The *Kipling Journal* is the quarterly magazine of the Kipling Society, a charity whose object is the advancement of public education by the promotion of the study and appreciation of the life and works of Rudyard Kipling. The Journal is open to submissions of any length between 500 and 5000 words from students, scholars, professional academics, and Kipling enthusiasts. All articles are peer reviewed.

The opinions expressed by contributors are their own, and do not necessarily correspond to those of the Editor or the Council of the Kipling Society.
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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF THE KIPLING SOCIETY

Wednesday 8 February 2017, At 5.30 for 6 pm in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League: Peter Hitchens and Alex Bubb debating ‘What kind of poet was Rudyard Kipling?’

Wednesday 12 April 2017, At 5.30 for 6 pm in the Mountbatten Room, Royal Over-Seas League: speaker to be arranged.

Wednesday 3 May 2017, at 12.30 for 1 pm in the Hall of India and Pakistan, Royal Over-Seas League: Annual Luncheon of the Kipling Society. Guest speaker: Lord Williams of Oystermouth, former Archbishop of Canterbury on ‘Rudyard Kipling and Dreams’.

Wednesday 12 July 2017, 4.30 pm in the Mountbatten Room Royal Over-Seas League: Kipling Society Annual General Meeting. 5.30 for 6 pm: speaker to be arranged.

December 2016

ALEX BUBB
(Meetings Secretary)
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EDITORIAL AND NEWS

This issue of the *Kipling Journal* on the theme ‘Kipling and Children’ begins, after reports and notices, with Christmas treats. Rudyard Kipling’s delightful illustrated replies to letters about the *Jungle Book* from two young boys in the USA (1893) and England (1895) were discovered by our Vice-President David Richards, who printed them privately and has now most kindly allowed us to reprint them here. There are enchanting photographs of a much older Kipling with the young son and daughter of his family friend Clare Sheridan in 1922, all three beaming, which their owner Lady Roche has generously allowed us to publish. The report of the John Slater ‘Writing with Kipling’ competition for primary schools is followed by two splendid prize-winning entries from children in Walthamstow and Colchester, both of which would delight the heart of Rudyard Kipling’s shade. If, as we hope, this competition for schools runs again in 2017, we shall be able to print further additions by children to the ‘Just So Stories’ in December 2017.

Professor U. C. Knoepflmacher has kindly allowed the *Kipling Journal* to reprint ‘Kipling’s Just-So Partner: The Dead Child as Collaborator and Muse’, first printed in the periodical *Children’s Literature*, 1997. This long essay represents an exception to rule that contributions are normally limited to 5000 words, so as to make this classic article available to Kipling Society members. Knoepflmacher’s beautifully written study, at once a textual history of the *Just-So Stories*’ composition, an acute, sympathetic analysis of the relationships between the implied child (or ghost) reader and the narrator/illustrator of the stories, and a study in the literature of mourning, will be read with pleasure and illumination by any lover of Kipling. Professor Judith Plotz in ‘Kipling and the Uses of Poetry’ skilfully discusses the relations between the poems of the ‘Puck’ books and the stories which they accompany, showing by close readings augmented by discussions of metres and their effects, how Kipling uses the poems to comment on the stories in different ways, sometimes ironic, sometimes elegiac. Both articles remind us in their different ways that although the subject ‘Kipling and Children’ is full of delights, it can be bitter-sweet.

I warmly thank all our contributors for their generosity which has made this a very special number of the *Kipling Journal*. I wish them and all our members, of whatever faith or persuasion, a Merry Christmas.
LOCKWOOD KIPLING AT THE V&A 2017
The Victoria and Albert Museum has collaborated with the Bard Graduate Center, New York, to present the first exhibition exploring the life and work of Lockwood Kipling (1837–1911), an artist, teacher, curator and influential figure in the Arts and Crafts movement. The exhibition will be at the V&A from January to April 2017. A special tour of the Lockwood Kipling Exhibition has been arranged for members of the Society on the morning of 25 February 2017. **To book for this tour, members will need to consult the flier** accompanying this issue. This Exhibition, which of course can also be visited during the V&A’s normal opening hours, is a ‘must-see’ for members of the Kipling Society.

READING KIPLING AT BATEMAN’S, SEPTEMBER 2016
On 25 September 2016, eight members of the Society spent two hours in the morning, and again in the afternoon, entertaining visitors to Bateman’s and each other by reading their favourite Kipling poems and extracts from his stories, punctuated by Kipling limericks read by Cdr Alastair Wilson. We are very grateful to the National Trust staff for their warm welcome to this successful event, which we hope will be repeated.

DEATHS
We are sad to report the death on 15 September of our former President Sir George Engle, whose obituary by our Chairman John Walker is on page 9. In July we lost our honorary life member Hildegard Coffin, of Robertsbridge in East Sussex, who had been a Volunteer Room Steward at Bateman’s for nearly forty years.

KIPLING LIBRARY ON TV
Members are alerted to the forthcoming BBC2 series ‘Michael Portillo’s Great British Railway Journeys’ featuring a visit to Haileybury School, including a tour of the ‘Kipling Room’ and an interview with our Librarian and Chairman John Walker.
‘KIPLING AND EUROPE’ IN BOLOGNA

By JANET MONTEFIORE

The University of Bologna, founded 1088 and therefore Europe’s oldest university, hosted a conference of Kipling scholars from Italy, France, Denmark, Russia, Japan, USA, New Zealand and the UK on 6–7 September 2016. We took part in enlightening, convivial discussions of Kipling’s relationship to Europe, including both his interest in European literature, culture and politics (far more wide-ranging than is commonly realized) and on responses to Kipling’s writings by French, Danish, Russian and German readers. We heard splendidly stimulating papers on Danish writers’ reactions to Kipling (positive), Russian Tsarist critics’ responses to Kipling (negative), Nazi appropriation of the Jungle Books, Indian soldiers’ responses to France in The Eyes of Asia (1918), Antonio Gramsci’s Marxist version of If—, Kipling’s role as propagandist in World War I (from our Vice-President David Richards), and the Frenchness of ‘The Bull That Thought’. There were keynote lectures from Professor Jan Montefiore on the connections which the ‘Puck’ books make between ‘Old England’ and France, Italy, Belgium, Scandinavia and Spain; from Professor Stephen Bann on Kipling, the Savile Club, and his French connection; from Dr Howard Booth on Kipling’s engagement with Italy and Italians in Kipling’s remarkable report on the Italian campaign The War in the Mountains (1917); and from Professor Harry Ricketts on the ways in which writers as diverse as Bertolt Brecht, Strindberg and Alain Fournier responded to Kipling’s poetry and fiction. A selection of the papers, edited by Dr Monica Turci, Director of the conference, and Jan Montefiore, will be published by the Kipling Journal as a special ‘Bologna Supplement’ in July 2017.
OBITUARY OF SIR GEORGE ENGLE

By JOHN WALKER, Chairman

In September, we learned with great sorrow of the death of Sir George Engle. Members will be anxious to record their memories and appreciation, but I would like first to offer both formal and personal detail, largely by courtesy of notes by Sharad Keskar and Alastair Wilson:

Sir George Engle, KCB QC, died peacefully on 15th September 2016, aged 90. In a long and distinguished career, we can see his importance to our Society, and early connections to Kipling himself. At Charterhouse, he was editor of the school magazine – and also head of school. His time at Christ Church, Oxford, as a Marjoribanks scholar, was interrupted by three years’ service with the Royal Artillery from 1945. Returning to Christ Church, he was awarded First Class Honours in Classical Moderations and Greats. A Cholmeley Scholarship took him to Lincoln’s Inn, and he was in practice at the Chancery Bar for four years, while also lecturing in philosophy, English literature, and some Latin at the Lycée Français. George’s move to the Parliamentary Counsel’s office in 1957 meant that he was responsible for drafting legislation. This was a skill from which the Society profited, when he oversaw the updating of our own laws and constitution.

As Chairman and later President of the Society, Sir George brought ‘large, sound counsel’, along with ready wit and painstaking attention to detail. My own most telling memory is of strolling to St James’s with him after a long meeting. I looked up at an overcast sky and ventured that the day’s Guardian had talked of nine thousand stars visible on a clear night. Kindly, but smilingly, our President pointed out that this figure was for the whole planet. From even the clearest spot in England, the figure would be much less than half that…He was, of course, right. How Kipling would have enjoyed talking to him!

SHARAD KESKAR, former Chairman and Kipling Journal Editor, adds: During his term as President of the Society, I worked closely with Sir George and benefited from his wide knowledge and clear thinking. Once, in a personal moment, he drew my attention to Tennyson’s poem “Crossing the Bar”. Sir George was a QC, and I feel that these lines from it are a fitting and fond farewell:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.
THE JOHN SLATER COMPETITION:
‘WRITING WITH KIPLING’

The late John Slater left a generous legacy to the Kipling Society to encourage the knowledge and appreciation of Rudyard Kipling’s writing among schoolchildren. The Slater legacy was first used to fund an essay competition among sixth form students, but this eventually proved incompatible with the demands of AS-Level syllabuses. Prompted by our then Chairman Mary Hamer, who pointed out that lovers of Kipling usually begin reading him as children, the Kipling Society decided to re-work the Competition as a project for primary schools, and a sub-committee was formed to re-launch the competition in collaboration with Year 5 teachers. Five primary schools and 116 children in Essex, Walthamstow and Northamptonshire took part. The Hamilton Trust, an educational charity (www.hamilton-trust.org.uk), generously supplied resources to support teachers in the project, in which over a three week period, the children read and discussed the *Just-So Stories* and wrote their own.

Promoting the work of Rudyard Kipling has always been the aim of the Kipling Society, but this writing competition for ten-year-olds is a new move, using Kipling’s stories to get children reading and writing for pleasure, and inviting them to join in with a famous writer, which they much enjoyed. ‘Having read several of the *Just So Stories*, children were so excited to hear that they would be able to choose their own animal to research and write about’, said Nathan Crane, deputy head of Prettygate Primary School in Colchester.

The competition was judged by Ros Asquith the *Observer* cartoonist. She awarded the First Prize to ‘*How the Baboon got its Bottom*’, by Ismael Guissous from Greenleaf Primary School in Walthamstow. ‘Extremely funny and inventive, wholly original’. The second prize went to ‘*How the Frill Necked Lizard got his Frill*’, by Seb Jenson, from North Primary School in Colchester, ‘brings Kipling up to date with chilled monkeys and space stations’. Both stories are printed here, retaining their original spellings.

A fuller account of the project is available in the ‘Kipling for Schools’ tab at www.kiplingsociety.co.uk, and the ten short-listed stories were put on display this summer at Bateman’s.
How the Baboon Got his Bottom

By Ismail Guissous, Greenleaf Primary School, Walthamstow

A long time ago, in the undiscovered tundra, there lived an absolutely ridiculous and totally impish creature that went by the name of Baboon. It lived at the summit of the not-very-high mountain where nobody ventured apart from the totally impish and overly selfish Baboon himself. Mostly because all the other animals where busy finding there on homes and creating habitats, as it was the first Monday of the world.

Each day the ludicrous Baboon would prank the hard working animals using all of his unique and efficient-for-pranking features. Sharp teeth to bite tails. Long tail for tickling hooves. Flexible limbs for climbing trees and dropping coconuts. And finally, his unmistakably favourite things: his darkish-brownish-greish-blackish fur, covering his whole body and not leaving a single bit out. Perfect for camouflaging in the dry and undiscovered tundra. He would prank: Rough Rhinos; Oriental Oxen; and Colabroate Cows.

“What will we do about this completely irritating and ultra burish Baboon”, asked the cow after a week of work and the first Friday of the world.

“When I told him to stop it he just bit my tail!”

“And when I told him to stop it he just tickled my hooves!” said the Oxen.

“And when I tried to reason with him he just climbed up a tree and dropped coconuts on my head” finished the rhino.

“Well, I bet we could prank him back”, suggested the oxx.

Suddenly, out of knowhere, Baboon jumped out of the shadows in an overly sneaky and superbly cheeky way, with his blackish-greyish, brownish-darkish fur disguising him as he ran up all the way to his den on the summit of the not-very-high mountain.

Following the rather irritating Baboon to his not-so-secret den, the rhino, oxx and cow found quite a dozen of banana peels on the bottom of the not-so-secret den, indicating that the Baboon had a unique craving for bananas.

As quickly as they could, the quadrupeds placed a pile of banana peels at the entrance to Baboon’s cave. Then they hid beside a shrubbery bush and waited. The now-very-foolish Baboon, lured by the smell of bananas, began to exit his den and then – “OOH OOH AAHH!” The Baboon found himself skidding down, down, down the not-very-high mountain with his now-hairless-bottom burning like it would when you
scrape your hand on the sun. Too embarrassed to ever show himself, and his base bottom, again the Baboon fled too the rainforest, where it could dance and prance with a burning backside without anyone to laugh at him.

Even now, when you set sight on a wild Baboon, it will be prancing and dancing and jumping and hiding just like the first Baboon in the world.

MORAL
The Moral of the story is to treat people like you want to be treated.

SECOND PRIZE

HOW THE FRILLED-NECK LIZARD GOT HIS FRILL
By Seb Jenson, North Primary School, Colchester

O my best beloved, this is the truly extraordinary tale about how the frilled-neck lizard got his frill that we can all see today!

Well, there was once a ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard, an old and wise dog, and not too forget, the chilled monkey! Each one of these peaceful, happy animals were taken on a one-way trip to Mars! Stumbling behind the NASA Experiment Helper, who had many years in training for working with aniamls, that was making his way up to the collosal, huge and grand spaceship! Happily, climbing the steps, the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard was chatting away to the Chilled Monkey. Who always found a space to chill, but the old, wise dog had absol-olutely no idea what was going on.

