineers, foresters, and he enjoyed listening to their shop talk – picking it up, too, for his own uses. He indulged his strain of hero-worship in idealizing the brave, strong, devoted, sometimes reckless young men who built canals and railways, governed immense districts and coped with famine or disease among millions of their subject

peoples. Lots of fine stories express his admiration for the way the Empire in India did its work, especially the technical side of its work.

He loved expertise. One of the more annoying traits of his work, to my mind, is the knowing way in which he displays his own second-hand knowledge of technical matters, picked up, one assumes by watching, reading and listening – for he never was a soldier or an engineer, never navigated a ship in his life. His was the Empire of Steam, though, built upon technology, and all his life Kipling was excited by engines, the hiss of pistons and the thumping of screws. He was also excited by the energies that succeeded steam, and which were to become anachronistic to it. He was fascinated by radio, just beginning in his day to transform the imperial arrangements. He loved cars, which never reached India in his time, and only first entered the imperial imagery, I suppose, with Lawrence's armoured-cars in the deserts of the first world war. And he foresaw, I suspect, that in the end new means of transport and communication would make the very notion of Empire out of date, by shrinking the world, so to speak, and making the concept of nationality itself increasingly an irrelevance.

In 1908 he wrote an amazing science-fiction story, "With the Night Mail". This Wellsian sort of fancy imagined a day, in the year 2000 as it happened, when the whole world would be habitually criss-crossed by flying machines. In this story Kipling could be genuinely knowing. He'd invented the whole system of air traffic himself, so he truly was the expert. He was as unrivalled in his technical knowledge, just for once, as the irrigation engineers or the dam-builders he so admired, and he alone was qualified to gauge the effect of his own invention. I suspect "With the Night Mail" may have influenced Ramsay MacDonald's Government when in the 1920s it began to conceive the Empire united in a new way by the Imperial Airship Scheme – All-Red Routes around the world, linking London with Cairo, Bombay, Hong Hong, Sydney or Vancouver, more or less in the twinkling of an eye. For one thing Kipling prophesied in his story that it would be the dirigible, not the aeroplane, that would be the freighter and the liner of the future, as the Air Ministry thought when they built the R101. For another he seemed to show that by the year 2000 the airways really could be governed and organized in a way that would enable immense fleets of aircraft to navigate the planet. I'm sure you've all read "With the Night Mail", so you'll know that it's very convincing in its evocation of a mail flight by airship across the Atlantic, full of technical know-how concerning things like dip-dials and thrust-blocks and rudder flanges and something called Fleury's Ray – Heaven knows what they all are, but they ring remarkably true.

More prophetic, though, are the systems of air traffic control that Kipling conceived in 1908. He imagined an International Aerial Board

of Control, to organize flight paths, decree safety arrangements, issue traffic warnings. He imagined, at a time when radio was still in its infancy, a general voice radio link between aircraft. He described, years before radar, a system of cloud-piercing searchlights, based all over the world, which could guide the airships on their routes just as flyers lock on to their beams today. (And here by the way, is the most perceptive thing of all. When his mail-ship – Flight 162 – reaches the docking tower at Quebec after its ten-hour Atlantic crossing, it is obliged to hang around the airport waiting for a berthing slot – don't we know?)

But all this was not an imperial vision. The Empire isn't mentioned in the story. It was a supra-national vision. It was 'globalisation' before its time. The vision was influenced without a doubt by Kipling's early acquaintance with the ships, the railways, the bridges and the first magical wirelesses of Empire, but the imperial planners got the wrong end of the stick, I fear, if they really did take it as the inspiration of their All-Red Airship routes from the Mother Country to her far-flung possessions.

Certainly by the time he wrote "With the Night Mail" Kipling's view of Empire had lost all jingoism, because the Empire itself had long before showed signs of going wrong. I was around to see the end of the British Empire that I was evoking, and I was able to close my books with a symbolical threnody, as Churchill's coffin was taken upriver from St Paul's Cathedral, the dock cranes themselves bowing in sad salute. Kipling never saw the end – in fact when he himself died the British Empire occupied more territory than ever before – "wider still and wider", as A.C. Benson had said in a poem my old grandad, I am told, came to particularly dislike. But Kipling saw the end coming, without a doubt, and worse still perhaps he began to lose his faith and pride in the imperial idea. At the very moment of the Victorian climax, very soon after "The Song of the Cities", he wrote his magnificent "Recessional". At a time when he was one of the most famous men on earth, and the universally accepted Laureate of Empire, he cast a solemn chill upon the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations by warning the imperial celebrants against the sin of hubris: "For frantic boast and foolish word – Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!"

Only a year or two later the Boer War happened, and shattered many an imperial illusion – not just about the morality of Empire, but about its efficiency. Nobody was more disillusioned than Rudyard Kipling to see the regiments he had so loved and admired humiliated by an army of farmers – the colonels and subalterns he had idealised now transformed in his eyes into 'flannelled fools at the wicket and muddy oafs at the goal'. And then came the first world war, into which Kipling threw all his talents and energies and prejudices, but in which, like my poor grandfather, he lost his only son. I could end my book about the

Empire in actual elegy, because the Empire had died: he could only write elegiacally, sometimes bitterly, because it was still lingering on in sadness.

None of his stories, to my mind, is more bitter, with a streak of the cruelty that had perhaps remained from those years at Westward Ho!, than the masterpiece called "Mary Postgate" in which a very ordinary English spinster finds her womanhood fulfilled not in love or creation, but in deliberately allowing a wounded German airman to die untended. And no story is more moving than "The Gardener", about a 'mother's' mystical visit to her 'son's' grave among the battlefields of France, where it is tended, so it seems, by the supreme gardener of them all. These were the kind of Kipling stories that my grandfather so admired, seeing in them I suppose a transcendental fulfilment in Kipling that the imperial subject had not cherished, but had if anything stifled – or perhaps he was just converted, one bereaved father by another, by that heart-rending poem "My Boy Jack".

It was half lucky, I think, and half a shame, that Kipling died when he did. It was a shame, because he did not live to see that the British Empire he had himself done so much to create – if only in the world's minds, and in the minds of its own activists – he never lived to see that at least it did not in the event go out with a whimper, but with an epic bang. If the British Empire should live a thousand years, Churchill said, men would still think that 1940 was its finest hour. And so I think it was, a noble last assembly of its pride and energy in a just and eventually victorious cause, which enabled me to conclude my own books in a spirit of resigned satisfaction.

On the other hand perhaps Kipling was lucky not to live to see the condition of his beloved country, with or without an empire, at the start of the next century. After the Boer War he wrote a lyric imagining the sensations of a British soldier returning home – a return to a homeland that seemed much pokier and pettier that it had ever seemed from the distant frontiers – and which doubtless seemed to Kipling himself less heroic than it had before his brave young subalterns turned out to be flannelled fools. The poem struck a spirit, I think, of disillusioned and defensive defiance – a spirit which many English people probably feel today, as they whistle through the dark of 2001. Here's its refrain:

If England was what England seems,
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!

Or was she? Perhaps she had only been putty and paint all the time. Perhaps it was all a dream.

THIS QUARTER 70 YEARS AGO

On 2 July 1931, Kipling was in France and guest of honour at the annual banquet of the "France Grande Bretagne Association". The event received its fullest report in the *Morning Post* the next day. [If you wish to know more, *Journal* No. 19, September 1931 may be purchased from Michael Smith – see page 68.]

This *Journal,* which includes a reproduction of Reginald Cleaver's illustration "The incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney", has two full assessments of Kipling as a writer. They are "Kipling and America" by Rear Admiral Chandler, and "Kipling and India" by Professor Rushbrook Williams. A rewarding discussion follows upon the second, and is one in which prominent contributions are made by G. C. Beresford (M'Turk of *Stalky & Co)* and B. M. Bazley – elected, 70 years ago, Honorary Editor of the *Kipling Journal.*

The *Journal* also notes that the July 1931 Southeby's sale included *Echoes* [1884] and *Bungalow Ballads* [1885] in their original wrappers. These were catalogued at £280 and £32 respectively. Also a typewritten but autographed letter of Kipling to a Mr Brown for £2 and a first edition of *Letters of Marque* for £6 5s.

However, readers will find "Sussex Dialect Words", compiled by Mr DeLancy Ferguson, of Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., of abiding interest. This is a glossary of words and phrases used in Kipling's writings. Here are some to mull over:

> Farabout, fisk, flog out, flyte, frowten, gaffer, galliwopse, ghyll, gor-bellied, gub, heat-shake, huggle, hurly-bulloo, inter-common, justabout, keckle, lither, mowch, muck-grubber, naun, next-above-fool, odd-gates, pavisand, pharisees, pig-pound, poke-hole, pompion, porture, rakle, roundel, rummel, sally (as in "alders an' sallies"), scutchel up, sinnification, slubber, and spang.

The answers are in the Journal [September 1931] but not the answer to who wrote the lines quoted by Professor Williams in his talk "Kipling and India". If you know, please write to the Editor. Here are those 'Kiplingsque' lines:

> Remember the mess that is made
> Of the work that is done by the man in the sun
> By the man who sits in the shade.

ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 2001

The Kipling Society's Annual Luncheon, on 2 May 2001, was once again successfully held at the Royal Over-Seas League, London. The Guest of Honour was the writer Mr Adam Nicolson. The occasion was much enjoyed by members and guests, and the attendance, of some 90 included the following:

Mr M.R. Aidin; Mrs L.A. Ayers; Lt-Col R.C. Ayers; Mr R.E. Ayrton; Mr C. Ball; Mr J.A. Barker; Mrs H. Barton; Mrs G.J. Bolt; Mr B.J. Bolt; Mrs Diane Bonny; Major Keith Bonny; Mrs E.H. Brock, Dr M.G. Brock; Mr D.H.V. Brogan; Mr E. Brooker; Professor P.W. Campbell; Field-Marshal Sir John Chapple; Lady Chapple; Mr D.A. Clare; Mrs J Clayton; Mr S.J. Clayton; Mrs Z. Cohn-Lieber; Mrs P. Commin; Mr A.J. Commin; Mrs S. Couchman; Mr M.H. Couchman; Mr C.J. Driver; Mr J.M. Ducker; Mr Michael Egan; Mr Norman Entract; Sir George Engle; Lady Engle, Mr R.R. Feilden; Pierre Gauchet; Lt-Col C.R.D. Gray; Mr P.G.S. Hall; Miss A.G. Harcombe; Miss J. Hett; Mrs A. Hopkinson; Mr J.M. Huntington-Whiteley; Mrs Elizabeth Inglis; Mr Tony Inglis; Mr Dan Jacobson; Mr D.G.S. Jameson; Mrs Jane Keskar; Mr S.D.J. Keskar; Mr W.H.B. Key; Mrs C.A. Key; Mrs J.M. Lewins; Dr J.D. Lewins; Mrs L.A.F. Lewis; Mr P.H.T. Lewis; Miss Barbara Luke; Lt-Col C.H.T. MacFetridge; Mrs K.J. Marsh; Mr E.H. Marsh; Mr J. Nicoll; Mr Adam Nicolson; Mr F.E. Noah; Dr Patrick Noronha; Ms H. Owen; Mr D. Page; Mr Robert Pettigrew; Mr G.C.G. Philo; Mrs E.A. Plowden; Mr J.F.C. Plowden; Mrs R.P. Plowden; Brigadier R.B.C. Plowden; Mr John Radcliffe; Mrs T. Schreiber; Revd. Prebendary John Slater; Mr John Slater; Mrs A.J. Smith; Mr J.W.M Smith; Mrs G.M. Sooke; Mrs Prudence Turner; Mrs E.F. Vyvyan; Maj-Gen C.G.C. Vyvyan; Mrs F.M. Wade; Mr S.O. Wade; Mr G.L. Wallace; Ms J. Wallwork-Wright; Mrs Jo Webb; Mr G.H. Webb; Sir Colin St John Wilson; Mrs Hélène Wilson; Maj A.J. Young.

Apologies had been received from: Mr R.A. Bissolotti; Mr & Mrs J.L. Morgan; Mrs Alison Pettigrew; Mr David Vermont; and Sir Colin & Lady Imray.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

My name is George Engle. As Chairman of the Society's Council I welcome you all to this year's Annual Luncheon – especially those who, like Pierre Gauchet from France, have travelled a long way to be with us.

I am delighted to welcome our Guest Speaker, Mr Adam Nicolson, about whom I shall have more to say later. We seem to have an outstanding military turnout today – a Field Marshal, a Major General, a Brigadier, several Lt. Colonels and Majors – and even a Secretary who once served as a subaltern in the Indian Cavalry. So, as a former subaltern in the Gunners myself, I extend a particular welcome to Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, Major General C.G.C. Vyvyan and Lt-Col "Duggie" Gray – who at the age of 91 is the President of the Indian Cavalry Officers Association.

We are also pleased to have with us Mr Michael Egan, the distinguished printer of our *Journal,* and a staunch and generous friend of the Society. I would like also to pay tribute, although they are unable to be with us, to Sir Colin and Lady Imray, who have become members of the Society, and to assure them that having them on board makes us feel more at home here than ever.

Finally, I would like to welcome all Members of the Society and their guests, and to wish you all *bon appetit.*

GRACE, BY JANE KESKAR

This prayer from *Kim* is in memory of Canon Coldwells, who died recently.

> My brother kneels, so saith Kabir,
> To stone and brass in heathen wise,
> But in my brother's voice I hear
> My own unanswered agonies.
> His God is as his fates assign,
> His prayer is all the world's – and mine.

For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.'

THE CHAIRMAN, ON THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY

Before I introduce our speaker, I would like to mention one or two matters of special interest that have occurred in the past twelve months. Something like a game of musical chairs has gone on among the Honorary Executive Officers. It began last July, when Michael Smith resigned as Secretary for compelling family reasons, and was succeeded by Sharad Keskar, who had just completed his year as Meetings Secretary – an office to which Jeffery Lewins was elected in his place. Then, at the end of last year, George Webb, having edited the Journal for 20 magnificent years, was forced by illness to retire as Editor, and was succeeded by the ubiquitous Sharad Keskar who, until the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, will be heroically acting as both Secretary and Editor – in which Pooh Bah-like conjunction he is being ably assisted by his wife Jane, who we hope will be elected to the office of Secretary at the A.G.M. With any luck the music will then

stop, and there will be no more empty chairs for a while. However, Dr Michael Brock, who has been our distinguished and greatly respected President for the past 13 years, has recently decided that it will soon be time for him to step down – thus creating in prospect yet another empty chair – so that today may be the last occasion on which he will be among us as our President.

A NOTE ON THE GUEST OF HONOUR

[This is an expanded version of the Chairman's introduction. — *Ed.]*

Mr Adam Nicolson, was born in 1957 and grew up at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent. He was educated at Eton and Magdalene College, Cambridge, and is the author of many books on landscape, architecture and the environment. *Frontiers,* describing a journey through the eastern borderlands of Europe, won the 1985 Somerset Maugham Prize; and *Wetland,* on life in the Somerset Levels, won the British Topography Prize the following year. *Restoration,* about the fire and rebuilding at Windsor Castle, was Runner-up in the 1998 British Book Awards Book of the Year; and *Perch Hill,* published in 1999, is an account of life in his Sussex farm. He is now writing a history and natural history of the three small uninhabited islands he owns in the Hebrides, while also researching for a book on the translators of the King James Bible, entitled *God's Secretaries.* Adam Nicolson is married with five children, has 2 dogs, 10 ducks, 60 sheep and 11 Sussex cows with their calves, all of which live and play on their pastures overlooking the River Dudwell, where the woods, as Kipling said, "know everything and say nothing." Living within a mile of Bateman's, it is not surprising that he became interested in his former neighbours, the Kiplings; and it is he who wrote the National Trust's excellent guide-book to Bateman's. April 2001 saw the publication of *The Hated Wife,* his short biographical essay on Carrie Kipling, marking yet another excursion by him into the world of the Kipling family.

TEXT OF MR ADAM NICOLSON'S ADDRESS

My only claim to be addressing you today is not as a scholar or any kind of critic, but as something else: a neighbour. For the last eight years I have lived on a small farm in the Sussex Weald which is about a mile across the fields from Bateman's. My farm, which is called Perch Hill, is very nearly but not quite mentioned in *Puck of Pook's*

Hill. Most of the residents of the rural parish of Burwash claim that their particular hillside is Pook's Hill and so do I. I have it from the mouth of Puck himself. One day by the mill-leat down in the valley, Puck gestures to Dan and Una (and incidentally I always see in that fictional name for Elsie a sad echo of the absence of Josephine, Una, the one girl, the only girl left):

> He pointed to the bare, fern-covered slope of Pook's Hill that runs up from the far side of the mill-stream to a dark wood. Beyond that wood, the ground rises and rises for five hundred feet till, at last you climb out on the bare top of Beacon Hill, to look out over the Pevensey Levels and the Channel and half the naked South Downs.

If you take a straight line from the meadow in the valley to the top of Beacon Hill, now crowned by Brightling Needle, it runs through my farm. It remains a wonderful piece of England – the rich wooded enclosures of the Weald, the huge extent of the Downs to the south; and what Tennyson called "Green Sussex, fading into blue", Kipling improved on those lines in the poem called Sussex. He is on the Downs:

> And, through the gaps revealed,
> Belt upon belt, the wooded, dim,
> Blue goodness of the Weald.

It is not smart country. The very opposite. I once sat next to a woman at lunch who came from the immensely smarter realm of West Sussex where one near-ducal estate succeeds another and where the landscape is full of open grandeur. "Oh yes," she said, "near Burwash. Slum Sussex."

But there was something critically important I think about this Wealden landscape to the Kiplings. It is crucially not grand open country. Its shadowed woodiness, and all those dim, hidden riches, a landscape based on clay, all give rise to a sense of deep immobility and rootedness. Puck says at one point that his hill is "one of my oldest hills in Old England". I don't think you would get top marks in a geography O level if you wrote that sentence in an essay on the landforms of south-east England – and its conventional meaninglessness is part of its charm – but it does mean something in what could be called a psychological landscape. This is a place of no great extent. Its core places are small, hidden, detailed, private, rich, and dark, but what comes with that is a sense of enormous depth, of lives soaked into the clay, and of all those numinous riches which would later emerge in "The Way Through the Woods". That poem for me is quite literally a

haunting poem in that I have never, since reading it, been able to walk through the woods which separate and connect my farm with the fields around Bateman's, particularly at dusk when it is set, that marginal time of day, without feeling that elision between the here and now and the all-present past, the living and the dead in a quiet, calm and undramatic way, as if all the barriers were down.

But there is as ever with Kipling a paradox here. There is in Kipling what Angus Wilson called "a largeness of spirit". Largeness is obviously there in many other Kipling landscapes, in the beauty of the then-uninvaded Himalayas, in the multiplicity of life and the heroic scale of the Grand Trunk Road, in the exquisite long horizons and silence of the Vermont woods and distant mountains, in the kind of global grasp which the mind of the discharged English irregular who in "Chant-Pagan" boasts that he has "watched 'arf a world/ 'Eave up all shiny with dew."

So what is the largeness in Kipling – that wonderful sense of extent, of the entire world being his domain, drawn to England and particularly to the tight-knit, secretive, enclosed landscape of the Sussex Weald-for? The English irregular asks all the difficult questions:

> 'Ow can I ever take on
> With awful old England again,
> An' 'ouses both sides of the street,
> And 'edges two sides of the lane,
> And the parson an' gentry between,
> An' touchin' my 'at when we meet –
> Me that 'ave been what I've been?

It is extraordinary how often in Kipling's work you can hear one part of his consciousness interrogating or sparring with or joking with another. The irregular decides to head out again to the place

> Where there's neither a road nor a tree –
> But only my Maker an' me,

but as he writes, deeply sympathetic to this, Kipling is burrowing into the most heavily wooded and most enclosed landscape in England.

