



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PAPER No: 196.

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DATE: 22 November 2011.

Bro. JOSEPH RUDYARD KIPLING

(~~1837~~ - 1936)

1865

The life of Bro. Rudyard Kipling. His father John Lockwood Kipling was born on 6 July 1837, the eldest son of a Methodist Minister. At the age of 22 he settled in Burslem to gain experience in designing pottery. He married Alice Macdonald, the daughter of the local Minister.

The Macdonalds were a large and remarkable family. One sister married the highly successful nineteenth-century painter Sir Edward Burne-Jones and the other Sir Edward Poynter while the third married Alfred Baldwin and became the mother of Stanley Baldwin, later Prime Minister. John Lockwood Kipling was appointed Curator of the Museum at Lahore in the Punjab and appointed Principal of the Mayo School of Art.

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was born on 30 December 1865 in Bombay.

In March 1868 the family returned to England briefly where his sisters Trix and Alice were born. They returned again in 1871 for a six-month furlough and during this time his parents arranged for the children to be boarded with a retired sea captain and his wife in Southsea. It was here that during 1878 - 1882 he went on to the United Services College at Westford Ho, North Devon.

On 20 September 1882 he sailed for India and arrived in October 1882. In November he commenced work as assistant editor on the *Civil and Military Gazette*. He was transferred to the *Allahabad Pioneer* newspaper and began writing the verse and stories that were to bring him fame, collected under the titles "*Plain Tales from the Hills*" "*Soldiers Three*," "*Wee Willie Winkie*," "*In Black and White*," "*The Phantom Rickshaw*". Between 1887 and 1889 he journeyed extensively in Asia and America. One of his ports of call was Moulamein in Burma. This gave him the inspiration to write "Mandalay", made popular in song by Bro. Peter Dawson and others as "*The Road to Mandalay*."

When Kipling returned to England in 1889, he lived in London where his reputation had preceded him and within a year he was acclaimed as one of the most brilliant prose writers of his time.

In August 1891 he again set out on a voyage around the world. In Capetown he met Bro. Cecil Rhodes who ultimately became a good friend. He called in on New Zealand, wrote a short story about "*The Lady of Waikiki*," a few days in Australia; mainly in Melbourne and with General Booth of the Salvation Army on to Colombo.

Back in London in January 1892 Kipling married Caroline Starr Balestier and from this time on Carrie, as she was known, was the force behind him. She watched his health, shielded him from intruders, kept his accounts, managed their homes and bore him three children. They went to live in Vermont in America and it was here that he published "*The Light that Failed*" (1890) and "*Captains Courageous*" (1897). While in America he became friendly with Bro. Samuel Clemens, Mark Twain with whom he was to receive an honorary degree from Oxford University in 1907.

He refused parliamentary offers because he felt that it would limit his freedom to write. In 1889 a knighthood was offered and refused. The KCMG was refused on similar grounds in 1904.

His fame was redoubled upon publication of the verse collection *Barrack Room Ballads* in 1892. Not since the English poet Lord Byron had such a reputation been achieved so rapidly. When poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson died in 1892, it was said that Kipling took his place in popular estimation.

In September, 1902 the Kiplings settled in at their best and happiest home in England, "*Batemans*" at Burwash in Surrey about 70 km from London.

His children were Josephine, born 29 December 1892 - died 1899.

Elsie, born February 1896, married George Bainbridge in 1924 and died in 1976.

John, born August 1897 - died 1915.

In early 1896 Kipling and his family travelled to South Africa for their winter holiday. They would spend holidays there each year until 1908.

In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, a great honour, which carried in those days a grant of 7,700 pounds sterling.

When war was declared in 1914 young John Kipling, not yet 17, joined the Irish Guards. John was killed in October 1915 at the battle of Loos.

Partly in response to his son's death, in 1917 Kipling joined Sir Fabian Ware in the Imperial War Graves Commission (now the Commonwealth War Graves Commission). His most significant contribution was his selection of Biblical phrases "*Their Name Liveth For Evermore*" found on the Stones of Remembrance in larger war graves, and his suggestion of the phrase "*Known unto God*" for the gravestones of unidentified servicemen.

The Commission made their Headquarters just outside St. Omer in France and in January 1922 a Lodge was consecrated there as No. 12 on the Register of the National Grand Lodge of France. Rudyard Kipling was a founder member and it was he who gave it its name, "*The Builders of the Silent Cities.*" In 1925, the War Graves Commission moved its headquarters to London and a Lodge was formed, this time No. 4948 (E.C.), which still meets in London.

