

Introduction and acknowledgements.

The Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge Volume LXXVII for 1964 contains the Kipling Centenary Paper “Kipling and the Craft” by Harry Carr. I could not hope in this article to produce anything of that quality and depth. However, that volume is not readily available and those interested in this fascinating Mason will find here something to wet their appetite.

I have also relied heavily on the details concerning Rudyard Kipling on the most excellent web site of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and the Yukon and on the details on the brilliant site of the Rudyard Kipling Society.

The address's of these two excellent sites are:-

<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/>

<http://www.kipling.org.uk/>

Please visit both of these sites. There is much of interest.

Alec Hall.

Brother Rudyard Kipling.

*THERE was Rundle, Station Master,
An' Beazeley of the Rail,
An' 'Ackman, Commissariat,
An' Donkin' o' the Jail;
An' Blake, Conductor-Sergeant,
Our Master twice was 'e,
With im that kept the Europe-shop,
Old Framjee Eduljee.*

*Outside - "Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!
Inside - 'Brother," an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
An' I was junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there!*

These are the first two stanzas of Rudyard Kipling poem, "Mother Lodge". If you can spare the time to read this short booklet, you may agree that Rudyard Kipling was a brilliant and remarkable man, deserving of more attention than is now given to him, particularly in Masonic circles.

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, on the 30th December 1865. His father, John Lockwood Kipling, the eldest son of a Methodist minister, was an artist and teacher of architectural sculpture. John was appointed Principal of a new arts school in Bombay. John's wife and Rudyard's mother Alice, was one of the talented and beautiful MacDonald sisters, four of whom married remarkable men, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Sir Edward Poynter, Alfred Baldwin, and John Lockwood Kipling himself. (Burne-Jones and Poynter were celebrated artists of the period whilst Baldwin was an M.P. and industrialist.)

In 1868, the family returned to England where Rudyard's sister Alice (Trix) was born. The family then returned to India.

Rudyard's early years were blissfully happy in an India full of exotic sights and sounds but, in 1871 Rudyard and Trix were again taken to England and left there for six years, boarding with Captain and Mrs. Holloway at Lorne Lodge, Southsea, their parents again returned to India. Captain Holloway died. Mrs. Holloway disliked Rudyard who was bullied by her son and Rudyard became deeply unhappy. He later described holidays he spent in London with his Aunt Mrs. Georgina Burne-Jones as a "paradise that I verily believe saved me."

His Mother, Alice, returned from India in 1877 and took Rudyard away from Southsea although Trix remained there for some time. Rudyard became a pupil at the United Services College, Westward Ho!, Devon which was a cheap boarding school for the sons of army officers and civil servants, where the conditions were Spartan but the teaching good.

Returning to Southsea to fetch his sister Trix, he fell in love with her fellow boarder, Florence Gerrard although his feelings were, it seems, not reciprocated. Their relationship was broken off and resumed several times.

Rudyard was made editor of the school magazine and produced a booklet of poems,

“*Schoolboy Lyrics*” which were published by his parents without his knowledge.

In October 1880 at the tender age of 15, he returned to India and travelled to rejoin his parents at Lahore where he began writing as a sub-editor/assistant editor for "The Civil and Military Gazette", a local English language newspaper for the British in North India.

In 1883/4, his verses were published in The Englishman of Calcutta and in the Civil and Military Gazette and a joint venture by Rudyard and Trix, a series of parodies “*Echos by two writers.*”

This would seem to be a good point to address Rudyard Kipling’s brief but very important Masonic career.

He was initiated a Freemason in Lodge Hope and Perseverance, No. 782, E.C., at Lahore, on the 5th of April, 1886. Being under 21 years of age, a Dispensation for his initiation was procured from the District Grand Master. His proposer was Wor. Bro. Colonel O. Menzies; he was seconded by Bro. C. Brown. He was initiated by the W.M., Bro. Colonel G. B. Wolseley. He was passed on May 3rd following, there being only seven Brethren present, and raised on the 6th December, 1886. The same evening that he was raised, he was elected secretary of his Lodge so that he recorded his own initiation in the minutes of his Lodge.

A few months later, he delivered a lecture to his Brethren on the "Origin of the Craft First Degree."

He advanced in the Mark Degree in Fidelity Mark Lodge on April 12, 1887 and was elevated in Mt. Ararat Mark Mariners Lodge at Lahore on the same day. He attended an Installation meeting of Independence with Philanthropy Lodge No. 391 at Allahabad, Bengal on December 22, 1887. On March 4, 1889, he demitted from his Craft Lodge and resigned from his other Lodges three months later on June 30, 1889.