It is part of the doubleness of the man, both reticent and engaged, both intensely and volubly social and oddly removed. The whole long conversation between Kim and the Lama in that book can be seen, I think, as a play within Kipling's own mind. Both of those figures are to some extent Kipling: the wily, witty, naughty, clever, curious, playful, charming boy amazed at the world's multiplicity and richness, but at

the same time feeling marginal to it, not part of any establishment, living on his wits, is Kipling; and the wise, disengaged, reticent, silent, withdrawn Buddhist, witnessing the human comedy as a tragic repetition of trapped lives, is Kipling too. An old soldier proudly describes the life and careers of his three sons to the lama. "And they likewise," he says, "bound upon the Wheel, go forth from life to life – from despair to despair, hot, uneasy, snatching."

Anyone who thinks of Kipling as some kind of conventional Tory imperialist needs to be reminded of passages like that. This is Kipling in deep sympathetic identification with a pair of strange, mumbling, thieving, duplicitous beggars; a boy who is kicked away from the back door of white bungalows by kitchen porters; a holy man who would now, I think, be considered merely weird. Both of them figures, who under a zero tolerance policy, would long since have been swept from any British street. Multiplicity, a deep and fascinated interest in hidden corners, an overwhelming sense of the presence of "the other" in daily life: these are all qualities which would thrive at Bateman's and for which Bateman's was ideally suited.

I was amazed to find, when I first started to read about Kipling, that he had come to Bateman's, in some ways, on the run from the trippers at Rottingdean and from the ghost of Josephine, who continued to haunt every green shade in the garden of the house where she had played before the family had taken its fateful trip to the United States. It became clear to me that the Kiplings were drawn to Bateman's and the Weald precisely because of the secrecy and depth which that particular landscape provides.

When I came to live in what I now think of as Kipling's world and Kipling's valley, I discovered some strange parallels with my own life. I was not, I am sorry to say, a world-famous genius at the time but I was exactly Kipling's age, thirty-six; and also, for various reasons, feeling that the world was hostile and difficult; that what was needed was "a good and peaceable place" in which to lick my wounds. Like the Kiplings, my wife and I had looked all over the south of England for somewhere that felt right. Only when Sarah my wife found our disintegrating and neglected farm for sale, deep down a lane overshadowed with hazels and chestnuts on either side – it was exactly this time of year, with wood anemones under the trees and lady's tresses by the hedges – did we think that we had come to the right place. Like Bateman's the house was far from ideal, dark, inherently uncomfortable, not quite right, but the place around it, the interfolded woods and fields, the sense always of another hidden corner around the corner, that was perfect. Depth and an ability to hide here was what drew us to it and what appealed to the Kiplings when they found their

house down "a rabbit hole of a lane." The experience and the promise is something like Alice disappearing down the rabbit hole.

My farm on Willingford Lane appears in the Puck story "Weland's Sword":

> [Puck] jerked his head westward, where the valley narrows between wooded hills and steep hop-fields .
> "Why, that's Willingford Bridge," said Una, "We go there for walks often. There's a kingfisher there."
> "It was Weland's Ford then, dear. A road led down to it from the Beacon on top of the hill – a shocking bad road it was – and all the hill side was thick, thick oak-forest, with deer in it [. . .]"

I remember the moment I first read that. I had come to live by pure chance deep in the most secret part of Kipling's English landscape, which was still thick with oaks, where deer still wandered though the woods and where there are still kingfishers on the streams. Part by part, in detail, I rediscovered this private world. The theatre by the mill-leat where Puck first met the children; the weir on the river; the mossy remains of Hobden's cottage by the old forge, the bog wood, the places where as Kipling says in the most spine-tingling of phrases "wind prowling through woods sounds like things going to happen." And, above all, those marvellous descriptions of the river running in its deeply shaded and buried trench of a bed: The trees closing overhead made long tunnels through which the sunshine worked in blobs and patches. Down in the tunnels were bars of sands and gravel, old roots and trunks covered with moss or painted red by the irony water; clumps of fern and thirsty shy flowers who could not live away from moisture and shade.

I could take you to that precise spot this afternoon and every single aspect of Kipling's description would be today exactly as he described it a hundred years ago. Hardly anyone goes to these places now, nor did they then. The secrecy remains intact. It felt, strange as this might seem, as if in walking through and knowing these secret places, as secret and consoling for me as they had been for him, I had somehow opened the door to a hidden part of Kipling's existence. As though I had come in at the back of the theatre. There was no public face here. It was a world in which the children were admitted, where the childish side to Kipling's adult self was allowed to play and roam, but in which, for example, his wife never plays a part. Her domain is the house and, increasingly, the agricultural management of the farm. These other woody, dark, streamy, numinous places, where it seems perfectly natural for a Puck to emerge from the shadows are not part of Carrie's much more prosaic and ordinary world.

It may be that the way in which you first encounter a writer shapes the way in which you view them for ever. It was coming into the end of Kipling first. If you can say that his career follows a path essentially from brilliance to depth, from outer to inner, then I had stumbled into the later, private landscape. In *Kim,* the two exist side by side. They walk side by side down the Grand Trunk Road.

> Now let us walk, muttered the lama, and to the click of his rosary they walked in silence mile upon mile. The lama as usual was deep in meditation, but Kim's bright eyes were open wide. This broad, smiling river of life, he considered, was a vast improvement on the cramped and crowded Lahore streets....

Those are the two sides of Kipling, in perfect balance. At Bateman's, to which the Kiplings went the year after *Kim* was published, that balance changed a little. Kipling moved away from Kim and towards the lama. You can see it again and again in the increasing secrecy, removal from the world, the loathing of the press and biographers as the higher cannibals, the ever-increasing buffer of land which they bought around the house (increasing from 33 acres when they bought it to over 300 by Kipling's death), even in the famous limerick written by Kipling for Elsie:

> There was a young person of Bateman's
> Who was guarded in most of her statements
> When asked: "Where's your pa?"
> She said: "Out in his car",
> Whereas he was really in Bateman's

and in entries like this from Carrie's diary for February 1905 when they had just bought the neighbouring Dudwell mill and farm from their neighbour:

> Paid Scrimgeour £7126 for Dudwell. [A huge amount of money at a time when 200 acres of prime fenland arable could be bought for just over £1000.] Far more than we can afford but of so great an importance to the safety of Bateman's we cannot afford not to.

The safety of Bateman's is a significant phrase. What does it mean? That Bateman's is under threat from nearby development? Or that the sense of safety it provides for the Kiplings would be threatened by development? Perhaps both. The safety of Bateman's from development created the sense of safety at Bateman's which both of them valued so highly.

I think it is important to distinguish, though, between several aspects of this. It is not as though Bateman's was an empty, silent fortress from which the world as a whole was excluded. One only has to look at the visitors book to see what a stream of people came through the place. One after another of the Kipling-Baldwin-Burne-Jones-Poynter-Macdonald network comes to stay or to tea or to lunch. Kipling's own male friends, Rider Haggard, his agent A. P. Watt, H. A. Gwynne, the Tory journalist, Frank Doubleday, Max Aitken, many of the leading imperial figures from all over the world and many children. Even as late as 1933, with both the Kiplings chronically ill, they had 140 people to lunch or tea. And for them all Kipling no doubt dazzled, amused and entertained.

The privacy of Bateman's was not an anti-sociability. It was on a completely different level from that and is different for each of the Kiplings. For Carrie, and I will come on to Carrie in a moment, it was, increasingly, I think a kind of misanthropy, a distrust of the world and of people, an assumption that the life of her family would be better insulated from others.

For Kipling himself, it goes deeper. There is the famous passage from *Something of Myself* describing the sad and poignant scene in the Southsea cellar:

> When my father sent me a Robinson Crusoe, I set up business alone as a trader with savages in a mildewy basement room. My apparatus was a coconut shell strung on a red cord, a tin trunk, and a piece of packing case which kept off any other world. If the bit of board fell, I had to begin the magic all over again. I have learned since from children who play much alone that this rule of "beginning again in a pretended game" is not uncommon. The magic, you see, lies in a ring or fence that you take refuge in.

You can see how all of this might apply to Bateman's itself, with Carrie as the fearsome gatekeeper, her key dangling from her waist, as in Philip Burne-Jones's portrait. But it seems perfectly clear to me that even within Bateman's itself and, I would maintain, within their marriage, Kipling would withdraw into a deeper, inner, lama-like sanctuary, away not only from the world but from his wife.

The dreadful experience at the heart of his childhood, where all the brilliant coloured existence that Kim loved was taken from him and replaced with the meanness and cruelty of the House of Desolation, taught him the consolations of withdrawal. The untrustworthiness of human nature, the unreliability of those who say they love you, the threat of anarchic pain behind even the most secure-seeming institutions and arrangements: these were the attitudes that were to

shape the man. Kipling was profoundly self-knowing about this. "When young lips," he wrote at the end of his life, "have drunk deep of the bitter nature of Hate, Suspicion, and Despair, all the Love in the world will not wholly take away that knowledge."

Again and again in the Puck stories, which are Kipling's ecstatic and grateful response to the landscape in which he had come to live, you come across this power of the secret place, the place which is enriched because it is secret, the theatre by the mill-leat where Puck first appears, the rat-ridden attic of the mill, the woods themselves "which know everything and say nothing" and of course the trench of the river. That, as Kipling describes in "Young Men at the Manor,"

> was one of the children's most secret hunting grounds, and their particular friend, old Hobden the hedger, had shown them how to use it. Except for the click of a rod hitting a low willow, or a switch and tussle among the young ash-leaves as a line hung up for a minute, nobody in the hot pasture could have guessed what game was going on among the trouts below the banks.

This, of course, is both a real place, where I often go with my children on a hot summer's day, and a central part of Kipling's imaginative landscape of withdrawal. You remove yourself from the business of the real world in order to find the essence and vitality of something richer. The heart of Bateman's is not the house and garden, and all its organised appurtenances and staff (so many staff!) but in the richer secrecies of the landscape around it.