Hopping on to the space ship, the animals explored all there was to see, except for the old, wise dog who silently hid in the corner of the room.

“Wooahh, this is cool!” shouted the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard out loud! It was almost impossible to stop him from pressing all the buttons on the dashboard.

“Heheheh, this place is sweet!” exclaimed the Chilled Monkey, he was starting to get really sleepy due to the fluffiness of the chilled monkey’s space seat! Dog had completely opposite feelings about the place to the other animals. He was scared about what would happen on this so-called planet called Mars. Just then each of the three animals heard a booming countdown.

“Five…Four…Three…Two…One…”, the announcer screeched for all to hear. They shortly after heard a massive, ear-piercing blast. They
all hid in the corners of the colossal, huge and grand spaceship until they thought it was safe to come back into the middle of the spaceship. Many hours passed on the colossal, huge and grand spaceship when all of the animals were asleep.

Then the ship made a touchdown and all the animals were awakened from their sleep. “We’re here! We’re here! Open the doors!” pronounced the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard happily! So they all opened the door and all headed out into the vast world of Mars. Since Lizard was ’stremely enthusiastic about the trip, which he didn’t notice was a one-way trip only, he lead the way!

Amazingly, a wave of hungriness ran to his belly and the not-so-enthusiastic-now Lizard had forgot his pack lunch and started to moan. Then he ran over to the old, wise dog to see if he had some food.

“Sorry youngling, I have nothing on me”, answered the old, wise dog, who hoped he hadn’t hurt Lizard’s feelings, sitting there. So Lizard hopped over to monkey to see if he had any food on him at that moment.

“Hi there Monkey. Have you got any food to spare?” asked the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard as enthusiastically as usual. Unfortunately, the Chilled Monkey didn’t have any food either.

“Oh um, I’ve got nothing, but I reckon if you keep looking, you could find something to eat!” The Chilled Monkey replied politely. The ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard understood and trudged, off to find some food.

Out of no-where, Lizard found an almost dead flower, that shouldn’t really be eaten, and just ate it! He thought it was very tasty, and it sent to be the only thing around. Straight after he ate it, the flower got stuck in his neck, which apparently had all the nutrients for a flower to grow, and it stretched out and grew, and grew, and grew! until it was a massive frill sticking out. Lizard, who thought he had superpowers, headed back to the other animals to show them! They all doubted his super powers and laughed at him for ages.

Out-of-the-blue, a swarm of aliens, who had no idea why there was animals on the planet, raced and charged at the innocent animals. The ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard knew what to do, he stretched his neck as far as it would go to scare the oncoming swarm! Surprisingly, it worked and the swarm, which was so big it could fill wembely stadium 40 times, ran away! Wishing they never doubted the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard, the animals immediately apologised to him.

“Uhhmm, how, exactly do we get back home?” questioned Lizard, he was starting to feel homesick. Now, this was a really big problem. Right then, and just then the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard had a great idea! He saw a passing by comet and thought that the animals could hop on and fly back to Earth. So he told the others his greatly thought-of
plan. So jumping with joy, they all agreed and scurried to the side of the planet to the just-in-time passing-by comet.

“3…2…1...JUMP!” shouted the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard as enthusiastically as ever. The wise Dog, who was old, the Chilled Monkey, who was obviously chilled, all hopped onto the just-in-time passing-by comet. They sat there for a bit to wait for the absolute correct timing to jump off to earth.

Then the absolute correct timing to jump off to earth had came!

“Grab onto me, then jump”, demanded the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard, who didn’t want to miss the once-in-a-blue-moon chance to get back, so the animals did exactly what they told him. The wise, old Dog grabbed on first, and the Chilled Monkey grabbed on next. Once again for the second time, the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard stretched out his frill as big as he could. But this time, he used his frill as a parachute, so they could all land safely. Soaring through the air, the animals were in awe while they were looking at the vast landscape! They had never seen so much of Earth before! They landed in a sandy, rocky desert.

“Woohoo Yeaahh!” announced the ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard joyfully. Wise, old Dog had a dream of having a wonderful and caring owner... So he ran to a dog park and in minutes he was taken home by a happy, loving and joyful family that took full care of him. The chilled Monkey bounced back to the Amazon Rainforest to see his family and friends again. The ’stremely enthusiastic Lizard wandered around the desert, my best beloved, and found new friends and even found his family too! So that, beloved, is how the frill necked Lizard got his frill.
TWO CHRISTMAS LETTERS

By RUDYARD KIPLING

Edited and introduced by DAVID RICHARDS

[David Richards is a Vice-President of the Kipling Society, a lawyer practicing in New York City, the author of the British Library-published Rudyard Kipling: A Bibliography (2010), and the donor to Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of the world’s largest Kipling collection. Ed.]

INTRODUCTION

Rudyard Kipling’s gift for entertaining children with his fiction is well know. The Jungle Book (1894) and The Second Jungle Book (1895), each illustrated by his father John Lockwood Kipling, and Just-So Stories (1902) illustrated by himself, appear on every list of classic children’s works.

Less well known is his gift for composing informal sketches, from drawings and caricatures in his schoolbooks and on presentation copies of his first published works, printed by his parents on the press of the local Indian newspaper, to illustrations made in private letters sent throughout his long life (sixteen are reproduced in the 6-volume edition of the Letters of Rudyard Kipling, from 1872 to 1936).

Since the publication of Kipling’s collected letters, two new illustrated ones have come to light. Both were written from the Kipling family’s first home “Naulakha” in Brattleboro, Vermont, where the author had settled with his American wife, in the season approaching Christmas, and reflect his keen sensitivity to the sights and sounds of a New England winter. Both were written to young boys who had written him fan letters about stories which were collected in the Jungle Book, and were kept privately for over a century by those boys’ families and descendants, preserved in glass cases as mementos of the warm attention of the world-famous author to their sons.

And each features a charming drawing, meant to make its young reader smile. The letter of 1893, to a boy in Kentucky who shared the writer’s birthday of December 31, features a rear view of Santa’s sleigh, on its way over Vermont to New York. The letter of 1895, to a boy in Richmond, England, has a sketch of a contrarian camel, snorting “Can’t! Won’t! Shan’t! Don’t!” from the “Parade-Song of the Camp-Animals” in The Jungle Book. The letters are alike, too, in demonstrating how Kipling wrote to his correspondents as equals, without condescension to their age, and in celebration of their shared interest in “stories about the Jungle”.


My dear Sir

I am in receipt of your very kind letter of the 20th of November and write to thank you for it because I am always pleased to know when any one likes a story of mine. Kentucky is a long way from Vermont and this letter will not reach you in time for your birthday but I wish you many happy returns all the same. My birthday is in December too, just after Christmas and that is not a good time because people make Christmas and New Year presents count for birthdays too. That is mean, don’t you think?

I do not know what Santa Claus means to do this year but we have a great deal of snow so he ought to be able to get about very quickly between the houses. I live in the country but he never forgets to come. We are on the regular road from the North Pole and they say that he changes his reindeer after they have come through Canada and gets a fresh team somewhere in Maine; as well as two spare moose on account of the New York presents being so heavy to carry south.

Now I must stop writing because I am writing another wild animal story and it takes time and ink & things. You will find two or three more tales in St. Nicholas in the next two months and I hope you will like them as well as “Rikki-Tikki”. Wishing you the best of many Christmases and the happiest of New Years believe me

Very sincerely yours
J Rudyard Kipling
My dear Mr. Bower,

I am very much obliged to you for your nice letter telling me that you liked the ‘Jungle Book’. By this time there ought to be a second ‘Jungle Book’, with more stories about Mowgli in it, in the booksellers’ windows at Richmond. A great many people wrote to me asking me to do some more stories about the Jungle and so I did, but now I have stopped because one must never do one thing too long at a time at once. If you get the Second Jungle Book I hope you will like it as much as
the first because I took a great deal of trouble over it. Writing Jungle Books is rather difficult. I have to translate out of beast talk and jungle talk into easy English and as the beasts use “portmanteau words” like the ones Humpty-Dumpty said to Alice through the looking glass, there is a great deal of translation to be done. When a tiger or a bear says “Wough” in a high voice it means something quite different from “Wough” in a low voice, and when he says “Wough?” as if he were asking a question it means something else: and the same when he says “Wough-ugh” with a stop in the middle.

Where I live now, in America, we have a great many animals but they are not Jungle-creatures. We have foxes, and now and then a bear kills a calf or a pig, and we have wild cats and porcupines, and things like wombats called “woodchucks” and ’coons with ringed tails and more red and grey squirrels than you could count. I have three horses, one has just gone lame and we are bandaging his legs, and two pigs, called “Bubble” and “Squeak”: and five cats and ever so many dogs. There are grouse in the woods behind my house who sit on a stump and drum with their wings and it sounds as though a little drum were being beaten by goblins. They have a ring of feathers round their necks and their real name is “ruffed grouse” but everybody calls them partridge. I never allow anyone to fire at them and so they are very tame. My coachman feeds them with oats and last summer old father grouse flew at the coachman’s children and pecked their legs. Sometimes tiny little hummingbirds with red throats come and put their beaks into our nasturtiums just outside the open window. It is hard to tell them from big hawk-wing moths and I have never found their nests. But now it is winter here and all the birds have gone away except the hawks and owls. There is nothing so interesting, I think, as watching birds and animals and flowers and in England you ought to be able to do that all the year round almost. I began collecting things when I was your age and I have nearly always lived to collect something. Butterflies and moths are best I think; and then plants and minerals.

Will you please tell your mother from me that I am always glad when any one of your age takes the trouble to write me a letter. Now I must stop because I always have a great many letters to write.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and happy new year; believe me
Most sincerely yours

J Rudyard Kipling
“Can’t! Won’t! Shan’t! Don’t! Pass it along the line!”
MEMBERSHIP NOTES

December 2016

NEW MEMBERS
- Erick Llerena (*USA*)
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John Lambert, Hon. Secretary
RUDYARD KIPLING AND THE SHERIDAN CHILDREN

Introduced by JOHN WALKER

Many members of the Kipling Society will know the story of the “falling out” between Clare Sheridan and Rudyard Kipling, in 1922. Clare was the daughter of the adventurer, Moreton Frewen, who lived at Brede, near Burwash, and had been a friend to Kipling since 1889, when they met in India. In 1910, Clare had married Wilfred Sheridan, a great grandson of the dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan, author of *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic*. Their first child Margaret was born in 1912. The second, Elizabeth, died in infancy, in 1914, and Clare’s husband, whom she called ‘William” was killed at the battle of Loos on the 25th September 1915, two days before the death of John Kipling. Wilfred died just a few days after the birth of their son, christened Richard Brinsley.

After the war, Clare worked in America as an artist, sculptress and reporter, and in June 1922, she visited the Kiplings at Bateman’s, taking Margaret and Richard along. Ostensibly she was there to sketch Rudyard for a portrait. In fact, according to her own book *The Naked Truth*, she set out to provoke Kipling into speaking out about America and the war. She described how he “…stumbled into my net. He let himself go about America, and I, breathless with suppressed eagerness and excitement, stored up every word, threw in a question and a remark to stimulate him to further statements”. On returning to America, she published an “interview” in the *New York Sunday World* (10th September 1922) in which Kipling was portrayed as highly critical of America for its late entry to the war.

Clare herself recorded that the children made a successful cover for her plans: “Rudyard, who adores children, sat down on the grass near the pond to watch Dick sail a boat… The moment was propitious.”

The Hon Lady Roche of Starbotton in Yorkshire has most generously allowed the *Kipling Journal* to reproduce two delightful snapshots of this moment, showing Rudyard Kipling with the Sheridan children beside the pond. One shows the boy Dick Sheridan squatting on the bank to watch his boat, while Kipling grabs his sister Margaret’s coat in case she overbalances. In the other, all three are happily sitting together, Kipling and Margaret both smiling, Dick overcome with giggles. There is also a touching photograph of Kipling with a younger, chubbier Dick Sheridan. This is not dated, but the little boy with a slightly uncertain expression and a bruised knee, wearing a tunic, knitted shorts and untidy
white socks, looks about 5. Kipling’s protective pose in this touching photograph indicates the affectionate relationship between the great writer and the boy whom it is tempting to see as his ‘missing grandson’. Their friendship survived the row following Clare Sheridan’s publication of her conversation with Kipling. Although it seems that Kipling was very embarrassed and hurt by Clare’s “betrayal”, and cut off contact
Rudyard Kipling and Richard Sheridan (no date)
Reproduced by kind permission of Lady Roche
with her, he stayed in touch with her son Richard Sheridan. Thanks to Lady Roche’s connections to the Frewen family, we have been promised another treasure to appear in a later issue – a sketch by Kipling of the teenage Richard dancing a jig, together with an affectionate teasing poem for “R.B.S.”

We are enormously grateful to Lady Roche for permission to publish these photographs, and we look forward to sharing with Kipling Society members this gem from the family archive. It will be of very great interest to scholars, especially Professor W. Dillingham, whose excellent *Being Kipling* covers the interview episode in detail, and of course our Vice-President Professor Tom Pinney, whose masterwork *Cambridge Edition of the Poems of Rudyard Kipling* (2013) will now have to have this important addition tipped in!
KIPLING’S “JUST-SO” PARTNER: THE DEAD CHILD AS COLLABORATOR AND MUSE

By U. C. KNOEPFLMACHER

U. C. Knoepflmacher is Paton Foundation Emeritus Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature at Princeton University. This essay first appeared in Children’s Literature, vol. 25 no 1, 1997. The Kipling Society is most grateful to Professor Knoepflmacher and to John Hopkins University Press for allowing us to reprint it here. [Ed.]

