Rudyard Kipling’s Letters to His Agents, A. P. Watt and Son, 1889–1899

Kipling, Rudyard, Pinney, Thomas

Published by ELT Press

Kipling, Rudyard and Thomas Pinney.
Rudyard Kipling’s Letters to His Agents, A. P. Watt and Son, 1889–1899.
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To A. P. Watt 3 January 1890

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr. Watt,

All of which is excellent and pleases me. Meantime the Editor of Macmillan\(^1\) appears to be startled and hurt at the fact that I am vending copy to the highest bidder.

If you possibly can let the Soldier Stories go to M[acmillan]. and any ghost yarns to Longmans.\(^2\) No, the novel hasn’t turned up yet.\(^3\) I am beginning to feel uneasy.

Yours
Rudyard Kipling

3-1-90

Notes 3 January 1890 [first of two]

1. Mowbray Morris (1848–1911), son of Mowbray Morris the elder (1819–1874). The father was manager of *The Times*, 1847–1873; the son was known to RK by reputation as the art critic (by mail from England) for the *Pioneer* until 1885. Since then he had been editor of *Macmillan’s Magazine*.


3. RK wrote to his parents on 14 November 1889 “begging ’em to send along the M.S. of *Mother Maturin*” (*Letters*, I: 365). Watt had urged him to “hurry up your novel … and become rich” (*Letters*, I: 370). *Mother Maturin*, a story set in India, was never published. The first reference to it is in RK’s Diary for 7 March 1885: “The idea of ‘Mother Maturin’ dawned on me today” (*S.o.M.*, 207). RK called it “a novel of Anglo-Indian life” (*Letters*, I: 86) derived from his experiences of “a queer jumble of opium-dens, night houses, night strolls with natives; evenings spent in their com-
pany in their own homes (in the men’s quarter of course) and the long yarns that
my native friends spin me, and one or two queer things I’ve come across in my own
office experience” (Letters, I: 99). The interviewer of The World, 2 April 1890, in
his description of RK’s rooms, notes the MS of “Mother Maturin” in “very small
characteristic handwriting” among the items “in a quaint Dutch bureau.” The last
informed reference to it that I know is RK’s remark in a letter to Robert McClure,
13 August 1904: “There is no truth in the rumour that ‘Mother Maturin’ is finished.
She is as she was—to be done some day I hope” (ALS, Columbia University).

To A. P. Watt 3 January 1890

ALS

[London]

A. P. Watt Esq.

Dear Sir,

The situation is becoming complicated. The Editor of M[ac]M[illan]
appears to be anything but pleased at the notion of our trying to run up
prices, and the amiable McClure¹ sends me this today.

Will you kindly arrange, as they say in India.

Rudyard Kipling.

3-1-90

Note 3 January 1890

¹. Samuel Sidney McClure (1857–1949), American editor and publisher, the
founder of a successful literary syndicate supplying stories and features to newspa-
pers around the world; RK was included in his stable of successful authors. In 1893
he began publication of McClure’s Magazine, eminent among American magazines
in its day; it published more of RK’s stories and poems than any other American
magazine. McClure was briefly F. N. Doubleday’s partner in the publishing firm
of Doubleday, McClure and Co. (1897–1900). RK called McClure “a cyclone in a
frock-coat” (Letters, II: 290). What he sent to RK on this occasion was perhaps the
offer to buy “fiction for youth” from him (Letters, II: 6).

To A. P. Watt 7 January 1890

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr Watt,
Yours of today’s date. This is indeed business. I send a short yarn wh.
I shd prefer you to send to Longmans at your own prices but don’t have
the least hesitation in holding the thing back if necessary.

I’m thinking it w’d be better for all cheques to be paid direct to
you—you remitting me. Is my written authorization enough or must I
send along a power of attorney?

Sincerely yours
Rudyard Kipling

7-1-90.