And so where does poor Carrie fit into this? I think she had no access to this other world. It was not part of her mental equipment to enter it, either to play, in the way that Kipling could, strolling so effortlessly into the imaginative world of children, or in any deeper sense. She was the administrator of his life and as such I think in many ways he left her behind. She was left to run the house, Kipling's own business affairs, their investments, the estate, the practicalities of staff and children.

Carrie was seen by most people not as herself but as the wife of a great man. And most of the people who came into contact with her thought she was horrible, including most of Kipling's biographers. Of all of them, I think Angus Wilson was most acute and sympathetic. Biographers of great men, he says, and particularly of writers and artists, tend to be jealous of their subjects' wives. The wives are there all the time, they have all the access in the world, but they understand nothing. Unlike the biographers, of course, who are never there but understand everything. And that is true of the way spouse after spouse has been treated: Nora Joyce, Frieda Lawrence, even Leonard Woolf

and perhaps both Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes. No biographer ever thinks a spouse is sufficiently good for their subject.

Angus Wilson said something else about Carrie: she is the sort of wife that boyish men often end up with. Was it Aldous Huxley who said that if the *Iliad* wasn't written by Homer, it must have been written by someone else of the same name? If Kipling hadn't married Caroline Balestier, he would have married someone else of the same nature: strong, controlling, reliable and loyal. He was clearly drawn to that sort of woman. She would create the space in which he could work and be at ease. She would carry many of the burdens of life and allow him a kind of independence from them. One of the saddest ironies of Carrie's life is that as the devoted gatekeeper and patroller of the boundaries, she seemed to belong more to the world outside those gates than the one she guaranteed for her husband and the children within them.

Of course, the terrible sequence of catastrophes in their private life, a series of tombstones falling on them, shaped the people they became. Carrie I think may have gone a little mad with the strain. She certainly loses touch with a sense of common humanity. She cannot understand other people. Everyone is to blame but herself; none more than the servants. They were the cause of almost everything that went wrong. It was an attitude that both stemmed from and deepened her loneliness.

One can only look on this, I think, with a sense of appalled pity. Carrie's atrocious behaviour stems from an essentially unbalanced nature (and all the Balestiers were slightly mad in their different ways) exposed to repeated and devastating strain. One cannot blame but pity. Poor Carrie! I think she led a most lonely life. And so for this year only, I wonder if I can make a slight alteration to the traditional toast. I would ask you to stand up and raise your glasses not only to the extraordinary and unfading genius of Rudyard Kipling but to his long-suffering, sad, angry and tragic wife, Carrie. The Kiplings!

VOTE OF THANKS BY THE SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT DR MICHAEL BROCK

I know that everyone will wish me to express our thanks to Mr Nicolson for this stimulating and splendid address. He has one great qualification for giving the address: he is a writer. We have Rudyard Kipling's view about that profession:

> This is the doom of the Makers – their Daemon lives in their pen.
> If he be absent or sleeping, they are even as other men.
> But if he be utterly present, and they swerve not from his behest,
> The word that he gives shall continue, whether in earnest or jest.

The point could not have been put more clearly: the writer, when his (or her) Daemon is present, and is obeyed, differs from "other men". He sees and expresses – perhaps unconsciously – what we may miss: he travels down a path which only other writers know. May I illustrate this by pointing to a similarity between Kipling's experience and that of Mr Nicolson. In youth both have depicted the contemporary scene on a wide canvas: both have been much concerned with the future. By the age of thirty Kipling had written about life in three continents. Mr Nicolson's first book *Frontiers* (1985), which won him the Somerset Maugham prize, is of the same kind. It gives an account of a journey through the 'new', post-1945 countries of Eastern Europe, from the Arctic Circle to the Aegean. It was almost uncannily prophetic. Mr Nicolson was concerned with life under Communist regimes which were clearly unstable. In one of his closing pages he quotes a remark in a Romanian café (in Timisoara) to the effect that Ceausescu was probably 'going mad'. Less than five years later the avalanche of change started in that very place.

Since then Mr Nicolson, like Kipling, has turned from the wider contemporary scene to writing about the cultural tradition in its local manifestations – whether in the unfashionable part of Sussex or in the Hebrides. Here are two verses which enshrine this later development. The first, by Kipling in his middle period, will be known to all here:

> Take of English earth as much
> As either hand may rightly clutch.
> In the taking of it breathe
> Prayer for all who lie beneath.

The second, from the same era, may not be quite so well known to every member of the Society:

> Breath of the English shires,
> Hummock and kame and mead,
> Tang of the reeking byres,
> Land of the English breed, –
> A man and his land make a man and his creed.

That encapsulates, not merely a general, but a family tradition. It is by a member of the Nicolson writing dynasty – Mr Nicolson's grand-mother, Victoria Sackville-West, Harold Nicolson's wife. So we have been privileged today to listen to a member of the Writers' free-masonry, and for that we are most grateful.

LETTER FROM RK TO LADY BETTY HARRIS

This, till now, unseen letter was written from Bateman's, Kipling's House in Burwash, Sussex, and dated 22 October 1925

[Michael Smith writes: We are indebted to one of our new members, Mrs Dorothea Berwick, for permission to publish a letter which Kipling wrote to her mother, Lady Elizabeth Harris. They were fellow guests at a house-party and at dinner the young Lady Betty was seated next to Rudyard Kipling. She found him a charming companion and they talked of her possible forthcoming motor tour through his beloved France. Soon after she arrived home she was delighted to receive a letter outlining a route for her, accompanied by his 1925 copy *Guide Michelin* annotated on the final page with the daily mileages between the suggested overnight stops. Although most of the letter was typed, the final paragraph (italicised) is in his own hand.]

Dear Lady Betty,

I've been thinking over the possibilities of a two-seater, going South, in France.

The best ports are Southampton – Havre, because one lands early, with the day in front of one, and the fifty-mile run from Havre to Rouen gives time for testing and repacking on the first day. Also one can buy the little aluminium butter-pots etc. for one's own picnic-teas in Rouen, which is <u>most</u> important. (Hotel de la Poste, good but horrid expensive.)

Rouen to Les Andelys (where there is medioeval-looking hotel, Grand Cerf) and then on to Chartres is a full day if you take it easy, and you'll have time to see what Chartres Cathedral means. Then straight down to Tours (138 kms) and, if the weather is bad, lunch there and push on to Poitiers (about 66 miles). The whole 135 miles from Chartres to Poitiers ought to be quite easy.

With luck, Poitiers ought to have a fairish climate even in February, and your next day's run (70 miles) to Angoulême ought to bring you to the first sign of spring.

At Angoulême you are, as you chose, on the straight run for Bordeaux (which city I don't recommend) or Archachon which, even in early spring, is worth looking at. Thence you can get down through the pines of the Landes (a beautiful run on a bad road) to Bayonne, Biarritz, and all sorts of adorable little places tucked in under the Spanish mountains.

But I don't want to bore you: so I am sending you my own Michelin Guide for this year. (You'll get to know Michelin very well, I hope.) It has some notes at the end which may help (p.836). It's the kind of book which one shoves into a corner of the car, whatever else one leaves out, and it gets wet and purple and dogseared.

The next you care to think about a tour, show it to someone who says he or she knows the roads, and they will help you.

All the distances are there, and one can follow their hotel recommendations. Personally, I often find that the small hotels are better than the big ones shown with four or five humps in Michelin.

I do hope that sometime or another, you may be led to try touring in France and believe me that I wish you all possible goodfortune and happiness.

Very sincerely yours

Rudyard Kipling [Text and spellings – *sic.* – *Ed]*

NOTES

	K.m.
Havre – Rouen (H. de la Poste)	50
R. – les Andelys (Grand Cerf.)	40
les Andelys – Chartres (via Mantes) Chartres (Hotel Gnd Monarque)	130
Chartres – Tours. (Univers)	138.
Tours – Poitiers (bad hotels)	102.
Poitiers – Angoulême. (Hotel de France)	109.
Angoulême – Bordeaux. [Hotel de Bordeaux]	118.
Bordeaux – Biarritz.	180

mem. Most Bordeaux hotels make you eat at the restaurants. Chateau Rouge & Chapon Fin are the best. Cuisine is very good.

State of roads [illegible] [illegible] the south to the east.

The Riviera run is utterly uninteresting and the Rhone Valley road generally knocks out one's springs or scrapes off the silencer.

All the Corniches grow more and more dangerous, on account of the idiots who drive there.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Hated Wife: Carrie Kipling 1862-1939 by Adam Nicolson, published in 2001 by Short Books, London (ISBN 0 571 20835 5). 96 pages including 3 illustrations and select bibliography. Paperback, £4.99.

by GEORGE WEBB

Rudyard Kipling's wife, Carrie, has never had a very good press, and although her husband's biographers have generally given her credit for devotion and competence in the protective management of his way of life during the forty-four years of their marriage, the image of her that comes over has been notably lacking in charm.

Moreover, although on the surface their marriage has generally seemed to be close, and underpinned by mutual love and loyalty (it was described in glowingly appreciative terms by Kipling himself, in a letter cited by Judith Flanders on page 22 of last June's *Journal),* some signs that it was not always a comfortable relationship have long been apparent.

One was a remarkable, if Delphic, sentence in chapter V of *Something of Myself* where Kipling simply says: "My life made me grossly dependent on Clubs for my spiritual comfort." Another was the exclusion of his wife from any mention in "Merrow Down" *(Just So Stories),* that poignant lament for his beloved Josephine, which ends:

> For far, oh, very far behind,
> So far she cannot call to him,
> Comes Tegumai alone to find
> The daughter that was all to him!

Yet another was the extremely frank testimony of his other daughter Elsie, in the Epilogue which she contributed in 1955 to Carrington's official biography of her father. She said: "My mother introduced into everything she did, and even permeated the life of her family with, a sense of strain and worry amounting sometimes to hysteria. Her possessive and rather jealous nature [. . .] made our lives very difficult [and] kept us apprehensively on the alert for possible storms, [and] sometimes reacted adversely on my father and exhausted him, but his [. . .] utter loyalty to her prevented his ever questioning this bondage, and they were seldom apart."