It seems worth remembering that texts with impeccable “adult” credentials may enlist the intense attachments of a vanished youth in the service of growth and maturity. Tennyson opens In Memoriam A.H.H. (1850) by trying, characteristically, to find a gain in loss: “I hold it truth, with him who sings / To one clear harp in diverse tones, / That men may rise on stepping-stones / Of their dead selves to higher things” (i.1–4). Although referring to Goethe here, the future laureate may also have thought of the laurels bestowed on an ideal female Other by a much earlier predecessor, Francis Petrarch (1304–74). Petrarch’s Rime, after all, was divided by later editors into two parts, “In vita” and “In morte di Madonna Laura”; lyrics that celebrated a living lady as an infatuated young lover’s better “self” thus could become stepping stones for tributes on a higher plane. A sequence built out of meticulously crafted, compact, yet psychologically and tonally diverse units thus serves both Petrarch and Tennyson in fashioning ascending – and assenting – structures of memorial homage.

I am deliberately invoking these “adult” constructs as analogues for a very different narrative sequence addressed to a very different audience. For the impulses that gave shape to both In Memoriam and the Rime bear more than a passing resemblance to the rationale behind Rudyard Kipling’s own artful arrangement of the twelve tales, separately composed from 1897 to 1902 and collected in that year – together with twelve supplementary poems, twenty-three captioned full-page drawings, and many other smaller illustrations – under the title of Just So Stories for Little Children. This much-reprinted collection neither activates a male “dead self” such as Tennyson’s best beloved Arthur Hallam nor an idealized female alter ego such as the adult paragon whom Petrarch called Laura; instead, it animates a child-self imbedded in all grownup psyches and yet also recognizable as a juvenile Other.

For Kipling, this child-self, preserved from the happiest era of the writer’s own childhood, is intricately identified with “Effie” or Josephine, his first-born American daughter. That Effie acted as a catalyst for some of Kipling’s finest work as a children’s author is a point
that has not been wasted on previous critics (Green 182, for example), although her role in the Just So Stories has yet to be fully assessed. Kipling publicly identified his daughter as a listener and collaborator when he celebrated her fifth (and his thirty-second) birthday in December 1897 by publishing the first of “The ‘Just-So’ Stories” (as he then called them) as the leading piece in St. Nicholas Magazine. Yet he expanded and redefined Effie’s role upon her unexpected death in New York on March 6, 1899, after the trans-Atlantic passage that almost claimed his own life.

Kipling’s decision to transform his prime auditor into the “Best Beloved” he addresses throughout stories written after her death gave him unusual insights into the process of cross-writing child and adult selves. Indeed, as we shall eventually see, several of these later stories can be read as dramatizing an alliance or collaboration designed to counter not only the separation between adult and child, but also gaps between the sexes and between the living and the dead. Although born of acute personal loss, Kipling’s buoyant tales resist sentimentality in ways that seem saner and more self-knowing than the nostalgia for a lost childhood that sometimes seeps into classics such as the Alice books or Peter Pan. Because 1997 marks the hundredth anniversary of the self-contained trio of “Just-So Stories” Kipling offered to St. Nicholas, a fresh look at the “stepping-stones” through which he so brilliantly dramatized concerns taken up throughout this issue of Children’s Literature seems an especially apt contribution.

I

When Kipling first flirted with the idea of writing children’s stories for St. Nicholas Magazine he was not yet a father, and the child reader he envisioned was not a girl but a boy. He had himself read the magazine as a boy and had even tried to contribute to it at age thirteen. Catharine Morris Wright stresses the adult writer’s excitement on finding himself sought out by Mary Mapes Dodge, the same editor who had rejected a poem he had submitted in 1879 while still an “English schoolboy”. At that time, Kipling had hoped to get his American peers – “wisely allowed more liberty than we enjoy” – to “sympathize” with the predicament he had tried to dramatize (autumn 1879, cited by Wright 259). In agreeing to write something for St. Nicholas in February 1892, Kipling reminded Dodge that his chief “advantage” over other prospective authors stemmed from his having “read St. Nicholas since I was a child”. He can thus do more than compose “slick” stories about children for “a Wee Willie Winkie audience” of adults; instead, he can directly address “a People a good deal more important & discriminating – a peculiar People with the strongest views on what they like and dislike”
(21 Feb. 1892, cited by Wright 265). This sincere respect for the child’s acuity was retained when a few years later he considered the interests of the precocious Effie.

Initially, however, the fictions Kipling offered Dodge released the boyish exuberance of his early years in Bombay. A story such as “The Potted Princess” (Jan. 1893), ecstatically welcomed by Dodge, becomes a playful antidote for the unbearably painful “Baa Baa, Black Sheep”, the 1888 story Kipling had intended for adults. And the Mowgli and non-Mowgli stories that Dodge published before they made their way into the two Jungle Books similarly rely on the empowering exploits of boyish Indian heroes such as Mowgli, Toomai, or Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Wright wonders whether “these stories, like ‘Wee Willie Winkie’ and ‘Baa Baa, Black Sheep’” actually might not have been “too powerful for the young” audience of St. Nicholas (286). She points out that no American child reader ever referred to them in communications sent to the magazine’s “Letter Box”, and she also notes that Dodge balked at publishing “Servants of the Queen”, the ironic critique of imperialism that Kipling then promptly placed in the “adult” Harper’s Weekly (Mar. 1894) and used as the closing tale for the first Jungle Book.

By 1897, however, there was an entirely new start. When “the first three Just-So Stories’ came to a grateful Mrs. Dodge from A. P. Watt, Kipling’s agent” (Wright 287), the author who had by August of that year become the father of three children was ready to produce a rather different fare. While in Vermont, he had vividly recalled his Indian childhood in order to chart a wolf-boy’s adolescent empowerment. Now, back in England, he drew on his more recent memories of New England story sessions in order to dramatize a much smaller child’s passage into self-consciousness and linguistic mastery. This new interest, empirically acquired, did not involve fantasies of compensation such as those that underlie the Jungle Book stories. Instead, they led to the development of an entirely new narrative persona, and to the gradual refinement of a form that allowed him to capture the joyousness of a parental investment in the curiosity and creativity of the child.

In his valuable bibliographical essay on the illustrated versions of the book, Brian Alderson rightly stresses the distinctiveness of the initial unit of three stories that Kipling offered to St. Nicholas Magazine in 1897. He notes how Kipling placed an opening paragraph – directed at the adult, rather than the child, reader – before the narrative of “How the Whale Got His Throat” in the 1897 Christmas issue of St. Nicholas in order to insist “that these stories originated in the living – and private – exchange between a teller and a listener” (Alderson 148). Kipling’s preamble, also meant to introduce the next two instalments, “How the Camel Got Its Hump” (Jan. 1898) and “How the Rhinoceros Got Its
Skin” (Feb. 1898), asserts the privileges due to that original listener, the vibrant Effie. She holds the rights to stories that must, according to her father, be set down and retold by the adult exactly in the way in which she first heard them – “just so”. Although Alderson excerpts the salient portions of this long introductory paragraph, it deserves to be reproduced in its entirety if one is to savor the authority that Kipling confers on his little prime auditor. The narrator’s five references to Effie suggest that, far from being regarded as a passive listener, such a child must be granted a status that approaches that of a collaborator. Just as the bossy boy Punch in the 1888 “Baa Baa, Black Sheep” tries to orchestrate his Indian ayah’s storytelling, so does tiny Effie exercise an imperious control over the stories told in her Vermont nursery. But if the narrator of the earlier “adult” tale ironically looks back at Punch’s self-aggrandizements in a Bombay he must soon leave, the narrator of “How the Whale Got Its Throat” defers to the girl’s controlling stake in narratives that involve an active partnership between teller and listener:

Some stories are meant to be read quietly and some are meant to be told aloud. Some stories are proper for rainy mornings, and some for long, hot afternoons, when one is lying in the open, and some stories are bedtime stories. All the Blue Skalallatoot stories are morning tales (I do not know why, but that is what Effie says). All the stories about Orvyn Sylvester Woodsey, the left-over New England fairy who did not think it well-seen to fly, and who used patent labour-saving devices instead of charms, are afternoon stories because they were generally told in the shade of the woods. You could alter and change these tales as much as you pleased; but in the evening there were stories meant to put Effie to sleep, and you were not allowed to alter those by one single little word. They had to be told just so; or Effie would wake up and put back the missing sentence. So at last they came to be like charms, all three of them, – the whale tale, the camel tale, and the rhinoceros tale. Of course little people are not all alike, but I think if you catch some Effie rather tired and rather sleepy, and if you begin in a low voice and tell the tales precisely as I have written them down, you will find that Effie will presently curl up and go to sleep.

Now, this is the first tale, and it tells how the whale got his tiny throat:

Once upon a time there was a whale, and he lived in the sea and he ate fishes. . . (“The ‘Just-So’ Stories”, 89).

Kipling realized that the Mowgli and non-Mowgli stories he wrote for St. Nicholas might easily find an even wider audience if they were
expanded, collected in book form, and published in England as well as in America. He appears to have entertained no such marketing considerations, however, after fashioning the Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros stories; instead, he regarded them as a complete unit, a memento of “charms” shared with a four-year-old. Although Kipling surely told more just-so stories in 1898 to Josephine and to her special “bosom friend”, Angela Thirkell, the latter’s account is limited to the telling of the Whale story she remembered in its printed version (Thirkell 309, 312). In her memoir, Elsie Kipling (Mrs. George Bambridge) claims that the “Just So Stories were first told to my brother and myself during those Cape winters, and when written, were read aloud to us for such suggestions as could be expected from small children” (Carrington 396).

Yet it remains difficult to determine the exact number of stories specifically invented for Kipling’s surviving two children. Born in February 1896, Elsie Kipling and certainly John (born in August 1897) would not have been told “The Elephant’s Child” while vacationing in Capetown in January 1898; because that story, “The Beginning of Armadilloes”, and “The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo” were not written down until later in 1899 (Green 176) and published in the first half of 1900, all three may well belong to a store of tales originally devised for Effie.2

There is no reason, however, to distrust Elsie Kipling’s contention that all tales, “when written”, were read aloud for “suggestions” to be made by herself and John. Kipling had to devise a new format to blend the published St. Nicholas tales and unpublished Effie stories with tales told and written after her death. When he eventually chose to use the original trio of Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros stories as “stepping-stones” for the ambitious twelve-story, pyramidal structure of the 1902 book, he was compelled to make several important re-adjustments. The “you” he had addressed in these first three stories now became a “Best Beloved” invoked at the very outset of the book. As a result, the casual opening of the original Whale story (“Once upon a time there was a whale, and he lived in the sea and he ate fishes”) became more formalized and incantatory: “In the sea, once upon a time, O my Best Beloved, there was a Whale, and he ate fishes” (Just So Stories 25).3 Even the parenthetical interjections of the original text – “(you must not forget the suspenders)” – became less casual: “(you must not forget the suspenders, Best Beloved)” (“The ‘Just-So’ Stories”, 90; Just So Stories 25).

The playful captions for the full-page drawings Kipling introduced for the book version more than compensated, however, for the stateliness of such invocations. Adroitly anticipating the many questions that an inquisitive child might pose, Kipling delights in further stimulating his young readers with a bountiful store of never-gratuitous additions. The names of Whale (“Smiler”), Mariner (“Mr. Henry Albert
Bivvens, A.B.”), and ’Stute Fish (“Pingle”) may seem extraneous to an adult, but not to the child who relishes such verbal extensions and also accepts the invitations to let its visual fancies range beyond the limits of an illustrated page. Kipling’s drawings rely on cryptic images that the artist-writer points out in his captions and then encourages both child and adult to decode. The recast stories of Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros can therefore no longer be read in the purely linear fashion called for by their St. Nicholas originals. The “plot” of each tale comes to a halt whenever the reader, arrested by an intricate drawing, is seduced into becoming a viewer. And that viewer must subsequently turn into a reader of a different sort when invited to absorb the verbal amplifications and annotations in the full-page caption that faces each such drawing. As in a Talmudic commentary, the progress of the main narrative thus must defer to lateral coruscations. And even when that narrative finally stops, the poem placed at the end, far from providing a definitive closure, only opens up possibilities for further associations.  

Kipling’s renewed attention to the creative input of young interlocutors who want all details to cohere “just so” went far beyond the relatively simple instructions he had given to adult transmitters of his St. Nicholas tales. By 1899, such instructions had become obsolete, superseded by his much more dramatic demonstration of ways to handle the imaginative hunger of the astute “little people” he respected more than ever. Yet the introductory paragraph of 1897 had also become undesirable for another, more painful, reason: after Effie’s death and Kipling’s months of convalescence, the personal origins of the three animal tales obviously needed to be obscured.

Still, even though these private origins no longer could be explicitly acknowledged, it was Kipling’s unabated attachment to his dead child that led him to reinvest his creative energies in stories about growth and adaptation. Deflected to other children, his communion with the girl who had been the primary recipient of his first three stories is often handled indirectly in the later additions. Yet in “How the First Letter Was Written”, “How the Alphabet Was Made”, and “The Tabu Tale”, he allowed himself the luxury of a more direct expression of his feelings by transforming Effie into Taffy, a best beloved child he deposited in the safe haven of a prehistoric past. The joy and loss of a father, who was not a Briton or an Indian, or even an American, which he well might have been, could thus be ascribed to a Neolithic man who was “not a Jute or an Angle, or even a Dravidian, which he might well have been, Best Beloved, but never mind why” (Just So Stories 95).