To A. P. Watt 23 January [1890]

AL

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.
Jan: 23:

A. P. Watt Esq.

Dear Sir

I am sending herewith a piece of special work—the like of which is
not often used in English magazines. I fancy Longman’s might be will-
ing to pay well for it.

I’ve gone down with influenza for the past 10 days and shall be un-
done for another 6.¹ If you are passing any afternoon could you look
me up.

[Sincerely yours
Rudyard Kipling]²

Notes 23 January [1890]

1. Other letters from this time speak of some sort of breakdown: “my head is
all queer” (to S. A. Hill, [24 January 1890] Letters, II: 7); “I am ordered off for a
month’s idleness now ’cause of my head” (to W. E. Henley, [31 January? 1890]:
Letters, II: 8).

2. Closing and signature cut away and supplied in pencil.
To A. P. Watt  [27 January 1890]

ALS

_Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand._
Monday.

Dear Mr. Watt,

I send herewith almost all the book of the 45 Mornings to be typed.¹ Please tell the young ladies to go through the scrap books² and type every tale that is marked # keeping each tale separate and giving me wide margins for retouching. This I should like done swiftly—so that I may receive tales batch by batch as they are finished. I subjoin a list of the titles and I fancy that I have sent some duplicates.

Sincerely yours

Rudyard Kipling

List

Preface
The Wandering Jew
Through the fire
The Killing of Hatim Tai
How Liberty came to the Bolan
Little Tobrah
The burden of Nineveh
Mister Anthony Dawking
The Limitations of Pambe Serang
The pit that they digged
Christmas Day
Shafez-Ali-Mutineer
Jews in Shushan
The track of a lie
The Vengeance of Lal Beg
An interesting condition (unmarked in book)
A Kings ashes
What it comes to
The Old Station
The Lang men o’ Larut
Reingelder and the German Flag
The Wreck of the Visigoth
Of those called
The Red Lamp
One Lady at Large not wanted.
The Private Services commission
The Story of a King
The Explanation of Mir Baksh.
The Serai Cabal
The cowhouse jirga
The Great Census
A bazar Dhulip
The likes o’ us
Georgie Porgie
Bitters Neat
Love in old clothes
The Brides Progress
The City of Dreadful Night
In the year 57

Notes  [27 January 1890]

1. A book that was never published, it was to consist of selected items from RK’s Indian journalism. The idea was perhaps Watt’s. RK signed a contract for it with Macmillan on 9 July 1890, and in August added two more items to the list given above: “The Sacrifice of Er-Heb” (Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads) and “The Seven Nights of Creation” (Schoolboy Lyrics). Macmillan advertised the book in 1891. But RK had doubts. The Book of the 45 Mornings must be meant by this passage in Something of Myself: “I had intended [early on his return to England] a book to ‘take advantage of the market.’ This I had just sense enough to countermand” (89). Of the 38 titles in RK’s list, however, nineteen were variously collected by RK: nine in Life’s Handicap (1891); ten in “The Smith Administration” (From Sea to Sea, 1900). “The Burden of Nineveh” is in the second volume of “Turnovers,” Lahore, 1888, though not at RK’s instance.

All of the titles in the list may be found in Richards’s Bibliography, with the following exceptions:

“How Liberty Came to the Bolan,” CMG, 19 October 1887, has never been collected.

In the Year ’57,” *CMG*, 14 and 22 May 1887, uncollected.

“Christmas Day”: no story or poem by RK of this title is known. The likely identification is the poem “Christmas in India,” originally published as “The Dyspeptic in India,” *Pioneer*, 29 December 1886, and collected as “Christmas in India” in *Departmental Ditties*, 3rd ed., 1888.

“Shafez Ali Mutineer”: not identified.

2. RK kept cuttings of his contributions to the *CMG*, the *Pioneer* and other papers from early in 1884 until his departure from India in 1889. In England he continued the practice of placing his contributions to periodicals in a series of scrapbooks, but not with the same thoroughness as he had done in India. There are now nine of these scrapbooks among the Kipling Papers, now in Special Collections, The Library, University of Sussex, one of them continued after Kipling’s death down to the year 1945. The first four scrapbooks contain the press-cuttings from the Indian years and are a key source of identifications of his anonymous and pseudonymous work.