Elsie went on to say that her mother had great qualities, a keen mind and "never-failing courage"; also that the way she "tried to shelter [Kipling] from the world" had indeed helped him to work with fewer distractions, but it had also increasingly restricted him, and he badly missed the stimulus of good talk and interesting company.

Though Carrie's significance as a subject derives mainly from the lasting importance of the man she married, her role as his wife is of more than marginal interest. Any study of Kipling's life will inevitably focus on three great shocks that he endured – the humiliating expulsion from his Eden in Vermont in 1896; the untimely death of Josephine in 1899; and the loss of John, killed in action in 1915 – as calamities that permanently scarred him. By each of these three events Carrie, whose toughness should not be mistaken for insensitivity, was as deeply affected as her husband.

In the first indeed (the Brattleboro *imbroglio),* she may have recognised, albeit tacitly, that the squalid feud with her volatile and mishandled brother Beatty, resulting in the precipitate abandonment of the dearly loved dream house, 'Naulakha', was as much her fault as anyone's. In the second (Josephine's death from pneumonia in New York), if it is true that Carrie had overruled her mother-in-law, who was pressing Kipling not to take ship across the Atlantic with the children in mid-winter, one can imagine how responsible Carrie felt for the crushing disaster that ensued.

She was intelligent, with a formidably strong character, and she became closely involved with most aspects of her husband's career – though not so much with the colonial statesmen and the generals and admirals who sought him out when he had become an imperial icon of the first rank. (For these, she tended to be an obstacle to surmount on their way to see him.) She was also articulate, as is clear from some of her letters which survive, and from her diary. This, though the original was destroyed by Elsie, exists in summary form, as edited long ago by Charles Carrington for the Kipling Society; it is a valuable record of her family's movements and activities, besides providing revealing glimpses of her own sometimes anguished state of mind.

Carrie deserved a biography of her own, and in this short but in places controversial or provocative book Adam Nicolson has supplied one. Anybody interested in Kipling's life – the subject of three recent biographies in the last three years – should find *The Hated Wife* rewarding with its unfamiliar, Carrie-centred, perspectives. The early

passages, outlining the family background of the Balestiers, and describing the literary circle in the London of 1890-91 that Carrie and her brother Wolcott (and of course Kipling himself) cultivated, are particularly interesting.

But Nicolson is a fluent writer, who presents his entire theme – his subject's wretched decline from early buoyancy to eventual demoralisation – in moving terms. Her vulnerability and pessimism are vividly described, and one must admit that her husband does not emerge from the story with full credit. Kipling sometimes found her moods hard to cope with, and perhaps failed to see that her tiresome bossiness and self-pity (and, at Bateman's, her obsession with the 'servant problem') might be symptoms of profounder malaise. It is ironic that his wife, who tried so hard to shield him from the intrusive world, could not shield him from herself.

Her dedication to him is well brought out, but some of Nicolson's more emphatic assertions, such as the book's abrupt closing sentence – "In 1939 Carrie Kipling died, mourned by no one." – will strike some readers as overstated. When Nicolson spoke as Guest of Honour at our recent Annual Luncheon, his respect for Kipling as a *writer* was more evident that any affection for the Kiplings' extended family as *people.*

In that connection, unless I am mistaken, whenever in this book Nicolson employs unkindly blunt language in disparagement of someone's physical or mental attributes – especially when those descriptive terms are hardly called for by the immediate context – one may reasonably infer his distaste for that individual. There are a good many instances here, starting with a slight throw-away remark on page 9 that Kipling's teeth "were rotten in his twenties". Carrie gets the full treatment, perhaps not unfairly since the book is about her. In her thirties her "torso and shoulders have become massive, leg-of-mutton sleeves ballooning around them"; and in middle-age her body "had turned loose and heavy; her jowls dropped," and "her breast were allowed to slump down her chest, a lumpen landslip carried in front of her." As for George Bambridge (who had served in the Irish Guards with John Kipling and after the war married Elsie), he was a "huge, fat, sybaritic and stupid man", whose "paunch bulged both above and below the waistband of his trousers."

Though the tone of such passages is brutal – calling to mind Kipling's notorious view of biography as 'Higher Cannibalism' – Nicolson is always very readable. And though it might be a pity if a

biographer seems to lack full sympathy with the chosen subject, this has not prevented Nicolson from producing a compelling story, presented not as an exercise in pietism but as a human tragedy, beginning with his title, *The Hated Wife.*

That title is of course ambiguous, begging the question: Hated by whom? I do not think Nicolson or his publishers can have meant it to imply, *tout court,* that Kipling hated his wife: there is far too much evidence to the contrary. No, to judge from the publishers' meaningless blurb on the cover (that Carrie was "one of the most loathed women of her generation") the inference is rather that whatever people may have thought of Kipling, they disliked his wife.

Carrie was not attractive, but she had a lot to endure, and she fitted Aristotle's definition of a tragic figure – someone with great abilities, vitiated by a fatal flaw. Her flaw was a chronic inability to distinguish between managing and domineering. Nicolson's little book vividly shows the price she paid.

A Circle of Sisters by Judith Flanders, published in September 2001 by Viking, London (ISBN 0-670-88673-4), with illustrations and 392 pages including a select bibliography, notes and an index. Hardback, £17.99.

by SHARAD KESKAR

In the high noon of the its Empire a near Spartan mentality took hold of Britain, and what men were expected to achieve in far-flung lands, women were expected, often encouraged, to achieve on domestic fronts. This climate, with its attendant values, enabled women from the lower-middle class to furnish nurseries of power and influence, and provide the backbone of Victorian Britain. In one such nursery, four women of modest beginnings and strong Christian upbringing, were to be exemplars. This 'ring of belles' – for these intelligent and active women were, in those Pre-Raphaelite times, fashionably beautiful – found themselves recorded on canvas and soon meeting the great and the good in the arenas of art and politics. They were the Macdonald sisters: Alice, Georgiana, Agnes and Louisa; who were, respectively, the mother of Rudyard Kipling; the wife of the celebrated Pre-Raphaelite artist, Sir Edward Burne-Jones; the mother of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin; and the wife of Sir Edward Poynter, President of the Royal Academy. Georgiana was the model for the

beggar maid in *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid,* after she and her sisters had been immortalised in an earlier painting: *King's Daughters.* [She caught the eye of Dante Gabriel Rossetti too, although it seemed to rest a little longer on Jane Morris.]

In the circumstances of their modest beginnings, the 'sisters' could so easily have fallen prey to a Chekhovian languor. But, the second half of the 19th Century, in Britain, was an age of reform. An age imbued with a sense of mission, industry, and responsibility. An age when a high moral stance had to be maintained, even if it meant keeping up appearances and employing a fair measure of hypocrisy. An age when the only relief for an unhappy partner in marriage was in friendships that were often genuinely platonic. The Victorians adopted the 'sound mind in a sound body' dictum with typical gusto. Waste was sinful; and good housekeeping, a virtue. From this romantic period of British history, Judith Flanders, cleverly constructs a true story, not just of a family but of the age. The breadth and details of the vision it portrays could only be captured, like a Pre-Raphaelite painting, by a painstaking artist. She has made a thorough study of her subjects, and in doing so illuminated a circle of leading lights, the likes of which we are unlikely to see again. For this, and all the reasons that put a heavy demand on a writer's attempt to paint on such a large canvas and succeed, I found the book altogether of sustaining interest.

Some readers have expressed some disappointment about the manner and style of the language. But that is a matter of taste and expectations. I found a charm and a refreshing directness in the writing. It is feminine, gutsy and down to earth, which in every way fits the subjects of this unusual biography. We have a woman writing about women. It is also modern in the sense that it avoids the 'purple haze' of blind adoration, while yet being traditional in its witty observations – at no time, mean or cruelly destructive. We are prying into a domestic front and a nurturing that brought forth the men of their century. Clearly Judith Flanders loves "the sisters" and their families with an affection that leaves the reader in pleasant humour. She sees the intricacies of family life; and the intimacies of husbands and wives, and mothers, sons and daughters, with generous understanding.

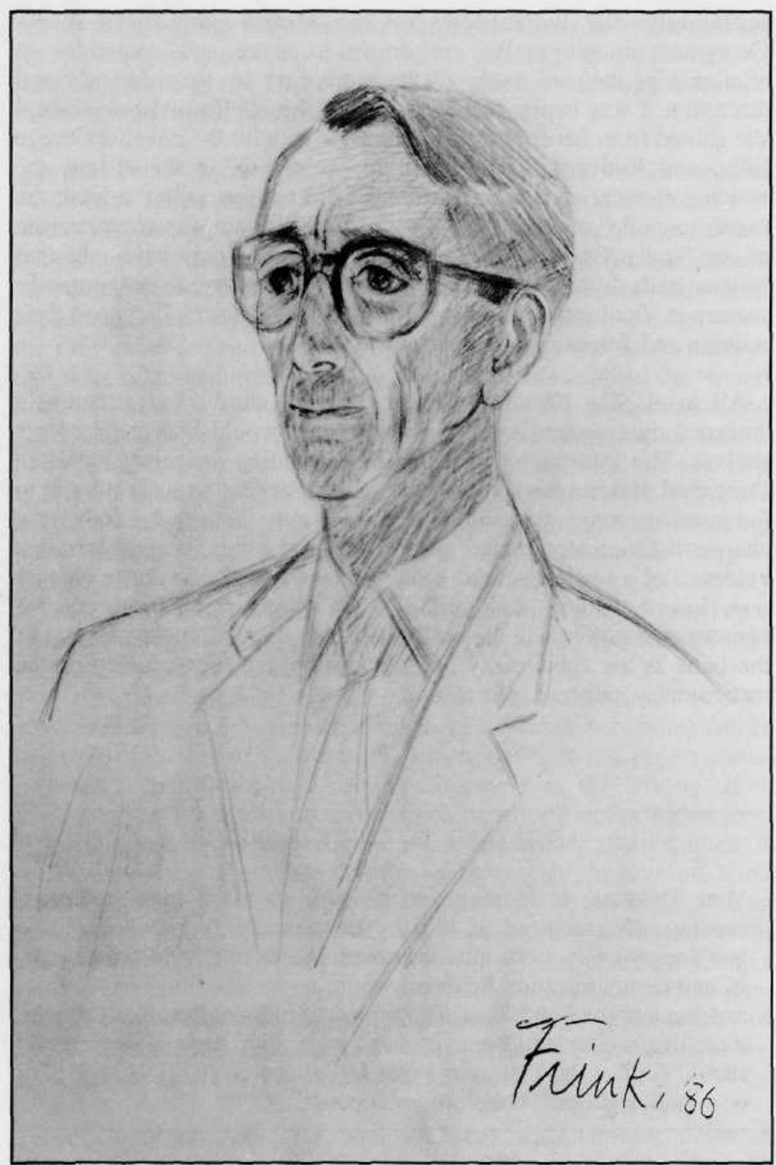
The Circle of Sisters is well planned; with copious notes, a comprehensive index, and a sizeable list of illustrations. Some of the photographs were new to me, and I found it satisfying to be able to see the actual photographs of the subjects whose pen portraits I had read; and from them to see real evidence of the intricate sadness that