Given that Effie had permanently fallen asleep after returning to her native land, Kipling could hardly be expected to continue posing as a dispenser of sedatives helpful to adult readers equipped with drowsy
little girls. In a way, however, the 1897 *St. Nicholas* introduction had already anticipated the process of transference that now became such a major feature of the expanded “Just So Stories”. After acknowledging that “little people are not all alike”, Kipling had appealed to a wider audience by offering other parents and other Effies oral narratives that he had designed for the ears of a single child. If the tales he had told to that special child could already be transcribed for a dual audience in 1897–98, then they also could, as Kipling came to see, readily be assimilated after 1899 into an expanded sequence that might itself stress the dynamics of assimilation and accommodation.

By celebrating the child’s adaptability and its gradual mastery of verbal and visual signs, Kipling could also partake in a transformative process of obvious therapeutic value to himself. He had previously transferred to Effie his memories of a self-centered little raja by becoming her paternal playmate. It now remained for him to take the more difficult step of rechanneling his deep emotional attachment by transferring it to maturing children as bright as she had been. To do so, he required a new set of listeners – the effigies of Effie, as it were – Elsie and John Kipling, the many girls and boys he continued to befriend, and all those faceless children he could charm and help to grow beyond the age at which Effie’s life had stopped. The child – and childhood – he had now twice lost could therefore be recaptured once again, kept alive through the agency of an undying fictional Other who was his personal Best Beloved as well as a universal Every child.

Kipling’s bold decision to return to a cross-writing project that he might well have abandoned after the three *St. Nicholas* stories had appeared must have been difficult to manage. Yet the decision seems to have been made quickly: he was composing “The Elephant’s Child” in October 1899, a mere seven months after Josephine’s death (Carrington 235n). Was the story, which he sent to another American journal, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, among those he had previously told her? Although one need not share Howard R. Cell’s belief that “despite the masculine pronoun” the Elephant’s Child is “in fact... a female” (Cell 143, n. 2), it is true that the “person small” celebrated in the poem Kipling eventually placed at the end of that story is a girl who is every bit as inquisitive as the observant Taffy (or the “little girl-daughter” of “The Crab That Played with the Sea”): “She keeps ten million serving-men / ... / One million Hows, two million Wheres, / And seven million Whys!” (*Just So Stories* 72).

Whether or not “The Elephant’s Child” belonged to a group of tales originally fashioned for Effie, it marks a distinct departure from the emphasis of the St. Nicholas trio. Although the comic transformations of the Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros were as pronounced as
was the metamorphosis of a short “bulgy” nose into a versatile trunk, those earlier changes were punitive rather than beneficial to the selfish protagonists. The omnivorous Whale, gluttonous Rhinoceros, and uncooperative Camel are made to pay for their childish and egotistical behavior. But if the Whale must curb its insatiable appetite, the little elephant who is beaten for asking questions is amply rewarded for his “satiest curiosity”. Although its higher form of hunger may offend punitive adults, it is clearly endorsed by an author who delights in the barrage of Hows, Wheres, and Whys produced by restless young minds. Kipling grants the Elephant’s Child an appendage that proves to be as handy as the skinning knife that the Mariner – or Mowgli, another quick learner tutored by a rock python – wielded to such great effect. Mowgli’s older animal acquaintances came to fear the superiority of this precocious manling. The superiority of the Elephant’s Child, on the other hand, not only allows him to carry out a Mowgli-like revenge against abusive elders, but also soon inspires other elephants, old and young, to emulate him by becoming equipped with “new noses” as powerful as his own (71).

Like the initial story of the Whale, “The Elephant’s Child” dramatizes a collaboration in which the small and weak can outwit those who are in power by sheer virtue of their larger size. By directing the huge Whale to the ingenious Mariner, the little 'Stute Fish creates an alliance between smaller marine creatures and the “man” whom Kipling figures as a boy who had “his Mummy’s leave to paddle” in the water (28); the little 'Stute Fish can save himself and other threatened creatures from being eaten. Yet if this alliance can be read as merely pitting two children against a stronger third child, the Elephant’s Child rises above his rigid elders after being aided by the “mournful” Kolokolo bird and by the sententious Bi-Coloured-Python-Rock-Snake. It is not the Crocodile, a hungry predator much like the Whale, but rather the python (an ironist who, like Kaa, is endowed with a mocking intelligence much like Kipling’s own) who becomes primarily responsible for furthering the little elephant’s growth. The transference of the python’s superior powers is symbolized by the child’s acquisition of that elongated, snakelike trunk. This phallic, yet bigendered (as well as bicolored) tutor thus takes the place of elephant parents who ought to have supervised, rather than inhibited, their precocious child’s growth. And, in a pachydermous twist of the old Wordsworthian paradigm, the evolved Child can now become Father of the Elephant.

II

“The Elephant’s Child”, written first yet placed second, is central to the four-story unit that follows the trio of Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros
tales. All four stories dramatize beneficial mutations: if the trunk gained by the Elephant Child gives it a greater maneuverability and new powers of self-defence, the evolutionary advantages obtained by the new colorings assumed by the Leopard and the Ethiopian, by the longer hind legs gained by the Kangaroo, and by the conversion of Tortoise and Hedgehog into a new species are just as significant. Less childish than Whale, Camel, or Rhinoceros, this new set of protagonists can nonetheless retain childhood strengths that are crucial to their development. Their resilience is encouraged not only by the narrator, but also by his surrogates. With the notable exception of the Tortoise and Hedgehog, who manage their own transformation, the members of this group require the advice or intervention of adult-like superiors: Baviaan, the dog-headed Baboon “who is Quite the Wisest Animal in All South Africa” (52); the pithy Python; and the Big God Nqong.

Although collaboration is highlighted throughout this sequence, it is especially prominent in the first and last tales, “How the Leopard Got His Spots” and “The Beginning of the Armadilloes”, which also act as pendants for “The Elephant’s Child”. Yet if the plain-spoken Leopard and the verbose Ethiopian simply learn that camouflage can make them better predators, the “mixy” verbal games that save the lives of the word-twisting Hedgehog and the artfully literal Tortoise anticipate an even higher accomplishment in the art of survival. Whereas the Leopard and Ethiopian merely regain their former superiority as fellow hunters, Hedgehog and Tortoise are fellow victims who help each other become less vulnerable. The flexibility that permits each to develop into a shielded armadillo is contrasted with the rigid upbringing of their confused child antagonist, the Jaguar Mother’s overdependent son. In their joyously inventive partnership, Hedgehog and Tortoise thus anticipate the collaborative successes of Taffy and her father in “How the First Letter Was Written” and “How the Alphabet Was Made”, the two stories Kipling placed right after “The Beginning of the Armadilloes” in the 1902 collection.

Though seventh in the book, the Armadillo story was actually fifth in order of composition, having appeared in Ladies’ Home Journal in May 1900, a month after the same journal had published “The Elephant’s Child” and a month before it printed “The Sing-Song of Old Man Kangaroo”. Kipling links the Armadillo story to that of the little Elephant through deliberate verbal as well as visual echoes. He recalls the opening sentence of “The Elephant’s Child” by announcing at the outset of the new tale that “This, O Best Beloved, is another story of the High and Far-Off Times” (82). And by placing Stickly-Prickly Hedgehog and Slow-Solid Tortoise “on the banks of the turbid Amazon” (82), he clearly means to match “the banks of the great
grey-green, greasy Limpopo River” (61) to which the Kolokolo Bird had directed the curious young elephant. An even more important connection, however, is established by the ornate capital T that Kipling drew for the story’s initial letter. Picked up in both of the full-page illustrations for the Armadillo story, the letter will figure prominently, as we shall see, in “How the Alphabet Was Made”, where it comes to signify the bond between the father-daughter letter-makers whose first names begin with the same consonant T.

Kipling places two heads at each end of the upper crossbar of the capital T that he uses to open the Armadillo story (see fig. 1). The crossbar is inclined rather than strictly horizontal, as it will be in the T that opens “How the Alphabet Was Made”. At the higher extreme right is the stylized head of an adult elephant, with tusks that are considerably longer than those in the representations of the Elephant’s Child; it is underneath that mature head that Kipling places his initials, “R K.” At the extreme lower left is the head of an embryo whose big eyes resemble those of an unhatched chick. Although looking, Janus-like, in opposite directions, the two heads grow out of an intertwined common stem that could be made out of bone or cartilage (its helix-like right side resembling a
ribeage), or be sprouting from a vegetable organism. If made out of bone, this shaft recalls the carved knives that served as opening letters for both the Whale tale and the Leopard/Ethiopian story. If it is meant to be a vegetable growth, however, the sinuous stalk resembles the sheltering uterine “seaweed” into which Kipling had placed the ’Stute Fish he had drawn in the second full-page drawing for his Whale story.

The symbolic implications of this decorated initial suggest a complexity that befits that of Kipling’s two full-page illustrations for the Armadillo story: the overly detailed map of the Amazon delta, which, as Alderson notes, takes (at least!) “half an hour to decipher” (Aiderson 155), and the wonderful drawing of the ball of intertwining bodies formed by Tortoise, Hedgehog, and Armadillo “all in a heap” (Just So Stories 92), observed by a jaguar child with a puzzled face and a wounded paw. The sites and adventures so minutely labelled on the “inciting map” of “Ye Manie Mouthes of Ye Amazons River” may not literally have “anything to do with the story” itself (84). But it seems significant that all the inscriptions that crowd the page are placed at the border of a blank body of water that Kipling shapes as a giant letter T. The child “incited” by the map’s puzzling proliferation of details thus is induced to feel “more mixy than before” (86), just as the Jaguar felt after his intended victims cleverly jumbled up his mother’s explicit instructions on how to identify and catch hedgehogs and tortoises. But if that “incited” child is inspired, unlike the Jaguar, to learn the benefits of “mixiness”, it will hardly be as “much surprised” by the blending of separate species within a single globe. If the Jaguar child is drawn, parodically, as an inverted Atlas who cannot sustain that “mixy” globe, its black snout and mouth form a letter that also seems to parody, in its droopy inversion, the outlines of the initial T with which the story began. By way of contrast, the Tortoise seems truly Atlaslike, even though he is at the center and not outside of the globe. Simultaneously bearing the weight of the newly formed Armadillo on his shoulders and propping his four legs to hold up the Hedgehog, this creature’s legs act as a sort of intermediary stem between two T-shaped mushrooms, as shown in figure 2.

Because both tortoises and elephants figure as propping up the universe in Hindu representations, the portrait of this T-bearer also brings us back to the significance of the elephant’s head portrayed in the story’s opening letter. The wise elephant and the unreflective ball of animal bodies: tortoise, hedgehog, and armadillo in embryo, are no more opposites than are Stickly-Prickly and Slow-and-Solid in the story itself. They evolve from the same vital I, and hence can eventually assume a common identity such as that of the Armadillo-self that Kipling confers on two animals who belong to such different species.
By way of contrast, the Jaguar mother who relies on a taxonomy that falsely insists on irreconcilable contraries demands a conformity that might well cripple her child. The young Jaguar who finds his mother’s mnemonic jingle useless may never grow up. His deference to her authority does not allow him to learn, as Hedgehog and Tortoise do, by adopting fresh defensive tactics. When Stickly-Prickly practices his swimming, he ceases to look like a “chestnut-burr”; when Slow-and-Solid starts his stretching exercises, his back-plates lose their former rigidity. Their “mixy” interchangeability subverts Mother Jaguar’s rigidly held conviction that “a Hedgehog is a Hedgehog, and can’t be anything but a Hedgehog; and a Tortoise is a Tortoise, and never can be anything else” (90). Kipling’s own evolution as an armadillo with protective scales gave him a toughened adult identity he was eager to pass on to children willing to take imaginative risks. At the same time, however, his self-caricature as a wounded Jaguar child suggests that he was too honest to repress his painful memories of adult inflexibility.

III

Kipling appears to have initially regarded the stories of the Elephant’s Child, the Armadilloes, and the Kangaroo, all published in *Ladies’ Home Journal* from April to June of 1900, as forming a unit almost as close-knit as that of the *St. Nicholas* stories of Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros. But the publication history of the three stories that feature Taffy and her father – “How the First Letter Was Written”, “How the Alphabet Was Made”, and “The Tabu Tale” – suggests no such design. By featuring the same protagonists, these tales are even more closely interrelated than those in the other trios and may well have been composed in a single creative thrust. And yet Kipling seems to have gone out of his way to disperse their publication. He published the first in *Ladies’ Home Journal* in December 1901 (on the dead Effie’s ninth birthday and hence exactly four years after the Whale story first
appeared). It was followed there by “The Cat That Walked Alone” (July 1902) and “The Butterfly That Stamped” (Oct. 1902), but not by the second and third Taffy tales. Instead, Kipling saved “How the Alphabet Was Made”, the most important of these tributes to Effie as his collaborator, until he was ready to gather all of his tales for the 1902 edition of the book; in this way, he made it the only story among those collected there never previously published in periodical form. And he kept “The Tabu Tale” out of all standard collections, although he included it, with two full-page illustrations and captions but no final poem, in a 1903 volume of Just So Stories published by Charles Scribner & Sons in New York.