To A. P. Watt 6 March 1890

*ALS*

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

A. P. Watt Esq.

Dear Mr Watt,

All thanks for cheques type and tale.

What can I say? You’ve only doubled my income and given me good advice into the bargain. “Thank you” seems rather an ineffective return doesn’t it?¹

Sincerely yours

Rudyard Kipling.

6 / 3 / 90

Notes 6 March 1890

1. This letter, no doubt solicited by Watt, is published in *A. P. Watt Literary Agency*, London, [1892?], 10a; there it is dated 5 March, though RK has clearly dated it 6 March. The title of this collection of letters from Watt’s clients was later changed to *Letters Addressed To A. P. Watt*, or to variations of that title; the book, which was Watt’s main means of advertisement, went through many editions. See Richards, *Bibliography*, 364–66.
To A. P. Watt 10 March 1890

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Mar. 10th: 90

Dear Mr. Watt,

I have, as an outsider on the London market, to thank you for doubling my income and halving my risks. You have given me a free hand and liberty to do my own work in my own way without piping or dancing in the market place for the benefit of the publishers. All I can ask you is to continue in your charge of wardship and help.¹

Yours very sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

(conf.
See if this suits? Send suggestions as you please)

Note 10 March 1890

1. Evidently a try at a more formal testimonial than that of 6 March. It was not used in Letters Addressed To A. P. Watt.

To A. P. Watt [13 March 1890]¹

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr. Watt:

I am just now haggling and higgling and niggling over the last touches to the Book of the 45 Mornings. It doesn’t satisfy me yet.

Glad to hear about the Barrack rooms. There are five or six ballads of Burma and elsewhere to accompany them and if M[acmillan]. lets me use the Yussuf ballads, and I add the Sacrifice of Er Heb and some legends my faith we shall have a good book!²

By the way I have been attacked on this subject just now by a person of the name of Dean (a young K. H. A. D.)³ who says he belongs to a publishing firm and exhorteda me to deal directly with the publishers.
I’ve sent him on to you of course and I daresay you can settle his young hash.

Sincerely
R. K.

Thurs.

Notes  [13 March 1890]
1. The date has been added in another hand in the upper left corner of the letter. Thursday was the 13th in March 1890.
2. *Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses* was published by Methuen in London on 6 May 1892, being preceded by a few days by the American edition, published in New York by Macmillan under the title of *Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads* on 27 April. The only “Burmese” poem is “The Ballad of Boh da Thone;” the “Yussuf” poems are the four that appeared over that name (RK’s first name, “Joseph”) in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in 1889–1890: “The Ballad of East and West”; “The Last Suttee”; “The Ballad of the King’s Mercy”; and “The Ballad of the King’s Jest.” “The Sacrifice of Er-Heb” was included in *Barrack-Room Ballads* but may have had an earlier publication: see *Poems, Cambridge Edition*, I: 631, where an unidentified printed version is described. All of the poems named are in *Barrack-Room Ballads*.
3. That is, “cad.” I have not identified Dean.

To A. P. Watt  [11 April 1890]¹

ALS
From A. P. Watt. / Advertising Agent, / 2, Paternoster Square, London, E.C.

Dear Mr. Watt:

Please get all this stuff typed for me as soon as may be. It’s not mine and has nothing to do with the book but I fancied your typewriters could get it done better than most.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

Note  [11 April 1890]
1. Office date stamp on the note is 11 April 1890. RK is evidently delivering the MS at Watt’s office. The letterhead is from Watt’s earlier identity as an advertising agent in the 1870s.
To Walter Besant

ALS

Embankment Chambers / Villiers St. / Strand
Saturday
Ap: 28 90

Dear Mr. Besant:

Could you very kindly redeem for me at any price in reason my *Mutiny of the Mavericks* from the hands of a paper called “*Short Cuts.*” I know it isn’t a usual request but in this instance I’d be willing to let you have the whole thing as it stood on the condition that that paper did not get it; or I would be willing to pay the *Short Cuts* £10 for its rights in my yarn; or £20 if they wouldn’t part at £10:

I know it’s your syndicate and I must apologize for troubling you but it’s a matter of personal and private hates for which I am prepared to pay a little money. Only get the thing back, and give me the right to cut my name from the list at the end of that journal and you have me as much your debtor in the present as I have been in the past.