In 1922 - 1924 he was the rector of the University of St. Andrews.

In 1926 he was awarded The Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Literature.

In 1927 he travelled to Rio in Brazil and in 1930 to the West Indies. He had many friends, among them Stanley Baldwin and King George V and Lord Robert Baden Powell.

Kipling made many references to Freemasonry in his writing. A list of many of these can be found in A.Q.C. No. 77 1964, in a lecture delivered by Bro. Harry Carr. However this is an example of Kipling's knowledge of the Craft and its history.

His story in the interests of the Brethren talks about a carefully decorated ante-room hung around with Masonic prints. I noticed a Peter Gilkes and Barton Wilson, fathers of 'Emulation' working, in a place of honour with a beautifully framed set of Grand Masters from Anthony Sayer down.

One wonders how many Masons there are - even among those who practise 'Emulation' who know that Gilkes and Barton Wilson were among their great leaders or how many had ever heard of Dunckerley. Only a student who had read his life story could possibly know that he was an illegitimate son of George II or that he affected the Royal Arms with a bar sinister. "Kneelers" Christopher Wren and Hogarth's "Night" are known to the world at large. Now how many Masons would know, even if they had seen or heard of Hogarth's leering caricature of John Wilkes know that he too, was a Freemason, and how many of them could name Anthony Sayer as the first Grand Master.

Here, in one paragraph, Kipling demonstrates a basic knowledge of Craft history far beyond the average- but perhaps the most interesting piece comes a few lines later.

"There are some more in the Lodge room. Come and look. We've got the big Desaguliers that almost went to Iowa."

It would be difficult, perhaps to determine which precise portrait of Desaguliers is mentioned here, but the mention of Iowa betrays specialist knowledge. The Grand Lodge of Iowa was founded in 1840, and around 1850 it began to collect rare items of Masonic interest books especially which had made their Library into one of the best collections of its kind in the English speaking world.

Not one English Mason in ten thousand would be expected to know this, yet Kipling threw in this little detail simply to emphasize the importance of the picture in question. How he got this information is a puzzle, but there is a possible clue. When the Kiplings left Vermont after the trouble with Balestier, they settled in Torquay, Devon, for some two years, 1896 - 1897. Torquay was the home of that great Masonic scholar and Bibliophile, W.J. Hughan, a founder of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2072, English Constitution, who served the Grand Lodge of Iowa for a number of years as advisor in the acquisition of their collections.

He was made Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Iowa in recognition of his services. It is more than likely that he met Kipling and discussed matters of mutual interest with him. This is, of course, pure speculation, but, wherever Kipling got his information, he was one of only a handful of men in the whole world who could speak on the subject with knowledge.

Early in January 1936, Kipling suffered a violent haemorrhage. He lingered on for a few days but died on 18 January 1936, soon after his 70th birthday. He is buried in the Port's corner at Westminster Abbey near Charles Dickens.

KIPLING'S MASONIC CAREER

1886 - Lodge Hope and Perseverance :- Initiated, Monday, 5 April, Passed 3 May and Raised 6 December.

1887 - 10 January, elected and Invested as Secretary of his Lodge.

14 April. Advanced to the Mark degree in Fidelity Mark Lodge No. 98.

Elevated in Mt. Ararat Ark Mariners Lodge No. 98 on the same day.

He found time to attend the Installation of Lodge Independence with Philanthropy No. 391, E.C. at Alahabad in December 1888.

In March he advised his mother Lodge that he was permanently transferred to Allahabad and must regretfully resign and request a Clearance Certificate.

He resigned in 1895 from Lodge Independence with Philanthropy.

On October 4 1899 he was elected an Honorary Member of Lodge Cannongate Kilwinning No. 2, (S.C.) And was made Poet Laureate of the Lodge joining several other distinguished Brethren of whom Robert Burns was the first to hold this title in 1787-1796, but there is no evidence to suggest that he ever visited the Lodge.

Kipling was also a correspondent member of the Quator Coronati Lodge No. 2076 (E.C.).

In addition it has been suggested that he was a member of the Royal Arch and Rose Croix which are degrees in addition to the Craft.

He was offered Honorary membership with Authors Lodge No. 3456 (E. C.) sometime after its founding in 1910, and with Motherland Lodge No. 3861 (E.C.) in London in 1918.

He was a founding member of Builders of the Silent Cities at St Omer, National Grand Lodge of France which had to do with his work for the War Graves Commission. There is also an English Lodge No. 4948 (E.C.) Of the same name.