When Kipling introduces Tegumai and “his little girl-daughter” Taffy in “How the First Letter Was Written”, he minimizes the difference between child and adult. Treated as equal partners – like Hedgehog and Tortoise – the pair also circumvent, as Kipling and his children apparently did in real life, a strong maternal authority that they respect yet half-defy. Covered with mud after one of their romps, father and daughter are pronounced to be totally indistinguishable by Teshumai, the superior guardian of their cave: “Where in the world have you two been to, to get so shocking dirty? Really, my Tegumai, you’re no better than my Taffy” (95). Tegumai’s child-like carelessness is evident again when he forgets “to bring any extra spears” along (96). Self-absorbed while trying to mend his broken spear throughout the story, Tegumai seems slower than his quick, precocious child. When she volunteers to run back to the Cave to obtain another spear from “Mummy”, he refuses to let her go: “It’s too far for your little fat legs. . . Besides you might fall into the beaver-swamp and drown” (96). His refusal stems as much from parental solicitude as from an unwillingness to part from his lively child-companion. And his response introduces, however lightly, a note of death that will gradually intensify as the Taffy tales unfold.

Tegumai’s passivity is necessary, however, to help set in relief his daughter’s activation of her inventive powers. Although he fusses with the spear he fails to repair, she composes, with the help of the Tewara stranger’s shark tooth, a narrative entirely made out of pictures. The child-artist’s story is misread by both its adult bearer and its adult recipients – the stranger and her mother. It is therefore as unsuccessful as the creative effort that Rudyard Kipling himself had sent to St. Nicholas while still a schoolboy. But just as that failed contribution prepared him for his later successes as a writer, so is Taffy’s letter-that-failed rightly honored by the Head Chief of the Tribe as “a great invention” that augurs well for future accomplishments (103).

Kipling’s own adult art thus defers to the nascent achievements of young artists-to-be. The narrator had previously encouraged his child
readers to take out their paint boxes and loosen their imagination by wildly coloring the drawings his publishers had restricted to black-and-white. In “How the First Letter Was Written”, however, the artist lovingly reproduces – within the text and without a caption – Taffy’s own drawing, “a little berangement of my own, Daddy dear” (100). And his captioned full-page illustration adopts Taffy’s own pictographs to repeat her story “carved on an old tusk a very long time ago” (104). Like Tegumai’s spear, that tusk – “part of an old tribal trumpet that belonged to the Tribe of Tegumai” – is fragmented and incomplete: “a sort of network of beads and shells and precious stones” has been “broken and lost” (104). The efforts of a paternal artist-writer are required to supplement the budding creative powers of a “precious”, gemlike child.

Yet Kipling does not want to leave that inventive child at the mere threshold of her creative achievement. In “How the Alphabet Was Made” he therefore re-enlists Taffy in order to credit her with the “great invention” that the tribe’s Head Chief had predicted. Angus Wilson contends that all Just So Stories “marred by humans” lack the pleasureable interaction between child and adult found in the animal tales (Wilson 229). Yet, far from exhibiting a “sentimental whimsicality”, the story of the Alphabet actually transcends the “interplay” that Wilson so aptly describes as a “continuous flirtation between the two worlds”: “Every adult knows the pleasure of suddenly seeing what a child is putting into the game or the reading; equally, I am sure, children find much of their enjoyment in revelations of the jokes and absurdities that adults add to the stories or games for their own delight” (Wilson 229). It is the sudden coalescence or overlapping of these complementary pleasures that Kipling manages to produce in “How the Alphabet Was Made”. By involving young and old readers in the same playful, yet serious, process that enmeshes Taffy and Tegumai, he allows us to share the joyful immediacy of their discoveries. The “whimsicality” of Taffy’s and Tegumai’s joint enterprise, far from being “sentimental”, thus acts as a universal antidote against the indulgence of an actual father’s grief for his lost playmate. The capital T that opens “How the Alphabet Was Made” is no longer drawn as an organic shape as in the Armadillo story; instead, it has become a tool, an artifact constructed for social progress (see fig. 3). The crossbar of the ax is bound to its vertical handle by woven filaments, just as language – a cultural artifact – relies on the ligature of separate letters. Kipling places his initials, “R K”, beneath the cutting edge of the axe, and now draws the head of a young chick at the very end of the handle. Adult and child, therefore, now seem farther apart than they were in the capital T of the Armadillo story. And yet it is the chick handle that gives the edge of the blade its velocity and power, just as, in the story, it is Taffy who will empower
her father as an artificer. Watching Tegumai idly scratching on a piece of bark, Taffy prompts him to refine her depiction of the “ah-noise” they convert into the first letter of the alphabet. Caught up in his daughter’s “inciting” game, Tegumai is no longer as inattentive as he had been in the previous tale. He urges her to proceed, “in the voice that grown-ups use when they are truly attending” (Just So Stories 108). Soon, the pair have progressed far enough to form short words. Although their task is still incomplete when they return to the cave for supper, they exult in their mastery of “secret” constructions that Taffy’s “Mummy” mistakes for meaningless squiggles (115).

Excluded from their enterprise, the mother nonetheless is at first granted a place in the construction of the letter T with which father and daughter begin the second day of their collaboration. Yet not only she, but Taffy, too, will drop away, as the T gradually assumes the shape of a lonely, cruciform male figure: “When they came to T, Taffy said that as her name, and her Daddy’s, and her Mummy’s all began with that sound, they should draw a sort of family group of themselves holding hands. That was all very well to draw once or twice; but when it came to drawing it six or seven times, Taffy and Tegumai drew it scratchier and scratchier, till at last the T-sound was only a thin, long Tegumai with his arms out to hold Taffy and Teshumai. You can see from these three pictures partly how it happened” (115). By placing
the three drawings that depict the progressive reduction of the T next to an inverted S, described as a “hissy-snake” placed “the other way round for the Z-sound” (116), Kipling creates a sequence that seems to suggest that this falling off may lead to an ominous end (see fig. 4). No longer attached to either mother or daughter, the lonely figure flanked by a hissing serpent seems as forsaken as Christ on the cross. He is a child without his prime parent and an adult without his prime child. Only a few more “sound-pictures” remain to be completed, among them the “scratchy, hurty, Ka-sound” (116). Reasserting the passage of time, the narrator explains how the “fine old easy, understandable Alphabet” invented by a daughter and her father was later set aside, deformed and forgotten, until it “got back into its proper shape again for all Best Beloveds to learn when they are old enough” (117).

Yet even as he celebrates Taffy’s useful legacy to other Best Beloveds, the narrator also insists on the uniqueness of her world: “But I remember Tegumai Bopsulai, and Taffimai Metallumai, and Teshumai Tewindrow, her dear Mummy, and all the days gone by. And it was so – just so – a long time ago – on the banks of the big Wagai!” (117). The meaning of “just so”, in this last sentence of the narrative, has clearly altered; it no longer carries the resonances of the phrase once used to signify a living child’s insistence on verbal accuracy.

But Kipling does not end there. Just as he produced a preface to the 1897 Whale story, he now devises a sort of afterword. Having provided no full-scale, captioned picture in an illustrated story that markedly differs from all the others by its inclusion of no less than thirty-three little “sound-pictures”, Kipling surprises the reader by also drawing – and then elaborately describing – a necklace composed of twenty-three letters. He tells us that Tegumai had made that “magic Alphabet-necklace” to be preserved “for ever and ever” by the tribe but that it took father and daughter “five whole years getting the necklace in order” (119). Because five years had also elapsed between the publication of the first “Just-So” story and the collected tales, the analogy to Kipling’s own crafting of a necklace of interconnecting stories seems
inescapable. Just as Taffy begot the individual letters her father then worked into this fuller construct, so is Effie implicitly credited as the begetter of a mode her father perfected after her death.

“How the Alphabet Was Made”, the one story Kipling had saved for the completed book, ought logically to have come last in the sequence. Why, then, does he not use it to close his volume? A hint of an answer, I think, can be found in Kipling’s annotations for the letter beads linked in the Alphabet necklace. Tegumai and Taffy may have spent five years ordering the beads, but the order has been disturbed. For the narrator explains that the necklace he professes to have copied so “very carefully” (121) no longer retains its pristine shape. He can joke about the missing “P and Q”, lost in a war and replaced by “the dried rattles of a rattlesnake”. But the dislocation of several other letters seems more serious: whereas E is still “a twist of silver wire”, its successor F (pronounced “ef”, as in Effie) “is broken” and “what remains of it is a bit of stag’s horn” (119).

Moreover, J and K, Josephine Kipling’s initials, are no longer in their proper sequential order:

J is a fish-hook in mother-of-pearl. L is the broken spear in silver. (K ought to follow J, of course; but the necklace was broken once and they mended it wrong.) K is a thin slice of bone scratched and rubbed in black. (120)

Kipling here encodes private meanings he neither wants or expects his readers to fathom.\(^{11}\) “JLK” are the initials of the jovial father-artist, John Lockwood Kipling, whom his son emulates by drawing his own illustrations. Yet the separation of J and K by the broken silver spear of the letter L also suggests a generational discontinuity: Collaboration Lost. L may well stand for Love, transfixed by a spear, but it also stands for Loss. The K etched on a thin bone splinter thus appears to carry connotations that are as painful as that “hurty Ka-sound” mentioned toward the end of the narrative. Its blackness seems funereal, as does the “black squiggle” designed to set the whole necklace in relief and to “make the beads and things look better” (121). This record of a collaboration comes perilously close to a ritual of mourning.

Mourning is also the note struck in the verses Kipling put after this coda. Lewis Carroll had professed himself to be haunted by his own dream child in the poem he placed at the end of *Through the Looking-Glass*. But whereas Carroll bemoans the loss of an idealized little girl who has turned into an actual woman, Kipling memorializes the loss of an actual child whose exceptional promise might well have been fulfilled as a grown-up. Unlike Carroll’s Alice, his Taffy is more than
a wishful self-projection; despite her early death, she can still stimulate his hopes that other Best Beloveds might effect a less traumatic passage from childhood to maturity than that which he had been forced to negotiate. If Kipling’s final poem is an elegy, it also celebrates the possibility of an imaginative blending. It is therefore closer, as I have already suggested, to Wordsworth’s “Lucy Gray” than to Carroll’s farewell verse. Yet Kipling avoids the first person that Wordsworth and Carroll use. He relies, instead, on the figure of Tegumai, who has himself long disappeared, whittled down into thin slices of bone, to dramatize a loss he tries to depersonalize through his art. Indeed, Art – “the figure” cut by “all the Tribe of Tegumai” – survives artists young and old (p. 123:11.1–2). Yet amidst a landscape in which “silence and the sun” remain sole constants, a ghost child can be glimpsed, “dancing through the fern / To lead the Surrey spring again” (123:11.4, 7–8). This prehistoric child may materialize on British Downs, yet she is suspiciously American, a little Pocahontas moving in her native land:

In moccasin and deer-skin cloak,
   Unfearing, free and fair she flits,
And lights her little damp-wood smoke
   To show her Daddy where she flits. (123:11.13–16)

The child’s perpetual motion directs the adult man she has preceded. She is still the active little girl who speaks in the Taffy stories and who had formerly, in real life, “put back the missing sentence” in her father’s narratives. But her voice has been muted:

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. (123:11.17–20)

IV

Angela Thirkell claimed that much “of the beloved Cousin Ruddy of our childhood died with Josephine” (Thirkell 311). Kipling never returned to the United States after Effie’s 1899 death in New York. Back in England, according to John Lockwood Kipling’s report, “house and garden” were full of “the lost child and poor Rud told his mother how he saw her when a door opened, when a space was vacant at the table, coming out of every green dark corner of the garden, radiant – and heartbreaking” (quoted by Green 175). If the composition of new Just So stories proved therapeutic as a revival of the old father-daughter collaborations, the termination of that project was clearly marked by
renewed pain. The text and drawings Kipling provided for the New York edition of “The Tabu Tale”, the third Taffy story he had kept out of the 1902 collection, suggest how difficult it became for him to close off, even artistically, his relation to the American “daughter that was all to him”.

In “How the Alphabet Was Made”, Taffy helped to create a system of signs that could be adopted by adults; in “The Tabu Tale”, however, she must master codes that are already known to her parents and have been harnessed by her tribe’s powerful shaman, the Head Chief. Whether contained in “magic necklaces” such as the one the Head Chief gives Taffy, in the “Big Tribal Tabu-pole” he places at a spot where fishing is forbidden, or in mere handsigns that she must learn from Tegumai, these tabus involve restrictions and prohibitions. As the Chief tells Taffy, “Tabu doesn’t mean anything till you break it” (1903 Just So Stories 235). Yet what the self-disciplining Taffy must learn turns out to be as essential for the adult as for the child. Both Taffy and her father need to discipline themselves in the face of death. He places the pair within a world of predation and casts them as hunting partners such as Leopard and Ethiopian – or Mowgli and Bagheera – had been.