The Explanation which is a reply to a perfectly civil letter of mine I enclose on the next page. As “human documents” I should laugh both at my own letter and the other thing but, being only human myself I am prepared to pay for the blessed privilege of taking my copy out of his hands. If you think it worth while send me a private admonition on my youth and presumption but help me in the present vendetta.

I’ve worked for seven years in a climate which would have scorched the hair off the *Short Cut’s* man’s head and for most of that time I’ve been on a journal eight and a half times the size of *Short Cuts* and I do not approve of his genial communications. It’s simply brazen and blatant vanity that makes me write to you, as of course you see (and it’s rather an interesting study from the objective point of view) but get the thing away from this person who takes tales on the off chance of their being interesting and helps young authors into places which do not belong to them and I’ll pay all that may be necessary.

Yours very sincerely

Rudyard Kipling
[The letter from *Short Cuts* follows: RK’s comments are printed in italic.]

50, Fleet Lane, / Farringdon Street / E.C.  
April 24 1890

The Editor of *Short Cuts* presents his compliments to Mr. Rudyard Kipling, and in reply to his letter writes to say that the Mr. Rudyard Kipling whose name is published as a contributor to *Short Cuts* is the author of some sketches of Indian life. These the Editor of *Short Cuts* not long ago accidentally came across; and thinking there was some merit in them, accepted on the chance of its proving interesting a short story of Mr. Kipling’s offered to him by Mr. A. P. Watt, of 2 Paternoster Square, Mr. Kipling’s literary agent.

The Editor of *Short Cuts* inserted Mr. Kipling’s name among his list of contributors as he thought it would be doing a kindness to a young author, naturally desirous to bring his name before the public, to allow the name to appear among the foremost authors of the day.

*If there be any honesty in writing let me get my place when I deserve it; why should “fortunes given away” people help me?*

In answer to Mr. Kipling’s inquiry as to when his contribution is likely to appear, the Editor of *Short Cuts* regrets to say that he sees little hope of inserting it at present. When, however, the paper is firmly established, he will be happy to make use of Mr. Kipling’s tale.

*Please get it out before that happy time arrives. R.K.* [The underlining in the last sentence of the letter is probably RK’s.]

Notes 28 April 1890 [No. 1 of 2]

1. Besant (1836–1905), novelist and miscellaneous writer, a leading worker for authors’ rights, the founder of the Society of Authors and of its journal, *The Author*. RK in India had read and admired Besant’s fiction and had quickly made his acquaintance in England; it was Besant who steered RK to Watt. Besant conducted a literary syndicate among his other activities. He was knighted in 1895.

2. RK sent “The Mutiny of the Mavericks” to Watt early in March “for Mr. Besant’s syndicate” (To A. P. Watt, [2 March 1890]: ALS, Syracuse University). His wish to retrieve the story from the magazine called *Short Cuts* is explained by the letter from the *Short Cuts* editor following RK’s letter. The story had no periodical publication but was first published in *Mine Own People*, 1891. *Short Cuts* to Knowl-
edge and Fortune, a weekly, was published only from 22 March to 20 August 1890. The editor is not identified in the magazine.

3. At the end of the second number of Short Cuts and continuing to appear to the end of publication is a list of 77 “Contributors to Short Cuts” beginning with Walter Besant and proceeding through such names as Henry James, Edmond Gosse, George Saintsbury, George Moore, and Rider Haggard, and ending with “Rudyard Kipling.”