OBITUARY

A Mason went in Thirty-six to Grand Lodge up above
He left the world his verses and stories children love,
But in European mansions the Muse was heard to cry
Despairing, with his passing, good English verse would die.
Poet, Author, Mason and Master at all three;
Its certain in this lifetime his like we'll never see.

He also wrote some poems for Brothers on the square
We know his depth of feeling by "My Mother Lodge out there"
"When I was King and Mason" then too "My New Ashlar"
Those lines are still oft quoted both here and countries far;
We are his "Sons of Martha" (Let those who hate us mock)
'Tis ours to aid a brother "Take the buffet with a Shock"

Much he wrote is wisdom, to read him is to learn;
It helps with our progression, as new degrees we earn
"Our England is a Garden" By work it so became!
He taught that we maintain it, though getting halt and lame
And when this life is ended I'll greet him 'Hand in Glove'
Yes meet the triple master in that great Grand Lodge above.

Author - Gerry Miles.

REFERENCES

- 1) Rt. Wor. Bro. Grahame Cumming, Director of Research of the Masonic Historical Society, with grateful thanks for his help obtaining material, advice and proof reading.
- 2) Bro. Harry Carr "Article - "Quatour Coronati," Vol. 77, 1964.
- 3) V.Wor. Bro. W.M. Caulfield - "Rudyard Kipling - Master of his Craft."
- 4) *The West Australian Craftsman* - March 1965. "Kipling and Freemasonry."
- 5) Bro. J. Brunton Gibb, Official Lecturer - "Rudyard Kipling a distinguished Brother in the Craft.
- 6) Pietre Stones, "Review of Freemasonry"- Rudyard Kipling and his Masonic career."
- 7) Pick and Knight - "The Freemasons Pocket Reference Book", Frederick Mullar Ltd. London 1955.
- 8) Gerry Miles - "*The Masonic Compass*"- Journal and newsletter of the International Poetry Society - Issue No. 18, November 1997.

Rudyard Kipling

List of Items that contain Masonic references

1887	(S) Letters of Marque	From Sea to Sea
1887-1889	(S) The man who would be King	Wee Willie Winkie
1888	(S) The Rout of the White Hussars	Plain tales from the Hills
1888	(S) To be filed for Reference.	: " " "
1889	(P) The ballad of East and West	From Sea to Sea
1890	(S) With the Main Guard	Soldiers Three
1890	(S) On the City wall	Soldiers Three
1890	(S) The sending of Dana Da	Soldiers Three
1890	(S) The Enlightenment of Pagett, M.P.	The Pioneer
1891	(P) My New Cut Ashlar	Life's Handicap
1892	(P) The Widow at Windsor	Barrack -Room Ballads
1892	(P) With Scindia to Delhi	Barrack-Room Ballads
1892	(P) Thee Ballad of East and West	Barrack Room Ballads
1893	(S) A matter of Fact	Many Inventions
1896	(P) The Mother Lodge	The Seven Seas
1896	(S) The Native Born	The Seven Seas
1893 1896	(P) The Merchantmen	The Seven Seas
1896	(S) The Song of the Dead	The Seven Seas
1897	(N) Captains Courageous	Captains Courageous
1898	(S) 007	The Days Work
1899	(S) The Flag of their Country	Stalky and Co
1900	(S) Among the Railway Folk.	From Sea to Sea Vol.ii,
1901	(S) The Rout of the White Hussars	
	(N) Kim.	Kim
1902	(S)The Butterfly That Stamped	Just So Stories
1903	(P) The Palace	The Five Nations
1903	(P) The Feet of the Young Men.	The Five Nations
1904	(S)The Captive	Traffic and Discoveries
1906	(S) The Winged Hat.	Puck of Pooks Hill
1906	(S)The Treasure and The Law	Puck of Pooks Hill
1907	Letters of Travel	Publ. 1920
1907	(Speech) Imperial Relations	A Book of Words (1928)
1908 March	(C) Jubal and Tubal Cain	The Morning Post, London
1910	(P) A Truthful Song	Rewards and Fairies
1910	(P) The Thousandth Man	Rewards and Fairies
1917	(S) the Dog Hervey	A. Diversity of Creatures
1917	(P) The Press	A Diversity of Creatures
1923	The Bold 'Prentice	Land and Sea Tales
1926	(S) In the interests of the Brethren.	Debits and Credits
1926	(P) Banquet Night.	
1927		

(S)

(S) Story

(P) Poem

(N) Novel