But the youthful restlessness that Kipling had previously celebrated can become a liability in an order in which hunters may themselves be hunted. The Alphabet story had ended with a poem in which Taffy’s “flitting” still could symbolize the childhood energies Kipling wanted to tap. In “The Tabu Tale”, however, her lack of restraint makes her a poor hunting partner. Not until she masters “the Still Tabu sign” will her “wonderhugely pleased” father hail Taffy as “a superior girl-daughter” (1903 Just So Stories 248, 247). But her major test does not come when her stillness allows Tegumai to catch a nimble rabbit or even when she puts the Still Tabu on him in order to kill her own rabbit (247). Instead, it occurs when Taffy is herself threatened by death after “her Daddy had taken off all tabus” (248). Seen by Tegumai but not by Taffy, “a big, lean, grey wolf” who seems to have come straight out of Mowgli’s Jungle sneaks up on the girl (248). Even before she detects this grisly predator – “something black creeping sideways at her” – Taffy spots her father’s “Still Tabu sign” and freezes, thereby allowing both him and the Head Chief to throw their hatchets past her shoulder (249). It is the Chief who now certifies Taffy as a valued member of the tribe: “O Daughter of Tegumai, I saw everything that happened. You are a true tabu-girl. I am very pleased at you” (250). He awards her the wolfskin for a “winter cloak”, promises to make her a necklace out of the beast’s teeth and claws, and decides to paint this climactic scene “on wood on the Tribal Tabu-Count, so that all the girl-daughters of the Tribe can see and know and remember and understand” (251).
The father-playmate who had fashioned a letter necklace at the end of the Alphabet story thus is replaced by a far more powerful artist figure in “The Tabu Tale”. By inserting this thirteenth Just So story between “The Cat That Walked By Himself” and “The Butterfly That Stamped”, Kipling may have wanted readers to connect Taffy to the freedom-loving Cat who comes to accept social constraints and to link the Head Chief to Solomon as all-powerful patriarchs who vindicate heir ostensible inferiors. Yet the creation of this alternative father figure, who clearly prefers Taffy to Tegumai and whose hatchet would have killed the wolf even if Tegumai had faltered, also suggests that Taffy has approached a phase of existence in which more than a child-like “Daddy” is needed to help her master the art of stillness.

In the illustrations for “How the First Letter Was Written”, Kipling purportedly reproduced a child’s scribbles; but in the last illustration for “The Tabu Tale”, he claims to have rendered the Head Chief’s own depiction of the climactic killing of the wolf (see fig. 5). The long caption for this drawing explains that it is “done in the Head-Chiefly style of the Tribe of Tegumai, and it is full of Tabu meanings and signs” (252). The Chief, who stands with lifted hatchet at the top right, “has
no face, because the face of a Head Chief does not matter” (252).

The faceless Taffy, who is placed closer to him than to Tegumai, is drawn as a mere silhouette who seems to levitate above the ground. The caption laconically suggests that her near invisibility must be accepted as being just so: “Taffy is always drawn in outline – quite white”, like the two-headed beaver on top of a T shape that “is meant to be a Tabu tree” (252). The tree, the black wolf at its base, and a horizontal strip that shows the Ark that Kipling had used as a signature in other drawings (Ar/K = R.K.) tend to impinge upon the foregrounded figure of Tegumai in the lower left quadrant. Whereas the floating Taffy looks reposed and free, surrounded by blank space, Tegumai seems crowded and cramped into an awkward position. He is in the act of slaying Death, yet the child who seems to ascend toward the godlike Chief has entered a stillness that somehow belongs to a different order of reality.

Kipling was correct to leave out “The Tabu Tale” from all standard editions of the Just So Stories. Closer to an adult ghost story such as “They”, this tale hints at an impassable gulf between child and grown-up. The joyous traffic of the other tales no longer seems possible in a narrative that makes the sharing of “meanings and signs” difficult for both kinds of readers. Kipling informs us in the penultimate sentence that the “Still Tabu” was the “chief thing” that Taffy learned. He then offers a concluding paragraph made out of a single sentence: “That was why she was taken everywhere that her Daddy went” (256). The father who had fallen “down flat on the floor and shouted”, who had “curled himself up and rolled round” upon infringing on his daughter’s space earlier in the story, indulges in one last romp with Taffy and the Head Chief before she ceases to behave like a child (1903 Just So Stories 241). He must himself now learn adult self-discipline. In her stillness, Taffy/Effie has taught him the value of a restraint he needs to adopt when carrying her within wherever they go.


WORKS CITED


**NOTES**

1 For a discussion of “The Potted Princess” and its relation to “Baa, Baa Black Sheep”, see Knoepflmacher, 28–32. Dodge wrote to “Dear Mr. Kipling”: “How did you do it? Children will go wild with delight over the story, and the editor is simply shortling over the bewitching thing. Editors seldom know the joy of thorough satisfaction!” (19 Oct. 1892, quoted by Wright). For other satisfactions in Dodge’s long editorial career, see Gannon’s essay in *Children’s Literature*, 1997.

2 Still, the African story of “How the Leopard Got Its Spots”, printed a year after “The Elephant’s Child” and featuring an alliance between two childlike protagonists, may well have been first tried out on Effie’s two siblings. In December 1901, they probably were also exposed to “The Crab That Played with the Sea”, which was published by itself as late as August 1902, when John was five (Effie’s exact age in 1897, when the Whale, Camel, and Rhinoceros stories had appeared in print). December 1901 also saw the publication of “How the First Letter Was Written”, the first of three stories featuring Taffy and her father, Tegumai. Back at the Cape in early 1902, Kipling completed the last two stories for the 1902 volume, “The Cat That Walked by Himself” and “The Butterfly That Stamped” (Green 177). The dates of composition of the other two Taffy stories, “How the Alphabet Was Made” and “The Tabu Tale”, remain murky. Given their emphasis on his special relationship to Effie, Kipling may not have wanted to share these with Elsie and John.

3 Adding to the formalism, of course, is the decorated opening letter that Kipling drew as a skinning knife, just as in the opening of “How the Leopard Got His Spots”, the story he placed right after the *St. Nicholas* trio (although seventh in order of composition). Carved bones also appear in the Taffy stories: the “old tusk” inscribed by Taffy’s people “a very long time ago” (*Just So Stories* 98, 104) and the “magic Alphabet-necklace of all the letters” (119) I shall later discuss more...
fully. It seems significant that these representations of bone, as well as the initial T of the Armadillo story and the H for “The Cat That Walked By Himself”, should all appear in stories that feature collaborations. Depicted as palimpsests that retain engraved memories unerased by time, these relics also preserve the father.

The verses at the end of “How the Whale Got His Throat”, for example, seem an ebullient, but innocuous, address to a child who refuses to get seasick during a turbulent ocean voyage that even decimates the ship’s steward. The hardy “you” ostensibly resembles the resilient Mariner of the story. Yet the last lines, which establish the co-ordinates for that passage, introduce a more ominous subtext: the steamship careening on the latitude that offered a last glimpse of England and on the meridian that brings the first sight of the American continent is following the same trans-Atlantic course that caused Effie’s fatal pneumonia: “When Nursey lies on the floor in a heap, / And Mummy tells you to let her sleep, / And you aren’t waked or washed or dressed, / Why, then you will know (if you haven’t guessed) / You’re ‘Fifty North and Forty West!’” Like so many of the other settings in the Just So Stories, the space defined here acts as a rather special meeting place.

In this sense, the alliance resembles those formed against school bullies in Stalky & Co.

I defer to Maureen Thum, whose reading of Dwarf Long Nose appears in this volume [Children’s Literature 25: 1], to expound on the implications that nasal empowerment holds for a young male child. In Kipling’s fable of empowerment, the rock python plays the role that Hauff assigns to the long-nosed Herb Fairy, who passed on to Jacob both her culinary powers and her long proboscis.

Kipling placed an elephant and a turtle at the top left and top right of the first of the two full-page drawings he devised for “The Crab That Played with the Sea”, the tale he placed after the two Taffy stories (127).

When we are told that Tegumai’s name means “Man-who-does-not-put-his-foot-forward-in-a-hurry” (95), it is difficult not to associate him with Slow-and-Solid Tortoise in the previous story.

Given the “difficult temperament” that Elsie Kipling attributes to her mother, bonding with a playful father may have offered important relief to his children. Elsie claims that her mother’s “domination” and “possessive and rather jealous nature, both with regard to my father and to us children, made our lives very difficult”. Although she credits Carrie Kipling with “a keen, quick mind and ready wit, a business ability above the average”, and a mastery of “pain and sorrow”, she prefers to stress the constraints placed on a mate whose “kindly nature, patience, and utter loyalty to her prevented him from ever questioning this bondage” (Carrington 400). Kipling’s ambivalent relation to the maternal, discussed in my 1992 essay, clearly affected his own parenting. That ambivalence colors his portraits of mothers in five of the last six Just So Stories: “The Beginning of the Armadillos”, the two Taffy tales, “The Cat That Walked By Himself”, and “The Butterfly That Stamped”.

As a young man, Kipling had parodied “Lucy Gray”; yet Wordsworth’s poem about a drowned girl vainly sought by her grieving parents must have acquired a more serious dimension for him after Effie’s death, as the closing verses he placed at the end of “How the Alphabet Was Made” strongly suggest. The Kiplings bitterly reproached themselves for having insisted that Josephine accompany them on their sea journey.
The possibilities are multiple: the \( L \) that takes the place of the \( J \) might possibly stand for Elsie, who replaced Josephine as a daughter Kipling could address as his “Best Beloved” as late as 1914 (see Gilbert 169).

Five months after Effie’s death, Kipling wrote to Edmonia Hill: “I don’t think it likely that I shall ever come back to America. My little Maid loved it dearly (she was almost entirely American in her ways of thinking and looking at things) and it was in New York that we lost her” (quoted in Wilson 197).

Seymour-Smith’s remarks about Kipling’s quasi-gnostic sense of “personal unworthiness, his granting of all his genius to a daimon outside himself”, and Kipling’s own remarks to Haggard that “we should become unfitted for our work in the world” if allowed to see God’s face (213, 332), seem as pertinent here as in “They”, the ghost-story published a year after “The Tabu Tale”. In both cases, Kipling seems to follow In Memoriam, A.H.H.: striving to “paint / The face I knew” (70:2–3), Tennyson tries to find comfort in thoughts of a deity whose own face cannot be seen (“Prologue” 2–3).

The capital \( T \) that opens “The Tabu Tale” offers a good example of the difficulties posed by what has become a private symbology. With a curved bottom bar as long as its straight top bar, this letter can be read as a \( T \) even if it is inverted. But why? To capture the dual \( T \) alliterations of “Tabu/Tale” and “Taffy/Tegumai”? And why are six black Chinese letters that have no phonetic relation to a \( T \) placed inside the white letter? Were the outer four thinner signs – the simplest of which resembles the \( T \)-shape of the daggers and axe drawn for the earlier stories – chosen because they belonged to a more ancient Chinese alphabet that was carved on bones? Were the inner, fatter ones chosen as more modern representations of continuity and life?

Figure 6. Initial from “The Tabu Tale”
KIPLING AND THE USES OF POETRY

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INTRODUCTION
This paper is about the prosimetric conversation between poetry and prose in Kipling’s *Puck of Pook’s Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910), published at the period of imperial high noon and also of high literacy, and about the ways in which poetry for young people read and internalized in youth might connect to the prose of adulthood. By the “prose of adulthood”, I mean active intellectual, political military engagement in the public world within the context of British imperial thought in the twentieth. By “prosimetric”, a rhetorical term describing “the blending and mixing of verse and prose” (Harris and Reich) I mean the interpenetration of written or recited poetry with prose and spoken discourse. Kipling literally practiced prosimetrics, habitually writing prose interlarded with, introduced by and concluded with poetry. But particularly in *Puck of Puck’s Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910), did he juxtapose poetry and prose within a form specifically fashioned to teach service, history, nationalism, and empire.

Kipling came out of a prosimetric tradition which reached it apogee in the period of his lifespan, 1865–1936. During this era the role of poetry in British education was very substantial, both in the state and private systems, including public schools such as Kipling’s United Service College. Compulsory memorization was made part of the curriculum in British state schools in the 1870s and remained in place until the late 1940s. What would now be considered amazing feats of memorization were not rare: Catherine Robson has noted that in British state elementary schools in 1870, children were required to recite by heart 200 to 300 lines of approved English verse (*Heart Beats* 61). [As late as 1995, my son aged 12 was required by his teacher to learn the whole of Portia’s speech from *The Merchant of Venice* “The quality of mercy is not strained”. Ed.] Field Marshal Archibald Percival Wavell, the penultimate Viceroy of India (1943–1947), published in 1944 the anthology *Other Men’s Flowers*, consisting entirely of poems he knew by heart: a truly prodigious feat. It was an immediate and long-term success, selling 120,000 copies by 1979 (Connell 243), an astonishing record for a book dismissed by its hostile publisher’s reader as “familiar school recitations advancing in close formation”. Wavell’s dominant poet was Kipling (29 poems), followed closely by
Browning (21) and Chesterton (11), and Masefield (8), with smaller selections from others including Burns, Macaulay and Housman, plus the entire text of Fitzgerald’s *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. A very high percentage of these poems were in 1944 principally read by the young, often as school assignments, especially Kipling’s poems from *Puck of Puck’s Hill* and Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome*, from which Una shouts quotations to the wind at the start of ‘A Centurion of the Thirtieth’. “Because of the very memorability and familiarity of so many of the poems, people came to feel …that Wavell and his chosen poems ‘spoke for England’, or at least ‘a dream of England’” (Connell 246).

**THE PROSIMETRIC KIPLING**

The late Victorian and Edwardian era when Kipling became famous was also the high tide of the prosimetric, both in public speaking and in popular forms. In the novel especially – George Eliot is a notable example – poetic epigraphs not only stood at the beginnings of books but stood watch over every chapter. Late 19th and early 20th-century English prose was marbled with poetry like a good steak with fat, and nowhere more deliciously than in the works of Kipling.