To A. P. Watt 28 April 1890

ALS


Dear Mr Watt:

I was sorry to miss you but I was down with fever: The thing has been bowling me over every four days of late.

The Mutiny of the Mavericks I’ve seen in proof. I’d much like a revise if I could and more than a revise should I like you to get the serial rights of it out of the hand of the Editor of Short Cuts. I’ve written to Besant about this and am prepared to pay for the withdrawal.

I enclose herewith the Tauchnitz agreement.¹

I don’t quite understand Thacker. If he takes 1250 he ought to take only on the old Edition: But I’m writing a few (6 or 8 or so) new yarns for the MacM. Edtn² and I’d like him to take 2000: I’m off to Plymouth tomorrow to see my father³ but on the 2rd or 3rd May I’ll see you and talk things over.

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes 28 April 1890 [2nd of 2]

1. RK signed a contract for the reprinting of Plain Tales from the Hills by Tauchnitz on 24 April 1890 (Watt, UNC 451.57). Baron Christian Bernhard von Tauchnitz, a Leipzig publisher, was noted especially for his “Collection of British and American Authors,” English-language reprints published for circulation on the Continent. His list included many titles by RK, beginning with Plain Tales.

2. The Macmillan edition, the first English edition, of Plain Tales from the Hills, published in July 1890 does not contain any new tales. Presumably those that RK
was now writing went into *Mine Own People*. The stories first published in that collection are “Bertran and Bimi,” “Namgay Doola,” “The Return of Imray,” “Moti Guj—Mutineer,” and “The Mutiny of the Mavericks.”

3. RK’s parents were returning to England on furlough; they remained until the summer of 1891, living at 101 Earl’s Court Road in London, where RK joined them early in 1891.

To A. P. Watt  [8 May 1890]¹

*ALS*  

[London]  

Dear Mr Watt,

I had divided the thing before but I suppose the printer forgot. Here it is anew. My father came in less than three minutes after you had left:

Sincerely  

Rudyard Kipling

When you have considered the American notion please return the letter as I’ve forgotten the address.

RK.

Note  [8 May 1890]  

1. Date added in another hand in upper left corner.

To A. P. Watt  [13? May 1890]¹

*ALS*  

[London]  

Dear Watt:

The enclosed awaits your orders. *I don’t think it’s enough because I’ve wanted to dramatize the play book myself.*² Suppose we said £300 down for the use of the book (which is a complete plot) and then the royalty. What do you think?

Sincerely  

Rudyard Kipling
Notes  [13? May 1890]

1. Received 13 May 1890 (office date stamp).

2. Probably The Story of the Gadsbys, written in the form of a play, is meant, though no contemporary dramatization of the story is known. The first English edition of the story had been published in March of this year. According to Cosmo Hamilton, when he wrote to RK (no date given) asking permission to dramatize The Story of the Gadsbys, RK said in reply: “I’ve had several shots at it but my efforts have been awful and I’ve chucked ’em all away. If you think you can do the trick, go ahead, my lad.” In People Worth Writing About (New York: Robert M. McBride and Co., 1933), 26. I have found no record of Hamilton’s play.

To A. P. Watt  [13? May 1890]\(^1\)

*ALS*

[London]

Dear Mr. Watt,

Please arrange about enclosed. Thanks for cheque. The tale\(^2\) comes to you on Wednesday or Thursday.

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes  [13? May 1890]

1. Received 13 May 1890 (office date stamp). Wednesday and Thursday were the 14th and 15th in May 1890.


To A. P. Watt  15 May 1890

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*

Dear Mr Watt,

I send herewith the corrected proofs of Without benefit of clergy for distribution among the quarters of the earth.\(^1\)
Am in receipt of MacM. P[lain]. T[ales]. proofs and shall do 'em with speed.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling
15-5-90

Note 15 May 1890
1. Published Macmillan's Magazine, June 1890.