Returning to England, he was offered an honorary membership with Author’s lodge No. 3456 sometime after its founding in 1910 and with Motherland Lodge No. 3861, London, in 1918. There is no record of him attending either of these Lodges. He was a Founding Member of Builders of the Silent Cities Lodge No. 12, retaining his membership until his death. In 1905, Canongate-Kilwinning Lodge No. 2, Edinburgh, Scotland chose him as Poet Laureate as they had a previous Brother, Robert Burns. The Philalethes Research Society in North America also lists him as an honorary member although there is no record of any attendance, correspondence or submission of research papers. Kipling joined the Quatuor Coronati Correspondence Circle in May, 1918, remaining a member until his death. Although he paid his dues promptly, there is no record of his attending a meeting. On November 17, 1924 he is recorded as attending Rosemary Lodge No. 2851 E.C., giving his Lodge as Motherland No. 3861.

In 1925, he wrote in the London Times, "I was Secretary for some years of Hope and Perseverance Lodge No. 782, E.C. Lahore which included Brethren of at least four creeds. I was entered by a member of Bramo Somaj, a Hindu; passed by a Mohammedan, and raised by an Englishman. Our Tyler was an Indian Jew. We met, of course, on the level, and the only difference anyone would notice was that at our banquets, some of the Brethren, who were debarred by caste from eating food not ceremonially prepared, sat over empty plates." The Lodge minutes prove the details of his Entry to be wrong and those of Passing are probably

wrong also. However, the Tyler was indeed a Jew.

Nevertheless, it does illustrate that Rudyard was enthralled with the Craft and the principles laid down by Anderson in the first Constitution of 1723 and, even if his connection with the Craft was so short in an active sense, it clearly made a lasting impression on him and coloured much of his writing throughout his life. Rudyard was a retiring man and it may be that he would not have wished for the attention he would have received from the brethren if he had attended Lodges.

In 1886 Rudyard spent a month at Simla as correspondent of *The Pioneer*, a larger paper also owned by the proprietors of the *Civil and Military Gazette*. *Departmental Ditties*, comic poems about English in India, privately printed and immediately sold out. Second edition by Thacker, Spink & Co. of Calcutta. The following year he transferred to *The Pioneer* at Allahabad and made friends with Professor Alec Hill and his American wife Edmonia, who would become an important influence. Sent to Rajputana as special correspondent, writing articles afterwards collected as *Letters of Marque (1891)* (republished in *From Sea to Sea, Vol. 1*).

In 1888, Kipling went to board with the Hills at their house in Allahabad. Made the editor of a weekly supplement *The Week's News*. *Plain Tales from the Hills* published by Thacker Spink, his Railway Library series of short stories were published in six paperback volumes: *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys*, *In Black and White*, *Under the Deodars*, *The Phantom Rickshaw*, *Wee Willie Winkie*. (all these later collected as *Soldiers Three and other Stories* and *Wee Willie Winkie and other Stories*).

As *The Pioneer's* roving reporter, in 1889, Rudyard left India and travelled widely with the Hill's and eventually crossed America to visiting Mrs. Hill's at her family's home in Beaver Pennsylvania, where he met her sister Caroline Taylor, to whom he became informally engaged.

He travelled to London in September and took rooms in Villiers St, off the Strand and retained A.P. Watt as his literary agent. He became so famous that his work was the subject of an editorial in *The Times*. His 'unofficial' engagement to Caroline Taylor was broken off and he met his childhood sweetheart, Flo Garrard in the street and tried unsuccessfully to resume the relationship.

He made a new friend, American writer and publisher Wolcott Balestier, and met his mother and sisters. Kipling then wrote novel *The Light that Failed*. *The City of Dreadful Night*.

Kipling spent 18 days in NZ arriving in Wellington on 18 October 1891, telling the Special Correspondent for The Press (a Christchurch newspaper) "I have only come for a loaf and to see pretty things". He didn't have much time for loafing as he travelled between the four main centres - Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin, visiting the "thermal district" around Taupo which gave him the setting for his largely forgotten story "One Lady at Wairakei"

In 1892, he married Walcott's sister, Caroline Starr Balestier, through whom he became acquainted with notable American authors of the day. He received an honorary degree from Oxford University in 1907 along with one of his contemporaries, Mark Twain. During that same year he was granted the Nobel prize for literature, the first British writer so honoured.

Rudyard and Caroline had three children, Josephine, Elsie and John. It was after the birth of Josephine that Kipling began writing childrens books among the most well known of which is the *Jungle Book*. While on their last visit to America, the family became ill and their daughter Josephine died.

In 1900 he visited South Africa and became friendly with Cecil Rhodes and Baden-Powell. It is well known that Baden-Powell borrowed heavily from his friend Rudyard Kipling when he created the Cub Scout programme.

After the outbreak of the Boer War, Rudyard had become involved and contributed to, a campaign for service charities called "*The Absent Minded Beggar Fund*" after a poem which Rudyard had written.

Kipling was also much involved in the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, and King George V became a personal friend. The Kipling's travelled a great deal and at the outset of one of their visits, in January 1936, Rudyard died, just three days before his King. He had declined most of the many honours which had been offered him, including a knighthood, the Poet Laureateship, and the Order of Merit.

In 1902, the family had sold their American home and moved to Bateman's, Burwash, Sussex which was to be their home until Caroline died in 1940. She bequeathed their home to the National Trust. The property is now open to the public.

Their son John was killed in action in the first world War.