It is not surprising that Kipling dominates Wavell’s anthology, for in Kipling’s poetry Wavell found all the qualities he prized – music, mystery, magic, metrical solidity, energy, declaimability. And he frequently found these poems embedded in prose narratives, for Kipling, that man with two sides to his head, was himself a prosimetric figure. T. S. Eliot famously argued that Kipling is a hybrid writer, a méteque, whose verse and prose are so inseparable that he must be treated “as the inventor of a mixed form” – by which, according to Harry Ricketts’ gloss, Eliot meant “a poem and story together” (Eliot 5, Ricketts 120). This is especially true of the “Puck” books. Intended for a mixed audience of children and adults, *Puck of Pook’s Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) are themselves a mix of prose and poetry; they contain a total of twenty-one stories and fifty-nine poems. The books are overtly mixed as to their motive; they are gorgeously aesthetic, “worked . . . in three or four overlaid tints and textures”, as Kipling famously wrote (*Something of Myself* 111), but also explicitly tendentious as to the matter of Britain. Indeed, Kipling called the books his “whack” at teaching England about the Empire (Gilmour 172). Although Kipling’s stories from *Actions and Reactions* (1909) onwards are habitually introduced and/or concluded with poems, the “Puck books” are his consummate prosimetric achievement. Their poems, most notoriously “If –”, have often been read separately but
it is within their prose context that they are most resonant. Within that context, the poetry of the “Puck” books fulfils a number of aesthetic and narrative tasks: to frame and comment on the historical narrative; to give the sense of history a formal metrical shape; and to permit a mention of material repressed by the prose tales, that is, to recognize the intolerable.

The principal role of frame poems and interpolated poems alike is to set off, highlight, and reinforce the stories. Almost without exception, the opening and closing poems thematically and formally underline the historical narrative. Sometimes the link is thematic; thus the introductory “Puck’s Song”, written in a ballad meter appropriate to the voice of the land, sings the past in the present English landscape which is the burden of the whole project. “Sir Richard’s Song”, a Norman’s chivalric love song to England and its people, also in a ballad variant, introduces “Young Man at the Manor”. The burden of the poem is peace-making, a sugaring over of the Norman Conquest – its literal formal burden, in the sense of “refrain”, is “And Love, in England, hath taken me!” The kenning “old grey Widow-maker” for the sea in “Harp Song of the Dane Women” evokes concisely the Viking element in British history, more elaborately adumbrated in “The Knights of the Joyous Venture”. The three stories of Roman Britain are framed by four poems, all relevant to empire. The opening “Cities and Thrones and Powers” is a pan-historic overview of the transience of civilisations, while the three other poems are explicitly directed at the Roman imperial power. “A British-Roman Song” mimics a Horatian Ode on the page with stanzas of three long lines, one short (as in the Sapphic stanza often used by Horace), and precisely addresses Parnesius’ dilemma of loyalty to distant, threatened Rome. This ode by a British-Roman to “that so-holy spot/ The very Rome/ Crowned by all Time, all Art, all Might”, is subtitled “(A.D. 406)”, dating it as just one year before the Roman legions were withdrawn from Britain in A.D. 407 and four years before the first sack of Rome in A.D. 410. Less ironically, “A Song to Mithras” is a universal soldier’s pledge to duty at all costs that is directly relevant to Parnesius and Pertinax. “A Pict Song”, which closes the imperial series, speaks in the voice of the empire’s resentful vanquished.

Other thematic links are pervasive, as witness the smuggler’s song “Poor Honest Men” tied to the tales of the smuggler-peddler Pharaoh Lee and the poaching song “The Ballad of Minepit Shaw” tied to “The Tree of Justice”. The link is sometimes specific to the characters of the tales. The dialect-rich “Bee Boy’s Song” (“pine away – dwine away”) prefaces “Dymchurch Flit’” in which the Bee Boy who is “not quite right in his wits” figures in a line of Holy Fools with a special connection to
bees and fairies. The Queen Elizabeth story “Gloriana” is sandwiched between two quasi-Elizabethan poems: “The Two Cousins”, written in the manner of Ben Jonson, which idealizes youthful sacrifice on behalf of “Belphoebe”, a courtly name for Elizabeth I, and “The Looking-Glass”, whose jaunty common meter more realistically invokes the tough-minded, ugly queen who in the end “faced the looking-glass (and whatever else there was)” – her withered beauty, her accusing ghosts, and maybe her imminent death.

Sometimes the link is to place. “The Knife and the Naked Chalk” is framed both by the place-names of “The Run of the Downs” (“Highden, Bignor and Duncton Down/ Knew Old England before the Crown”), and by its themes of technological innovation and sacrificial divinity in the refrain of the “Men’s Side”: “This is the Buyer of Blade- be afraid!/ This is the great God Tyr!”. “Philadelphia” is another place poem which embeds an allusion to the Irish immigrant song “I’m off to Philadelphia in the morning”, and marks the transition to the two stories set in the USA of the 1790s, when Philadelphia was temporarily its capital. It also links back, obliquely, with “Marklake Witches” and its heroine Philadelphia Bucksteed.

But the frame poems are seldom narrowly illustrative, nor do they always reinforce the prose. Indeed, just as the illustrations in children’s books go beyond or even contradict the verbal texts, so do Kipling’s poetic outriders recalibrate or undermine their companion stories. “If – ” as Kipling noted “broke free of Rewards and Fairies and ran around the world” (Something of Myself 111), and quite properly so. Though the poem is nominally linked to the noble George Washington of “Brother Square-Toes”, that connection is less persuasive than the poem’s drive towards generalization. Similarly “A St. Helen Lullaby”, that rueful elegiac summary of Napoleon’s career, is antithetical in tone to the prose depiction of the Bonaparte who appears at the end of in “A Priest in Spite of Himself”, as a sour, foul-mouthed, “lanky-haired, yellow-skinned little man, as nervous as a cat” (238). In the “Lullaby”, however, Kipling deploys his beloved fourteen (echoing the Elizabethan lullaby “In going to my naked bed”), to sketch Napoleon’s rise and fall through exchanges between a wakeful child and his nurse, her answers closing every quatrain with a proverbial warning: “No one thinks of winter when the grass is green!...When you can’t go forward you must e’en come back!” The final stanza offers compassion and reconciliation with an old enemy, encompassing both the inquisitive child who doesn’t want to go to sleep and the defeated emperor lying in his shroud:
“How far from St Helena to the Gate of Heaven’s Grace?”
“That no one knows – that no one knows – and no one ever will.
But close your hands across your heart and cover up your face,
And after all your trapesings, child, lie still!”

Other poems embedded within individual stories generally function allusively to deepen meaning, as with the beautiful pastiche of 18th century lyric sung by the consumptive Philadelphia in “Marklake Witches”:

I have given my heart to a flower,
Though I know it is fading away;
Though I know it will live but an hour
And leave me to mourn its decay!

The inspiration for this song was by the minor Augustan poet Shenstone, as Kipling explained in a letter to his US friend Edward Lucas White:

Shenstone has somewhere or other, about the end, I think, of a long and dreary ode, four lines of pure tears thus:

Yet time may diminish the pain.
The flower and the bud and the tree
That I reared for her pleasure in vain
In time may bring comfort to me.

– or words to that effect. I quote without the book but my heart knows it too well. Well! of course they were the words for my Philadelphia only they wouldn’t have been set to music. So I had to invent a new sort of parallel passage of about the same age and appearance (quoted in Carrington, 551)."

As Kipling indicates, the scene of Philadelphia’s song is full of poignant ironies, not all obvious. Having unknowingly overheard her own death sentence (“the subject of your remarks is not for any living man”), she just as unconsciously sings her own proleptic elegy. But also, as Kipling hinted to his friend, the confident, spirited, doomed girl named after an American city is partly drawn from his own bitter-sweet memories (“my heart knows it too well”) of his lost American daughter Josephine.
The imperial splendor that beguiles the children in “A Centurion of the Thirtieth” is counterpoised at the end by Puck’s incantation of an 13th-century *contemptus mundi* poem: “*Cur mundus militat sub vana Gloria/Cujus prosperitas est transitoria?*” [“Why does the world whose well-being is transitory seek such vainglory?”]. Here the irony is historical rather than personal. The lyric “Cities and Thrones and Powers” introduces the three Roman stories with extraordinary grace and an almost equal irony. Within the prose of the three tales, Roman Britain is irresistibly glamorous.10 Una is swept up in glitter and dazzle:

... a young man covered with hoopy bronze armor all glowing among the late broom. But what Una admired beyond all was his great bronze helmet with a red horse-tail that flocked in the wind. She could hear the long hairs rasp on his shimmery shoulder-plates. (“A Centurion of the Thirtieth” *PPH* 141).

There is also an implicit glamor in Parnesius and Pertinax’s knowingness, their intimate grasp of the exotic Other: “There is never harm in a Pict if you but take the trouble to find out what he wants” (“On the Great Wall”, *PPH* 185). Above all, there is a glamor in Parnesius’ tragic courage and devotion to duty in the face of disaster: “It concerns us to defend the Wall, no matter what Emperor dies, or makes die”, and the gay despairing valor of his friend Pertinax: “Myself I am without hope, so I do not say solemn and stupid things. Rouse the Wall!” (“The Winged Hats”, *PPH* 211). These three stories are the original core of the “Puck” books, which started with a suggestion from Kipling’s cousin Ambrose Poynter that he write “a yarn about an old Centurion of the Occupation telling his experiences to children”, giving Kipling the name ‘Parnesius’ (Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 108). Their sensuous, exotic, and stoical glamor is so vivid as to make the Roman legacy seem to offer a durable continuity of values. But with exquisite musicality “Cities and Throne and Powers” undermines all claims to definitive historical triumph:

So Time that is o’er kind
To all that be,
Ordains us e’en as blind
As bold as she:
That in our very death,
And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well-persuaded, saith
“See how our works endure!”
Though the “Puck” books are premised on the availability of the past in the present, the single brilliant epithet “well-persuaded” ironically undoes that whole project, not to mention the stoical cheering oneself-up that Parnesius and Pertinax, “shadow to shadow” carry out to Una’s and the reader’s admiration. Though the theme of transience is explicit in the poem, it is almost imperceptible because the diction, structure and rhythm are so graceful and musically satisfying. The diction gestures at perpetuity: “stand in Time’s eye”, “The Cities rise again” and (assuming one misses the scare quotes) “See how our works endure!” Moreover, the line movement of the short trimeters and dimeters is so fleet that, in lines 19 and 20 (“ordains us e’en as blind, / As bold as she”) that blindness is swallowed up in the boldness. Indeed the musicality of the poem is so emphatic, the traditional imagery of spring renewal so affirmative, that the poem’s thesis conflicts with the register in which it is written.

“A Pict Song”, complicates its contiguous prose narratives still more, for it cancels out the largely benign view of the Picts offered in the two prior Roman stories. Parnesius and Pertinax pride themselves on their fellowship with old Allo, on their anthropological and psychological understanding of the little Picts, “improvident little animals” (“On the Great Wall”, RF 186) – good little chaps, companionable on a hunt, predictable and controllable if you know how to handle them: “There is never harm in a Pict if you but take the trouble to find out what he wants” (185). The poem however says something else, speaking in the rarely heard, resentful voice of a conquered and but unreconciled enemy, weak but not to be ignored:

We are the worm in the wood!
We are the rot at the root!
We are the germ in the blood!
We are the thorn in the foot!

In this second stanza, Kipling foregrounds the imagery of the minuscule, the loathsome, the invisibly dangerous – worm, rot, germ, thorn – and falls into into disquieting pararhyme: wood/ root/ blood/ foot. The language is heavily monosyllabic, alliterative and Anglo-Saxon in origin, connoting (however inaccurately) the ur-language of Britain. Part of the achievement of the poem is its strange empathy: “[Rome’s] heavy hooves fall,/ On our stomachs, our hearts or our heads;/And Rome never heeds.” But this empathy is achieved without sympathy:
Mistletoe killing an oak—
   Rats gnawing cables in two—
Moths making holes in a cloak—
   How they must love what they do!

This is the voice of a persisting unseen, ever-resentful Other, the forgotten part of historical triumph ever waiting for the obliteration of that triumphal empire:

   We shall be slaves just the same?
      Yes, we have always been slaves;
   But you—you will die of the shame,
      And then we shall dance on your graves!

In addition to overt discursive framing and commentary, the “Puck” poems offer a dazzling sweep of metrical and formal styles. These formal elements deepen the sense of history. The prose narratives which all unfold, whether set in the Iron or Elizabethan or Georgian Age, in the discourse and syntax of the early 20th century (writing for modern children, what else could Kipling have done?) True, this modernity is considerably modified by the un-modern idioms given to the historical characters – the archaic idiolect of Sir Richard Dalyngridge (“I did heartily pray for my schoolmate Hugh his health”), the formality of Kadmiel the medieval Spanish Jew (“How can a man be wise if he hate?”) and the old-fashioned Sussex speech of the labourer Hobden: “Dat’s jus’ right!” (PPH, 43 292; R & F 336). But the base-line is always the contemporary dialogue of the children and Puck: “What happened to old Allo? Did the Winged Hats ever come back?” (PH 224). The poems, in contrast, are written in multiple forms and meters. It is the metrical power of poetry – the beat, the rhythm – that makes it more somatic and memorable than prose; just as Dan and Una are “seized” of England by grasping a physical piece of earth, so the reader is seized of Britain by responding to the metrical patterns of multiple British traditions. The two books offer a set of time-travelling songs, lullabies, shanties, ballads, carols, chants, riddles, odes, kennings. An idealized and heroic Roman tradition is rhythmically embodied in a pseudo-Roman ode (“A British-Roman Song”), while the “Song to Mithras” is given a classical feel by its hexameter, though this is iambic, not the classical dactylic. Most of the poems use folk and popular meters, as a way of metrically embodying the voice and life of the people. The most frequent form is the ballad, articulated usually by the anonymous national bard with and without refrains: “Puck’s Song”, “A Tree Song”, “Sir Richard’s Song”, “A Truthful Song”, “Brookland
Road”, “Eddi’s Service”, and “The Ballad of Minepit Shaw”. There is a lullaby, and there is a proper sea shanty with lots of heave-ho-ing in “Frankie’s Trade”, with its refrain “All round the Sands!”.