To A. P. Watt 17 May 1890

ALS
Embankment Chambers, Villiers Street, Strand.
17-5-90

Dear Mr. Watt:

Try the Editor of the Singapore Free Press with those yarns of mine. He wants work that I cannot give and he might be disposed to pay for serial rights in, say, Without Benefit of Clergy. They know me in that part o' the world.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

P.S. As regards M.S. would you care for the M.S. of Without Benefit of Clergy?1

Note 17 May 1890
1. The MS is now at Harvard, inscribed to Lucy Clifford; a facsimile of the first page, with RK's inscription, is in Livingston, Bibliography, [80]. In a letter of 23 April 1926 to Flora Livingston, A. S. Watt, who knew of RK's offer of the MS to Watt's father, wonders how the MS got away (Harvard MS Eng 1166 f. 31). RK was seeing much of Mrs. Clifford, the widow of the mathematician and philosopher W. K. Clifford, during this year. She supported herself as a writer of fiction and drama and was well acquainted with literary London.
To A. P. Watt 15 June 1890

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

June 15th 90

Dear Mr. Watt

I send the Fortnightly Review article herewith and should be glad if you could send it over tonight at the latest or this afternoon.\(^2\) I want, as you know, £3 a page for the thing but if they undeniably kick at that we’d better climb down because as a piece of conviction I must have the thing go into the mag this month.

Yours ever

Rudyard Kipling

I promised delivery on the 15\(^{th}\), which is today.

Notes 15 June 1890

1. The letter is written in the hand of JLK, and carries the office date stamp of 15 July 1890, by mistake.
2. No article by RK appears in the *Fortnightly Review* around either 15 June or 15 July.

To A. P. Watt [25 June 1890]\(^1\)

ALS

[London]

Wednesday

Dear Mr. Watt,

Herewith proof of poem.\(^2\) I’m sorry to say that the galley of the Lippincott proof has hopelessly gone astray.\(^3\) Please wire for another set of proofs and dock expenses out of my wages.

Doesn’t this weather make you want to move away to the sea.

R. K.

Notes [25 June 1890]

1. Received 25 June (office date stamp); Wednesday was the 25th.
2. The poem published nearest this date is “The Young British Soldier,” no. 11 of “Barrack-Room Ballads” in the *Scots Observer*, 28 June; but that seems cutting it too close. “Screw Guns” appeared as no. 12 in the same series, 12 July.


To A. P. Watt [June? 1890]

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*

Dear Mr. Watt

Just my luck to ha’ missed you. Thanks for your letter. Couldn’t we keep one or two things back for a wee.

Otherwise—next months programme will run—

English Illustrated

MacMillan

Wednesday Journal.

possibly the syndicate tale will be out too and then an evil generation will say: “Yah, he’s overworking himself.”

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

P.S. *Let* me touch up the proofs of The Mark of the Beast. There will be ample time.

Note [June? 1890]

1. The references are to “The Gift of the Sea,” *English Illustrated Magazine*, August 1890; “On Greenhow Hill,” *Macmillan’s Magazine*, September 1890; “The Mark of the Beast,” *New York Journal*, 2 [Wednesday] July 1890; the “syndicate tale” may be “At the End of the Passage.” The staggered dates of publication suggest that one or two things were “kept back.”

To A. P. Watt [18? July 1890]¹

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*
Dear Mr. Watt,

Thanks for note. All right. Take it out and let it be. He’ll have to pay more for worse work later on.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

Whatever he says don’t deal at £2.-2-10—or 2–19-11 ¾ a page.

Note  [18? July 1890]
1. Received 19 July 1890 (office date stamp).

To A. P. Watt  [Early August? 1890]

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr. Watt,

Herewith the Light that Failed\(^1\)—for *most urgent* type reproduction leaving blanks at the heads of the chapters for the insertion of verses later. The N.Y. World tale\(^2\) is also done and comes anon but I want the Light put through as swiftly as possible.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

Notes  [Early August? 1890]
1. RK wrote on 11 August 1890 that “I’ve got to give a book to the printers on the 15\(^{th}\) of this month” (to Margaret Clifford, *Letters*, II: 18). This deadline was for the publication of the first form of the story, *Lippincott’s Magazine*, January 1891 (for 20 December 1890).
2. Nothing by RK in the *New York World* is known before 1894.