revealingly cast its shadows on the Morris-Janey-Burne-Jones-Georgiana situations. We are drawn to share and empathise in relationships that are made all the more easy by their delicacy and discretion. I was happy for Georgiana in the intellectual refreshment she gained from her friendships with Morris, with the novelist George Eliot, and Rudyard Kipling; and for being, of all the sisters, the bonding element of familial harmony. I did not see, in her at least, the "swift to chide" conduct, which her sister Edie said was characteristic of her family. Or have I missed something? She may have inherited certain traits from her 'preacher' father, but bossy, even pompous, women in Victorian families were the acceptable norm. They took their religion and domestic duties seriously.

All in all *The Circle of Sisters,* with its sturdy and attractively designed dust jacket, is the kind of book I would like to grace my shelves. The information it offers is fascinating and encyclopaedic. Once read, it is not the sort of book to set aside, but a source to refer to for years to come. But before I close, I must add, that I found the chapter titles creatively and purposively intriguing. They show clear evidence of a well-organised writer's planning. My favourite chapter was "Leaving Home 1884 – 1888". I am sure readers will not reach a consensus, but they will certainly agree that the outstanding feature of the book is the spontaneity of its narration and the accuracy of the meticulously gathered information.

ASSISTANT TO THE TREASURER

Your Treasurer is looking for someone to assist him in some routine tasks required of him by the Society. A knowledge of bookkeeping is not essential; however; access to a word-processor is, and communication by email would be an advantage as would residence in the South East. The time commitment is unlikely to be more than a couple of hours a week on average. Anyone interested should contact the Treasurer either by 'phone on (020) 7834 9132 or e-mail: rudolph@bissolotti.u-net.com



DR Michael Brock
By Dame Elisabeth Frink DBE, RA (1930-1993)

MICHAEL BROCK

by SHARAD KESKAR

There comes a moment in our lives when you meet someone you wish you had known all your life. Such a moment came my way, and, as it was not so long ago, I planned to hold on to it, imagining long and fruitful conversations. But life, it seems, aims to defeat our purposes: not only does Michael Brock live in Oxford, he has also, after thirteen years as President of the Kipling Society, decided to step down.

However, our short acquaintance does not prevent me penning this portrait. Admiration is qualification enough. But as Michael has been written about by people better qualified than me to do so, I shall, like Mr Gradgrind, confine myself to facts: facts of his career. Fortunately, they are many, and speak eloquently of the man who can hold a listener in thrall.

Michael George Brock was born on 9 March 1920 to Sir Laurence Brock C.B. From an early age he has had a brilliant academic career; first at Wellington College, where he won the Prince Consort History Prize, and several others. His studies at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, which began in 1938, were interrupted by the Second World War. After his Officer Training Corps, (Oxford University OTC), Michael joined the Middlesex Regiment as a Commissioned Officer. He served as Adjutant, successively, to three regiments before being released to return to University in 1945, picking up where he left off, and continuing the pattern of winning awards and distinctions in several subjects, chiefly in History and Philosophy. Thus, a First Class Honours in Modern History in 1948 should surprise no one.

In 1965 Michael was made a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1983, and in 1986, Fellow of the Society for Research into Higher Education. Between 1987 and 1995 he was Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. In 1981 he was honoured with the C.B.E., and between 1977 and 1988 he became an Honorary Fellow in three Oxford Colleges, and, was made an Honorary D.Litt. by the University of Exeter. After the many important positions held by him in Corpus Christi and Wolfson Colleges – among these, office as Dean of Corpus Christi and as Treasurer and Chairman of its Association, and as Vice-President of both Colleges – he was Warden of Nuffield College from 1978 – 1988.

His long years of association with the University of Oxford were to see him in almost every sphere of academic and administrative activity, much of which involved tutoring, lecturing, and examining. He served

on the University's Council and on a number of the central committees, and had a particular responsibility for its buildings, new and old. For a long time he was on the Editorial Board of the *Oxford Review of Education,* having been, for years before, Curator and Chairman of the Curators of the Examination Schools of the University. However, Michael's educational activities did not stop at Oxford University, or indeed at the Education Committee of Oxford City Council. The University of Buckingham, Reading, London and Exeter – to say nothing of Williams College, Massachusetts, and the Universities of Copenhagen, Jerusalem, and South Carolina – are indebted to him in one way or another. In 1985 his lecture on George Dangerfield's "Strange Death of Liberal England" was published; and in the same year he lectured at the Universities of Minnesota, Berkeley, Stanford, and at California State University, Northridge. But 1986 is a landmark for the Kipling Society. It brought Michael and the Society together. That year he had given the Stephen Graham Lecture to the Royal Society of Literature on Rudyard Kipling's political ideas. (This was published in the March 1988 issue of the *Kipling Journal,* under the title "Outside His Art: Rudyard Kipling in Politics".) And in 1987, he had addressed the Kipling Society at its Annual Luncheon, emphasising the need to recognise that while Kipling's political ideas had to be short-lived, it was time we turned our recognition and appreciation more firmly towards his literary achievements.

Between September 1988 and August 1993, Dr Brock was Warden of St George's House, Windsor Castle. (It gives me particular pleasure to note this, because here, at last, is a point of intersection. In April 1988 I was at St George's House for a long weekend course, chaired by Canon Derek Stanesby.) But it is far more interesting for me to say that, during this time, November 1988 to be exact, Dr Michael Brock was elected President of the Kipling Society. Now he is eighty-one, and although he has stepped down from the Presidentship, the thought that he will either cease to be a participating member of the Society or go into quiet retirement is an alien one to those who know him. In April 1977 he had taken on the mammoth task of editing Volumes 6 and 7 (1800 to 1914) of the *History of the University of Oxford* – latterly with Mark Curthoys. In July 2001, the *Times Literary Supplement* described Volume 7 as "a major intellectual project" and, for a *sursum corda,* added: "Glory to Michael Brock and Mark Curthoys."

Since November 2000, Dr Brock and his wife Eleanor have resumed editing a selection from *Margot Asquith's Diaries: 1908 – December 1916* – the years of Asquith's Premiership. This, begun under a long standing agreement with Oxford University Press, was delayed by Michael Brock's work on the University's History, just completed. The

Diaries have been given to the Bodleian Library by Margot Asquith's only grandchild, Mrs Priscilla Hodgson. Eleanor and Michael Brock feel they must get a move on with the project at last. Well, as I keep saying, the word retirement is not in his vocabulary.

This is a far from complete record of Dr Brock's activities, but I hope it will serve as an adequate tribute to our outgoing President.

[As may be noted on page 4 of this *Journal,* Sir George Engle KCB., is our new President. – *Ed.]*

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to:

Miss Dorothea Berwick, *(Rolvenden, Kent)*

Lt-Col G.T.A. Douglas DFC, *(Lewes, East Sussex)*

Mr F.L. Dunkin Wedd, *(Tonbridge, Kent)*

Revd. Hugh C. Hellicar, *(Brighton, East Sussex)*

Dr Rosa Henderson, *(Hertford, Hertfordshire)*

Miss J.C. Hett, *(London, SW3)*

Ms Kim Klein, *(Washington DC, U.S.A.)*

Dr Patrick Noronha, *(South Ruislip, Middlesex)*

Dr Brian Payne, *(Norwich, Norfolk)*

Mr Harry Travis, *(London, NW8)*

Listed by Roger Ayers, Deputy Chairman and Membership Secretary, Kipling Society, 295 Castle Road, Salisbury, SP1 3SB.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From George Webb, Weavers, Danes Hill, Woking.

Dear Sir,

I would like to convey my grateful thanks to all your readers who so kindly responded to the appeal for contributions to a present to mark my retirement from editing the *Journal.* Their unstinted generosity initially paid for a case of excellent champagne, and the latest volume of Pinney's edition of Kipling's *Letters.* Both were presented to me by the Chairman last February, and warmly acknowledged by me in your March issue.

And that was not all. I was later touched – and staggered – by the noble scale of the whole sum collected, as manifested in a final presentation by the Chairman at our Annual General Meeting in July. I was there given an expensive luxury which I was known to covet, a CD-ROM embodying the entire twenty-volume edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary.* Accompanying it was a cheque for a large residual sum, which I am still enjoyably considering how to spend – perhaps on a visit to Paris with my wife who (as all who know her hardly need to be told) gave me indispensable help with each of the 84 issues of the *Journal* that I edited, and deserves a large share of the plaudits lately heaped on me.

One member enquired, in a tone of friendly irony, why I needed another dictionary, since I "never seemed at a loss for a word". I hope my reply will reassure any who doubt the utility of this tremendous gift. The gigantic *O.E.D.* is no ordinary dictionary, but is constructed on a scale that utterly dwarfs any competitor. It claims to define no fewer than half a million words, and illustrates their evolving usage with more than two million quoted samples. It is an unparallelled resource, of endless interest to anyone afflicted (as I am) with a chronic and insatiable curiosity about words – their origin, implication and development over time. The prolonged effort and perfectionist standards that went into the *O.E.D.* had collated a great stock of references which, like any other modest amateur practitioner of the English language, I often needed to consult, but did not own – since I could not afford to buy its twenty volumes for myself, and was unconvinced of the practical convenience of an offered option, namely a version squeezed into fewer volumes by dint of being printed on thinnest India paper, in a font so small that the text could be decrypted with the aid of a magnifying-glass specially supplied to that end by the publishers.