Mrs. Elsie Bambridge, Rudyard Kipling's sole surviving daughter, died childless. His copyright was bequeathed by her to the National Trust.

Of course, Rudyard Kipling had his critics However, his contemporary admirers say that he had brought together the far flung members of the British Empire as no other writer had done. One commentator said: "It would almost seem that his mission was to bind the British Empire together in one blood-brotherhood, a purposive Masonic Lodge, whose business it is to cleanse the world of shoddy." It is said that "his position in English political thought and feeling is such as no other English imaginative writer not even Milton has ever occupied. His most strongly marked characteristic is energy. He glorifies the man of action above all men."

Turning now to the Masonic references in his writings.

The Man Who Would Be King. (1888) One of his best stories with the following conversation between a journalist and others on a train journey through India.

"I ask you as a stranger - going to the West" he said with emphasis,

"Where have you come from" said I?

"From the East", he said, "and I am hoping that you will give him the message on the square - for the sake of my Mother as well as your own."

The Poem, “**The Widow of Windsor**” ends with a play on the Tylers Toast.

*“Then ‘ere’s to the sons o’ the Widow,
Whereever, ‘owever they roam,
‘Ere’s all they desire, an’ if they require’
A speedy return to their ‘ome.
(Poor beggars – they’ll never see ‘ome.)”*

One of Kipling’s many military tales is “With the Main Guard” (Aug. 1888) which is a story told by Mulvany, a wild Irishman and the remarks concern fierce hand to hand fighting with Parthan tribesmen.

““Knee to knee!” sings out Crook, wid a laugh whin the rush av our comin’ into the gut shtopped, an’ he was huggin’ a hairy great Paythan, neither bein’ able to do anything to the other, tho’ both was wishful.

*““Breast to breast!” he sez, as the Tyrone was pushin’ us forward closer an’ closer.
“An’ hand over back!” sez a Sargint that was behin’. I saw a sword lick out past Crook’s ear, an’ the Paythan was tuk in the apple av his throat like a pig at Dromeen Fair.*

““Thank ye, Brother Inner Guard,” sez Crook, cool as a cucumber widout salt. “I wanted that room.” An’ he went forward by the thickness av a man’s body, havin’ turned the Paythan undher him. The man bit the heel off Crook’s boot in his death-bite.

Finally, probably the best story ever told by Kipling - from a Masonic point of view- is “**In the Best Interests of the Brethren**”

The story takes place toward the end of the First World War and is told by an unnamed narrator who meets and becomes friendly with Lewis Burges of Burges and Son, a Tobacconist. ‘Son’ had been killed in Egypt.

Burges and other Brethren from the Lodge Faith and Works, No. 5837, which meets in a converted Garage, open their doors at regular meetings to the many servicemen travelling through London and hold a Lodge of Instruction in the evenings and afternoons twice a week with a banquet to follow. The afternoon L of I is primarily for the wounded soldiers hospitalised in London. Bruges shows our narrator into the Lodge.

“You mustn’t expect-” he was still saying when we stumbled up a porch and entered a carefully decorated anteroom hung round with masonic prints. I noticed Peter Gilkes and Barton Wilson, fathers of “Emulation” working, in the place of honour; Kneller’s Christopher Wren; Dunkerley, with his own Fitz-George book-plate below and the bend sinister on the Royal Arms; Hogarth’s caricature of Wilkes, also his disreputable “Night,” and a beautifully framed set of Grand Masters, from Anthony Sayer down.

The visitors have to ‘prove’ themselves in whatever way they can for very few of them have ‘papers’. Our narrator, with other members of the Lodge, examines the visitors.

Brother Burges assigned me my discreet box, saying: "Don't be surprised. They come all shapes."

"Shaped' was not a bad description, for my first penitent was all head-bandages-escaped from an Officers' Hospital, Pentonville way. He asked me in profane Scots how I expected a man with only six teeth and half a lower lip to speak to any purpose, and we compromised on signs. The next - a New Zealander from Taranaki - reversed the process, for he was one-armed, and that in a sling. I mistrusted an enormous Sergeant-Major of Heavy Artillery, who struck me as much too glib, so I sent him on to Brother Lemming in the next box, who discovered he was a Past District Grand Officer. My last man nearly broke me down altogether. Everything seemed to have gone from him.

After the Lodge of Instruction had closed, with visitors acting as Lodge Officers, the Doctor who is a member of the Lodge Faith and Works, responds to the narrators question, "how did it all happen?"

"Brother Burges started it. He used to talk to the men who dropped into his shop when the war began. He told us sleepy old chaps in Lodge that what men wanted more than anything else was Lodges where they could sit-just sit and be happy like we are now. He was right, too. He generally is. We're learning things in the War. A man's lodge means more to him than people imagine. As our friend on your right said just now, very often Masonry's the only practical creed we've ever listened to since we were children. Platitudes or no platitudes, it squares with what everybody knows ought to be done." He sighed. "And if this war hasn't brought home the Brotherhood of Man to us all, I'm a-a Hun!"