To A. P. Watt  15 August 1890

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr. Watt
I have sent the Enlightenments of Pagett M.P. to its destination.\(^1\) Personally I should prefer to let this political article go free (for once only) as a present to the paper with which I have been so long connected.\(^2\) So don’t ask for the 12 gns.

Sincerely yours

Rudyard Kipling

15 / 8 / 90

Notes    15 August 1890

1. *Contemporary Review*, September 1890; written in collaboration with JLK.

2. This was RK’s first contribution to the *Contemporary*; only one other followed. The magazine was founded by Alexander Strahan, Watt’s brother-in-law and, in the 1870s, business partner.

To A. P. Watt    [8 September 1890]\(^1\)

*ALS*  

[London]

Dear Mr. Watt:

Enclosed please find receipt of Isbister.\(^2\)

I am not responsible for the statements of American publishers.\(^3\) The American rights of the 45 *Mornings* have been sold to MacM. As you and I know. No royalty is paid to me from John Lovell and Co for this book; no special arrangement or arrangements of any kind have been made with regard to the book, and I have not given my personal sanction to any edition published by John W. Lovell and Co. The whole statement seems to be an American lie. Do you wish me to write to Mac M personally or will this serve. It annoys me the more since I have been at considerable pains to make the thing clear to Lovell’s agents.\(^4\)

Angrily,

Rudyard Kipling

Notes    [8 September 1890]

1. Received 8 September 1890 (office date stamp).

2. William Isbister, London publisher from 1862, originally in partnership with Alexander Strahan, the publisher for whom A. P. Watt worked before turning to lit-
Kipling’s Letters to His Agents, 1889–1899

erary agency. Isbister was the successor, in part, to Strahan’s business. The receipt is probably for payment for “The Enlightments of Pagett, M.P.” in the *Contemporary Review* for September; Isbister was the publisher of the magazine, which had been founded by Strahan.

3. *Publisher’s Weekly*, 23 August 1890, printed a statement saying that RK’s *Book of the 45 Mornings* would be published in New York by John W. Lovell and Company, the firm that RK had authorized to publish *Plain Tales* and other Indian titles in America. Lovell presumed on this connection to claim rights to the *Book of the 45 Mornings*. RK wrote to Macmillan on 9 September stating that “I have not given my sanction to any edition of the book to be ‘published’ by Messrs John W. Lovell Co.,” and this denial appeared in *Publisher’s Weekly*, 20 September 1890.

4. Lovell’s English agent was the American Wolcott Balestier (1861–1891), with whom RK was by this time on terms of close friendship. Their collaboration on *The Naulakha* was in progress by July 1890.

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**To A. P. Watt 6 November 1890**

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*

Dear Mr. Watt

Just look at the proof on its way to the Athenæum\(^1\)—make any alterations you please and send it along to confound the enemy. I have a dripping cold.

Rudyard Kipling

6-1-90

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**Note 6 November 1890**

1. Harper, the American publisher, had published five of RK’s stories in *Harper’s Weekly* in 1890 and had then, with a sixth story taken from *Macmillan’s*, collected and published the lot as *The Courting of Dinah Shadd and Other Stories* in September 1890. When RK protested, Harper replied (*Athenæum*, 1 November 1890) that it had bought and paid for all of the stories except for the one from *Macmillan’s* and that they had sent RK £10 for that one. The “proof” that RK now sent to Watt for editing is of his letter of reply to Harper (*Athenæum*, 8 November 1890), pointing out that Harper had bought the serial rights only and had no right to sell in book form “an unedited, unrevised, unfinished, disorderly abortion of botch-work” (*Letters*, II: 26). RK later regretted the violence of his response, especially in view of the fact that his work could then have been published by any one in America without
paying him anything. “I should have taken their money and held my tongue but in those days I thought I did well to be angry. Never again.” Note dated 6 May 1898, *Catalogue of the Works of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Grolier Club, 1930), 38.