Now at last, thanks to your readers' generosity, I have become the proud possessor of an *O.E.D.* and its vast store of fascinating data made readily legible by science. With its great bulk miraculously distilled into two disks, it represents, in Marlowe's fine phrase, "infinite riches in a little room" – whence, at my mouse's peremptory behest, a *djinn* will instantly summon, display and explain any of the countless words and

phrases that constitute the accepted ingredients of the English language.

What Kipling would have made of the electronic revolution now transforming our world we can only conjecture. Though in some regards a traditionalist, he respected (and enjoyed describing) technical accomplishment, and would hardly have taken a Luddite line in face of inexorable change in his own specialism of word-management (nowadays a part of 'Information Technology'). Indeed in one respect – his literary style, and what he chose to write about – the young Kipling had himself been no slouch as an innovator.

As for his use of words, no other writer of English has deployed a more extensive vocabulary or achieved such seemingly effortless control of the 'loom' of the language – the subtle skill of weaving skeins of raw words into a finished fabric of prose or verse. He was modest about this skill – which at its best he attributed not to himself (for he was only a 'telegraph wire') but to his inspirational *Daemon.* He was also conscious of his supreme good fortune in having for his literary medium the limitless and malleable resources of the English language. He paid a glowing tribute to the unsurpassed beauty and diversity of English in a late poem, "The Birthright", written in florid seventeenth-century style and published in *Debits and Credits* as verse accompaniment to "The Propagation of Knowledge". It deserves to be printed in all its 26 densely compacted lines, to carry in full its extended metaphor, likening our language to an array of gorgeous jewels which we, its inheritors, too complacently take for granted. But a few selected lines will give the flavour –

> We have such wealth as Rome at her most pride
> Had not or (having) scattered not so wide [. . .]
> Rubies of every heat, where through we scan
> The fiercer and more fiery heart of man [. . .]
> Emerald that with the uplifted billow vies,
> And Sapphires evening remembered skies [. . .]
> Thereafter, in all manners worked and set,
> Jade, coral, amber, crystal, ivories, jet [. . .]
> Which things, through timeless arrogance of use,
> We neither guard nor garner, but abuse;
> So that our scholars – nay, our children – fling
> In sport or jest treasure to arm a King [. . .]

The man who could write in those terms would have agreed with my choice of English dictionary. As for me, before writing this letter I should have consulted my new *O.E.D.,* to help me find, if possible, adequate words to express my profound gratitude to our members for their great indulgence on my retirement.

Yours faithfully
GEORGE WEBB

From J.W. Michael Smith, Tree Cottage, 2 BrownleafRoad, Brighton, BN2 6LB

Dear Sir,
I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Council of the Kipling Society for the great honour it has bestowed on me in electing me Vice-President. It is something I shall treasure for the rest of my life because since becoming associated with the Society I have found both tremendous interest in Kipling's genius and real friendship with so many charming folk who share a common admiration for him. What the Society offers is truly remarkable for it helps to clarify many of the obscurities to be found within his canon. It is all the more remarkable because so many different people are willing to share their expertise and their time with all of us. The *Journal* and the *Index* which so quickly leads us to the gems of almost three quarters of a century found within; the exceptional quality of the electronic service offered to an increasing audience; and the vibrant meetings in London, in Cambridge and in Sussex, must make the Kipling Society one of the best literary societies in the world. In spite of Kipling's initial reservations about a Society founded to honour him and to promote his works, I am certain that he would have approved of all that has been done to keep alight the flame which he lit: the only sorrow is, that one lifetime is insufficient to open all the boxes of delight he has put before us.

The dedication, energy and enterprise of the Chairman and the Executive Council Members deserve the whole hearted admiration of all those they continue to serve.

Yours sincerely
MICHAEL SMITH

DRAVOT AND CARNEHAN

From Professor Frank de Cam, Louisiana State University, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,
I was delighted to read E.M. Beekman's well-argued and substantive essay, "The Whirligig of Empire: Kipling's 'The Man Who Would Be King'" [September 2000, pages 31-52]. Professor Beekman offers many insights and is right in noting that the story "is not as innocent an entertainment as one would like." And to view the story as "a remarkably accurate parable of European expansionism in Asia" is illuminating. However, it is possible to read the story not as the "critique of imperialism" he outlines (one of a "downward spiral" from the "romance" of "colonialism" to the overreaching of "imperialism") but as a commentary on what would have been seen by some of

Kipling's contemporaries as mistakes and shortcomings in imperial administration. Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan may be adventurers, but Carnehan is concerned from the beginning of the story with administration – he and the narrator discuss in the railway carriage the misadministration of India – and the very idea of a 'contrack' implies an orderly, legalistic approach to empire rather than a wildly romantic one. When they become kings, they set about doing the orderly, legalistic things that were done by district officers: setting up a Frontier guard, taking a census, establishing land claims and boundaries. Nor have they ever been entirely self-sufficient. They needed the maps and books produced by an ordered imperial administration, with its survey teams and cartographers. From the outset they rely on a bureaucracy.

But it is through violations of rules of good imperial administration that disaster comes about for the 'kings' of Kafiristan. That the British brought established law and the impartial administration of it to India was an important tenet of the mythology of Empire – though to what extent this was also historical reality is debatable. Yet Dravot scraps the "contrack," their only piece of written legislation, in effect signalling abandonment of the law. He sets about making querulous personal demands on his people by insisting on a wife and in doing so also violates what would have been an important social rule for the British in India in Kipling's day: a social prohibition of intermarriage with 'natives'. Billy Fish calls this "not proper", and official India of the 1880s would have agreed. Dravot also, though he claims that he does not want to, violates the imperial practice of trying not to interfere with local customs – a practice, which in British India was, of course, selectively applied but nonetheless often adhered to so as to avoid problems with local populations.

The consequences of Dravot's failure are called "our FiftySeven" by Carnehan, and the Indian Mutiny has perhaps as much significance in the story as Rajah Brooke's conquest of Borneo, which Professor Beekman helpfully details. Though the causes of the rebellion of 1857-58 were complex, popular conceptions of the event put the immediate cause as the attempt to force Indian soldiers to bite the new cartridge which was being introduced to them, supposedly greased with either beef or pork fat; one defiling for Hindus, the other for Muslims. Thus, mutiny resulted from interfering with local cultural perceptions and with customs of forbidden foods. Dravot makes a similar blunder in matters having to do with sexuality and local conceptions of the divine. The British Empire was able to regain control of India after the Mutiny, in part because there was an ordered, highly organised imperial system in place upon which to fall back. But Dravot and Carnehan cannot similarly rebound, having failed to set up a proper imperial

administration, and can only retreat to complete destruction.

And though Carnehan makes it back to India, after terrible trials, he ultimately perishes when he violates a mundane but key social rule of British India by going out in the sun with no head-covering. The cult of the *topi,* or pith-helmet, was well established by the 1880s, and simply, it was disastrous for any European who made the mistake of venturing into the noonday sun without it. Carnehan's final mistake is emblematic of a string of errors that imperial administrators of Kipling's day would have known at least to avoid. The 'kings', though splendidly venturesome, are not quite self-sufficient 'colonial' adventurers, nor adept 'imperial' administrators.

None of this invalidates Professor Beekman's arguments but they could complicate them somewhat. Whatever Kipling's own snobbery or lack of it, the story may reflect a contemporary vision of the official classes that those who are not proper gentlemen (as, Dravot and Carnehan are not, in spite of their pretensions and ambitions) cannot properly run an empire; or that the very pitfalls of actually running an empire, into which the 'kings' fall, further emphasise Kipling's pessimism and belief in the inevitable demise of imperial glories.

Yours sincerely
FRANK DE CARO

CARRIE KIPLING

From Dr RS. Jackson, 140 Above Town, Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 9RH

Dear Sir,
I have read Adam Nicolson's *The Hated Wife* and was somewhat saddened by the impression of Carrie which the book conveys. It ends: "In 1939 Carrie Kipling died, mourned by no one." – a verdict which I doubt could be passed on Adolf Hitler.

On re-reading the book, which certainly provokes my sympathy for one who had a sad and difficult life, I cannot find evidence for anyone to hate her, though her younger brother is a possibility. Perhaps the *Letters of Kipling,* so ably edited by Professor Thomas Pinney, might have provided pointers but he is not mentioned in the bibliography.

I trust that many people will read Mr Nicolson's interesting book but sadly the title and final line must inevitably leave a lasting impression. From my extensive reading around Kipling, I feel this impression will be to a degree harsh and unfair.

Yours sincerely
P.S. JACKSON

From Mr Stuart Currell, 5 David Grove, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 3AF

Dear Sir,
My mother, who had died two years ago aged 92, as a child lived in Burwash with her family, and she would tell me how Rudyard Kipling would come to the house to chat to her father, my grandfather. He would spend some time there, and my mother claimed he came to get away from his wife, as much as anything! There was great excitement when Kipling once brought his weekend guest H.G. Wells to see them all. My grandfather did decorating jobs at Bateman's for Kipling.

Yours sincerely
STUART CURRELL

SONG OF THE PILLOW FIGHT

From Professor Thomas Pinney, Claremont, California, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,
On a visit to the Library of Congress recently, I found this "song". It occurs in a letter from Trix [Mrs Alice Fleming, Rudyard Kipling's sister] to W.G.B. Maitland, who was then the Librarian of the Kipling Society.

"I have never forgotten a 'song' of his [RK's] because the first verse made a perfect chanted war song when pillow fights – all through the bungalow – were waged . . .