There are several name poems: place-names are used as incantations in “The Run of the Downs”, and traditional plant names are chanted in “Our Fathers of Old” with its list of “Alexanders and Marigold, Eyebright, Orris and Elecampane, Basil, Rocket, Valerian, Rue, (Almost singing themselves they run)”. There are four-stress quatrain poems that draw on folk poetry: “King Henry and the Shipwrights” and “The Smuggler’s Song”, while “Philadelphia” draws on a popular Irish song. The jingles of nursery rhyme are present in “The Bee Boy’s Song” (“die away—fly away”/ “pine away—dwine away”). Evoking the remote Anglo-Saxon/Nordic past, Kipling furnishes a cryptic riddle poem “The Runes on Weland’s Sword” and an approximation of the Anglo-Saxon kenning in the “old grey Widow-maker” of “Harp Song of the Dane Women”.

Kipling is especially deft at adapting 16th and 17th-century style, using the headless tetrameter couplet used by 17th-century poets such as Jonson, Herrick, Marvell, Milton. This is also he closing song of Shakespeare’s Puck, whose tetrameter couplets (“While the heavy ploughman snores,/ All his weary task fordone”) lurk under “A Charm”:

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

Another 17th-century appropriation is Kipling’s reworking of the stanza used by Jonson in his “Ode on Cary and Morrison”, which he adapted in “The Two Cousins” prefacing the story “Gloriana”. Both poems honor youth, “Two so early men” (Jonson) whose “years/ Which, though so few, yet so divinely ended” (Kipling), share an almost indistinguishable idiom. “Cities and Thrones and Powers” uses the Caroline pattern of Herbert’s “The Flower” (“Grief melts away/ Like snow in May/ As if there were no such cold thing”) and Herrick’s “Daffodils” (“We die/ As your hours do, and fly/Away”) whose one or two-foot lines suggest the brevity and fragility of existence.

Kipling also draws on the forms of religious poetry to conclude each volume in a religious register. “The Children’s Song” is pure hymn; it was sung in early 20th century churches, including the chapel in John Kipling’s prep school (Lycett 401). [When I was a schoolgirl in the 1960s, we sang it at school assembly every Remembrance Day.
Ed.] *Rewards and Fairies* concludes the dark tale “The Tree of Justice” with the concord of “A Carol” whose refrain “And who shall judge the Lord?” has well been described as, “a zestful, carolling reprise of God’s challenge to Job out of the whirlwind”.12

Though most of the Puck poems fit squarely into traditional formal and metrical patterns, there are also some uncanny lyrics of inassimilable otherness: “A Pict Song”, “Song of the Fifth River” and “The Way through the Woods”. With its thesis of permanent and powerful resentment, “A Pict Song” is dissonant, offering pararhyme instead of the satisfaction of full rhyme, and an end line in which nothing is ended: “*We are the Little Folk, we!* etc.” The awkward outlying “etc.” suggests perpetual enmity and threat. Another kind of otherness, this time of the Jew, is embodied in the heavily unmelodious “Song of the Fifth River”. Despite its iambic trimeter regularity, the syntactical inversions (“To each was appointed a Man/ Her Prince and Ruler to be”; “And, fed by a thousand springs/ That comfort the market-place,/ Or sap the power of Kings,/The Fifth Great River had birth”), and the portentous capitalizations – Eden Tree, Four Great Rivers, a Man, a Prince and Ruler, the Fifth Great River, thy Race, the Secret River of Gold – all make the movement of the poem ponderous and puzzling. The intricately shifting rhyme scheme disquietingly suspends matching rhymes, so that in the final stanza there is a delay of seven lines before the second line finds its matching rhyme “alone” in the penultimate one:

A Prince without a Sword,
A Ruler without a Throne;
Israel follows his quest.
In every land a guest.
Of many lands the lord,
In no land King is he.
But the Fifth Great River keeps
The secret of Her deeps,
For Israel alone,
As it was ordered to be.

Slow, measured, discordant, portentous, the poem is an equivocal tribute to a shadowy river of Jewish plutocracy. If not overtly anti-Semitic it nonetheless creates an uncanny drone of primordial otherness.13

The most subtle power of the Puck poems is their double mode of encompassing history. Though explicitly dedicated to instilling historic knowledge, the Puck books are nevertheless grounded in the rule that history cannot be known consciously; at best it can be absorbed.14 Though Puck gives Dan and Una a unique access to deep England, though they
are “seized” of their country, they possess this intense knowledge only on the condition of forgetting it. After every encounter they must eat or otherwise internalize the magic leaves, Oak and Ash, and Thorn, absorb their Englishness rather than cognitively mastering it. While there is no evidence that that Kipling had read Renan’s “What is a Nation” (1882) the Puck books pretty much concur that “Forgetfulness ‘is essential to national formation’”, that “the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things”. By absorbing these emphatically English leaves – and presumably by reading the leaves of these English books – the children both forget the particulars and become even deeper patriots. The specifics are gone but the spiritual formation remains.

If history can be absorbed without being specifically remembered, then it makes sense that each of the prose stories is set up as a writing followed by an unwriting, an experiencing and then a forgetting of an encounter. At the end of each story the gates of the past and the gate of memory are closed just like Una’s garden gate that “shut behind her, at the same time as Puck threw the memory-magicking Oak, Ash, and Thorn” (“A Centurion of the Thirtieth”, PPH 160). But key poems, unlike the prose, are less about the unwriting than the uncanniness of the past. They are set up to incorporate absence; indeed, they regularly invoke loss: “Trackway and Camp and City lost” or “the old lost road through the woods”. The poems, some of them, speak more to trace than encounter, less to history than to enchantment, less to recorded historic events than the intimation of something that might have been there. Thus “Puck’s Song”, the keynote text of the two books, invokes a haunted but decodable England of “the dimpled track...all hollow through the wheat” and “the trace/Of mound and ditch and wall” and “marks that show and fade, /Like shadows on the Downs”. The poem “A Charm”, which opens Rewards and Fairies promises to turn nothing into something, to make those who never counted for anything count now: “the mere uncounted folk/ Of whose life and death is none/Report or lamentation”. The incantation makes the invisible visible by uncovering “treasure hid/ Thy familiar fields amid...” Similarly, “the Way through the Woods” is all glimpses and traces and ghosts with “the swish of a skirt in the dew”. It is also about the uncanny knowledge that is deeper than cognition, a past that is totally lost and not available but intuited all the same. Poetry can speak of what is hardly there: “The old lost road through the woods, /But there is no road through the woods.”

The poetry of the Puck books promises to deliver to the reader an England that “is not any common earth” but “Merlin’s isle of Gramarye/Where you and I will fare”. The poems deliver on that promise by
themselves incarnating that “Isle of Gramarye”. The vanished past is available only in the textual version – the glamor known through the grammar. Through the magic leaves of poetry what is lost can be internalized, revisited, and held within the self.

For Kipling, the formal shapeliness and metrical solidity of poems – rigorous, sonorous, and lithe – could impose order and also distance on the multiplicity and stress of the world around and within them. The realm of poetry was a matter of liberating traces and ghosts – whether the traces of a child-self learning Horatius at the Bridge, or the traces of a lost realm, like the ghost road through the woods, that is and is not there.

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—— Rewards and Fairies. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911.


**NOTES**

1 In “prosimetric” texts, the prose dominates, but where verse predominates the term “versiprose” is sometimes used (Harris and Reichl 10).


3 Of the Kipling selections, six are drawn from the Puck books. Wavell also included their *leitmotif*, Richard Corbet’s “The Fairies’ Farewell”.

4 See Keating, chapter 2 (“Poetry and Prose”), especially pp. 26–8.

5 *Puck of Pook’s Hill* contains ten stories in prose, sixteen frame poems, and eleven inserted poems (not all by Kipling). *Rewards and Fairies* consists of eleven prose stories, twenty-two frame poems and ten inserted poems.

6 In *SOM* (Pinney 111) Kipling explains this mixture, depicting his consciously gorgeous craftsmanship as the counterbalance to “my ‘Imperialistic’ output in the past”.

7 This is the leading thesis of Perry Nodelman’s *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children’s Picture Books* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988).


9 Kipling wrote to his friend Edmonia Hill July 30, 1899, five months after Josephine died, “I don’t think it likely that I shall ever come back to America. My little Maid loved it dearly (she was almost entirely American in her ways of thinking and looking at things)”. *Letters of Rudyard Kipling vol. 3 1900–1910* ed. Thomas C. Pinney (Macmillan 1990), 376.


12 Donald Mackenzie, “Kipling and Northernness”, *Kipling Journal* no. 319, September 2007, p. 34.

Consciousness is a threat throughout the Puck books. In the final story, “The Tree of Justice”, Harold can remain alive only until he reveals himself. The sleeping dormouse mustn’t be breathed on and awakened: “It’ll make him warm and he’ll wake up and die straight off” (italics mine). See also Kipling’s aside in *Something of Myself* (106): “Every nation, like every individual, walks in a vain show – else it could not live with itself.”

By titling his album of Puck songs set to music “Merlin’s Isle of Gramarye” Peter Bellamy suggests the same equation.
I was glad to read in the *Kipling Journal* 365 (September 2016) that when the speakers at the Kipling conference at Shimla in April 2017 toured the city, they visited the Gaiety Theatre. According to the 1971 newsletter of National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA), Simla’s Amateur Dramatic Club, founded 1837, is the oldest in the world. Its performances took place in Simla’s Assembly Rooms and latterly in the the Gaiety Theatre, “effectively a miniature opera house”, of which the Simla ADC was the lessee for 60 years, from 1888 until the management passed into Indian hands with independence in 1948. “The Theatre had 116 stall seats, two ‘Honeymoon’ boxes, nine other boxes, a dress circle and a gallery with total capacity of 280 seats. The stage was remarkable in size with a proscenium opening comparable to London’s Ambassador, and acting depth greater than that of the Wyndham Theatre… Between 1888 and 1945, the Club presented over 500 plays and musical works. The patrons, players and other contributors to the Clubs activities read as a ‘Who’s Who’ of the famous who served or worked in India – not only were all the Viceroyys, Commanders-in-Chief of India and the Governors of the Punjab regular patrons, but many were more actively involved, along with such personalities as Baden-Powell, Godfrey Williams and Rudyard Kipling. It is recorded that Colonel Neville Chamberlain produced a burlesque entitled *Lucia de Lammermoor* with a prologue composed by Rudyard Kipling, and that Count Richthofen [the future air ‘ace’ known as the ‘Red Baron’: *Ed.*] purchased Box No. 2 for the first night of each performance of the 1908 season.” Performances continued through the 1930s and during the 1939–1945 war. For the 1947 Declaration of Independence, Graham Lomas directed *Jane Steps Out*.

Some years ago, Miss Bruce-Hays bequeathed her photographs and records of the Simla ADC to the Royal Over-Seas League, where Kipling Society holds its meetings. Has any member viewed the bequest?

*Helen Mills*
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[Visiting the Gaiety Theatre was one of the high spots of our Shimla tour. It has been very well preserved, and contains a large and fascinating photographic exhibition of several productions during its glory days. *Ed.*]
ABOUT THE KIPLING SOCIETY

The Kipling Society is for anyone interested in the prose and verse, and the life and times, of Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936). It is one of the most active and enduring literary societies in Britain and, as the only one which focuses on Kipling and his place in English Literature, attracts a world-wide membership. (Details from the Society’s website and membership forms from the Membership Secretary, Kipling Society, 31 Brookside, Billericay, Essex CM11 1DT. 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 the Haileybury, Hertfordshire, and Special Collection, Sussex University
- answering enquiries from the public (schools, publishers, writers and the media), and providing speakers on request,
- arranging a regular programme of lectures, and a formal Annual Luncheon with a Guest Speaker,
- running the web-site at www.kipling.org.uk for members of the Society and anyone else around the world with an interest in the life and work of Rudyard Kipling,
- and publishing the Kipling Journal, every quarter.

The Journal of the Society aims to entertain and inform. It is sent to subscribing paying members all over the world free of charge. This includes libraries, English Faculties, and ‘Journal – only’ members. Since 1927, the Journal has published important items by Kipling, not readily found elsewhere, valuable historical information, and literary comment by authorities in their field, following 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 online to members or in our Library. Apply to: The Librarian, Kipling Society, 56, Chaplin Drive, Headcorn, Ashford, Kent TN27 9TN, England or email to jwawalker@gmail.com

The Editor of the Kipling Journal publishes membership news, Society events, the texts of talks given by invited speakers, and articles on all aspects of Kipling and his work. She 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 500 and 5000 words are especially welcome. Write to: The Editor, Kipling Journal, 36, St Dunstan’s Street, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8BZ, U.K., or email jem1@kent.ac.uk
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Universities and libraries are £2 (or the currency equivalent) more than the corresponding individual rate.

Cheques are accepted made out to the Kipling Society and drawn on British banks in pounds, on US banks in dollars or on European banks in Euros. For other currencies please use either a Bank Draft or a Bank Transfer in pounds sterling. Transfers should be made to the Kipling Society account at Lloyds TSB, Old Bond Street, London, using our International Bank Account Number (IBAN) GB18LOYD30962400114978 and the Bank Identity Code (BIC) LOYDGB21014.

Members who pay their subscriptions from UK taxed income may increase the value of their subscription to the Society by completing a Gift Aid Declaration, available from the Membership Secretary. This enables the Society to reclaim from H.M. Revenue and Customs the tax paid on subscriptions.

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

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