To A. P. Watt  [1890]

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*

Dear Mr Watt

I acknowledge with thankfulness and wonder. *How* do you do it?

Sincerely

R.K.

To A. P. Watt  [1890?]  

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*

Dear Mr. Watt

Enclosed I send you a cutting from Punch. Please write to the Editor and ask him the name of the magazine that supplied my letter. I don’t remember writing anything of the kind but I fancy its a cutting from a letter of Jerome K. Jerome.¹

Rudyard Kipling.

Note  [1890?]

1. The cutting has not been identified. Jerome (1859–1927), editor, humorist, and playwright, founded *The Idler* in 1892; RK contributed a half-dozen items to it.

To A. P. Watt  [1890?]

*ALS*

[London]

Dear Mr. Watt
Send ’em enclosed and be d—d to them. But try to make the Yahoos understand that it isn’t to be sown broadcast about the States.¹ I believe however that they do not steal from each other.

R K.

Note  [1890?]
1. The “enclosed” may possibly be “The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot” and the “Yahoos” Harper and Brothers. Their unauthorized publication of The Courting of Dinah Shadd and Other Stories in September 1890, would quickly have been known to RK, who may still have had “Badalia Herodsfoot” in hand and have been grudgingly willing to honor Watt’s arrangements for the story’s publication in Harper’s Weekly, November 15 and 22 1890. If so, this letter may be from September or October 1890. For RK’s quarrel with Harper, see 6 November 1890.

To A. P. Watt  [1890?]

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr. Watt

Many thanks for your kindness. I was too angry with that man Moreau¹ to dare to trust myself on paper about him. Please tell the Rosslyner² that arrangements have been made.

Sincerely

R. K.

Notes n.d. [1890?]  
¹. Emile Moreau (1856–1937), senior partner in the firm of A.H.Wheeler and Co., Allahabad, the publishers of the “Indian Railway Library” in which six of RK’s titles appeared in 1888–1889 (see 14 December 1889n). Just before leaving India RK sold the copyright of these titles to Moreau; his efforts to buy them back entailed a long struggle, and gave RK a very low opinion of Moreau’s honesty.

². See 11 January 1891.
To A. P. Watt [1890?]

ALS

[London]

Dear Mr. Watt:

All thanks for the cheque. No, I don’t want to be mixed up with the New Review and I don’t much care for writing many stories.¹

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling.

P.S. What do you think of the enclosed: where w’d you place it.

Note [1890?]

1. *The New Review*, founded in 1889, was then still new; it challenged the existing practices by attempting to provide a substantial monthly review for 6d. The price was soon raised, and the journal expired in 1897.

To A. P. Watt [1890?]

ALS

Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.

Dear Mr. Watt

May I introduce to you Lieutenant Morris who, in addition to being the author of some well known music and songs has been kind enough to set my Barrack room ballads to music.¹ He wishes to consult you about musical agency in regard to the ballads and his own work. Any help that you may be able to give him will I need hardly say is appreciated by

Yours very sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Note [1890?]

1. Lieutenant Morris is unidentified. The letter is endorsed “Sutherland / G S Morris / Ashley Place / Victoria St.” I do not find his name on the list of composers who have set RK’s poems to music in Richards, *Bibliography.*
To A. P. Watt  [1890?]

*ALS*

*Embankment Chambers, / Villiers Street, Strand.*

Dear Mr. Watt

Cant we do something about this piece of theft from the Plain Tales. I don’t like appearing in tit bits with an altered title.¹

Sincerely,

Rudyard Kipling

Note  [1890?]

1. I take this to mean that something from *Plain Tales* appeared in the popular weekly called *Tit-Bits*. The first English edition of *Plain Tales* was published in July 1890, but a search of *Tit-Bits* from July to the end of the year did not discover anything to fit.