Oh Cousin Godfrey – as you stood (whack & flight)
  Beneath the apple tree (Take that!)
I think my heart went out to you . . . (Here it is!)
  And yours came back to me. (Bang)
Why did your presence grow to be ('Tisn't fair to duck behind a china cabinet!)
  A charm I grew to miss? ("I won't miss you now" – whack!)
Why did the world seem bright to me?
By reason of ... ("Oh Ruddy – not my best cushion please . . .")

The letter, in Trix's hand, is in the Colt Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The 'song' could be RK's.

Yours sincerely
TOM PINNEY

DAY AT BATEMAN'S – A REPORT

by JANE KESKAR

Thursday, 21 June 2001, was a fine day. One of the finest of the year; and Jeffery Lewin's well organised and relaxed timetable kept pace with the serenity of Bateman's on that perfect summer's day. He had asked some members to present readings on the suggested theme of "Travel", and Michael Smith began by reviewing Kipling's reaction to travel by 'horseless-carriage'. The vivid descriptions he read combined the ecstasies and the agonies of this novel means of transport. In Kipling's letters to relatives and friends, these automobiles, described as "lovely" of line and "elegant" of form, were the "nickel-plated frauds" which expired all over Sussex. In particular his letter to Filson Young, [April 1904] draws an evocative picture of how a drive turned England into a fairy museum in which all the exhibits – prehistoric to the present – became "alive and real". Michael Smith then followed with Kipling's magical descriptions of explorations through the downs to the contrasting landscapes of the inner Weald from "They". *[Traffics and Discoveries]* The view from the Downland crest: "the blue of the Channel turn through polished silver and dulled steel to dingy pewter" is, happily, unchangeable, although the rising sails on the anchored fishing fleet have passed into history.

From Sussex, Roger Ayers transported us to Cairo with its hints of the East that Kipling knew as a child in Bombay. Reading passages from "Egypt of the Magicians" [collected in *Letters of Travel* (1892-1913)] that compared modern Cairo unfavourably to parts of the old Arab City, where "the craftsmen and merchants sat on their shopboards, a rich mystery of darkness behind them. . . The city thrust more treasure upon me than I could carry away. It came out of dark alleyways on tawny camels loaded with pots; on pattering asses half buried under nets of cut clover; in the exquisitely modelled hands of little children scurrying home from the cookshop with the evening meal, chin pressed against the platters's edge and eyes round with responsibility above the pile; in the broken lights from jutting rooms overhead, where the women lie, chin between palms, looking out of windows not a foot from the floor; in every glimpse into every courtyard, where the men smoke by the tank [. . .] in the slap and slide of the heelless red-and-yellow slippers all around, and, above all, in the mixed delicious smells of frying butter, Mohammedan bread, kababs, leather, cooking-smoke, assafetida, peppers, and turmeric" Roger ended with Kipling's "Praised be Allah for the diversity of His creatures and for the Five Advantages of Travel and for the glories of the Cities of the Earth!"; and acknowledged the

help he had received from other members of the Society's mailbase in identiflying the five advantages of travel as those listed by the 13th Century Persian poet Sa'di in his "Gulistan" (The Rose Garden). These are "the freshness it bringeth to the heart, the seeing and hearing of marvellous things, the delight of beholding new cities, the meeting of unknown friends, the learning of high manners." Kipling's use of the phrase 'a diversity of creatures' predates his book of that title by four years.

The National Trust had prepared an excellent salad with cold meats followed by the most delectable apple pie; and as we sat down, Jeffery made a few announcements and explained to us the importance of not straying into parts of the woods and farms that were out of bounds due to the current "foot and mouth" crisis. He then eloquently and seamlessly slid into a recitation of "The Way Through the Woods".

As we took coffee at the tables outside, Edward Ayrton, the actor, gave an amusing rendition of " 'When 'Omer Smote 'is Bloomin' Lyre' ". This was followed by John Radcliffe's reading, from *Letters of Marque,* taking us East to Rajasthan with one of Kipling's pieces about his trip there in November 1887, just after he had been appointed to the *Pioneer.* Kipling visited the ancient city Chitor, (on the edge of the desert), climbed its famous 'Tower of Victory' and then descended to see the Hindu shrine of the Gau-Mukh. Here, he sensed an atmosphere of its evil associations with ancient bloodshed. "It seemed as though the descent had led the Englishman, firstly, two thousand years away from his own century, and secondly, into a trap. . ," In a panic he floundered back up the hill, shuddering.

Jane Keskar read from "My Sunday at Home" *[The Day's Work]* which, in contrast to the farcical conflict of the story, also contains superbly evocative descriptions of the English countryside: "And what a garden of Eden it was, this fatted, clipped, and washen land! A man could camp in any open field with more sense of home and security that the stateliest buildings of foreign cities could afford. And the joy was that it was all mine in-alienably *[sic]* – groomed hedgerow, spotless road, decent greystone cottage, serried spinney, tasselled copse, apple bellied hawthorn and well grown tree." And we were to spend a whole afternoon in this garden of Eden!

After this we split into two groups, one visiting the House and the other walking along the path, through high grasses and wild flowers, to the mill. Here we must pay tribute to Jan Wallwork-Wright's team of guides, who not only enthusiastically answered our questions, but also ensured that the day was such a success. Finally, before the end of the day, there were last readings, under the 'spreading' ash tree, where we began the day. George Engle read from Chapter V of "The City of

Dreadful Night" (*From Sea to Sea).* Kipling, very much the daring journalist describes a tour of the brothels of Calcutta on which he was taken by a European police officer. "Now you will understand", says the policeman kindly. . . "that these are not the sort of places to visit alone." "Who wants to? Of all the disgusting, inaccessible dens – Holy Cupid, what's this?" They see "a glare of light on a stair-head" they hear "a clink on innumerable bangles, a rustle of much fine gauze, and the Dainty Iniquity stands revealed, blazing – literally blazing – with jewellery from head to foot. Take one of the fairest miniatures that one of the Delhi painters draw, and multiply it by ten; throw in one of Angelica Kauffmann's best portraits, and add anything you can think of from Beckford or 'Lalla Rookh', and you will still fall short of the merits of that perfect face.

Sharad Keskar read "The Roman Centurion's Song" and Jeffery Lewins sang "For to Admire" from *The Scottish Student Song Book,* proving not only Jeffery's skill but also reminding us of Winston Churchill's description of Kipling as a "singer of songs".

NEWS AND NOTICES

A PLAQUE FOR RK

Michael Jefferson, member and regular correspondent on the Kipling mailbase, drew attention to an article in the Portsmouth *News* on 15 August 2001. According to it, English Heritage had set up a panel of local historians and enthusiasts, headed by TV presenter Lloyd Grossman, two years ago, to choose from a group of 23 worthies with local links who should be commemorated by a plaque. Of the seven chosen "Peter Sellers tops the list alongside literary great Rudyard Kipling. , ." A plaque is planned to be placed on the wall of Lorne Lodge, 5 Campbell Road, Southsea. It is a choice that is worthy of our support. Comments are invited by Daniel Bardsley at the *News:* daniel.bardsley@thenews.co.uk

LAHORE REVISITED

Dr M. Enamul Karim and his wife, who had last visited Lahore (Pakistan) in 1964, spent a week there last October. They found many changes. Lockwood Kipling's Mayo School of Arts now bears the name of the National School of Fine Arts. In 1885 Lockwood Kipling moved to Lahore, from Bombay, and became the School's first Principal, as well as Curator of the adjacent Lahore Museum. They were able to meet the present Principal, who is a woman. From her office they could see "Zam Zammah" the mighty canon, described in

Kim. Later they went on a round to see the students at work. Kipling's military cantonment still survives, as does the Anarkali bazaar.

CUL DE SAC

Earlier this year, Michael Smith (former Chairman, Secretary, and now Vice-President of the Kipling Society) told Sir George Engle (our new President) that he discovered, in E.F. Benson's autobiography, *Final Edition,* a reference to a story by Kipling. Benson, whose father was the first Principal of Wellington College and a former Archbishop of Canterbury, knew Kipling and Phil Burne-Jones. He recounts that "Phil furnished Kipling with the climax of one of his most notable stories, 'At the End of the Passage', in which a man died from the terror of some haunting presence." He goes on in some detail about the photographing of the dead man and the smashing of the (glass) negative. George Engle, whose article "Image from the Eyes of the Dead" *(KJ* March 2001) about this very story, believes that Phil Burne-Jones may have got the idea by reading Villiers story in the *Revue des Lettres et des Arts,* which could have been on his father's shelves; and that he gave Kipling a rather 'watered down' version of the story, as the horrific vision in *Claire Lenoir* is more powerful. George Engle also questions Benson's reference to the smashing of the glass negative. Your comments? Please!

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN-POLISH ASSOCIATION (AAPA)

Many members will know Michael Senter OBE, is Chairman of the English-Speaking Union's National Co-ordinating Committee in Sopot, Poland. Every year he kindly sends us an annual report of the activities of the AAPA, and this year marked its fifth anniversary. The Chairman of AAPA is Dr Enid Mayberry, Michael Senter's wife. Gifts of magazines and periodicals, which include the *Kipling Journal,* help to keep their Library in Sopot flourishing. Both Michael Senter and Enid Mayberry, attend our Society's meetings whenever they can, and are pleased to meet members.

"SOLDIER, SOLDIER"

Andrew McKeich, Managing Director of **Artworks Recorded Music,** has produced a CD entitled: **"Soldier, Soldier: – the Barrack-Room Ballads of Rudyard Kipling. (Artwork CD AW028).** Michael Halliwell (baritone) is accompanied, on the piano, by David Miller. Members can buy this lively recording of Kipling's ballads for only $25 (Australian dollars) including airmail postage. **Artworks** will accept Visa, Bankcard and Mastercard. Send your details and address by e-mail or fax to Artworks Recorded Music. Their e-mail address is: orders@artworksmusic.com or fax (02) 96455552. Alternatively you can write to Artworks and post an international money order or bank draft in Australian dollars. Their address is **Artworks Recorded Music, PO Box 115, Chester Hill, NSW 2162, Australia.**

ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY

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

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

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

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

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

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