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

Kipling, Rudyard, Pinney, Thomas

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To A. P. Watt  [Early February 1893]

ALS

[Brattleboro]

Dear Watt and Co

Just a line before the mail goes to thank you for your letter and ask you please to collect the money [illegible word] from the O. B. C. and send in a draft.¹ I return also the MacM contract and am writing at length about the other matters.

Have sent the first eight tales to McM of the book.² It is to be called “Many Inventions.”

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

All congratulations to the Co.

Notes  [Early February 1893]

1. “First dividend from OBC” (CK Diary, 28 February 1893).

2. RK’s letter to Macmillan, accompanying the stories, is dated 26 January 1893 (ALS, Macmillan Papers, British Library). In it he says that he will send six more stories, three of which are unpublished: see 1 November 1892.

To A. P. Watt  4 February 1893

ALS

Brattleboro

Feb. 4. 93

My dear Watt:

All thanks for your kind little note of the 21st. You should just have seen The Gift when it came in.¹ It was a splendid cup (goblet rather)
with knife fork and spoon, all reposing in state on a bed of blue in a roughened leather case. We shouted over it like the Ephesians “for about the space of three hours.”  

I have not yet learned Miss Josephine Kipling’s views on the matter. She is occupied in fighting for her serial rights in her meals and that takes all her time. But she’s a bonnie bonnie little bairn with fair hair and blue eyes! And how that came about I cannot tell for its none of it in our blood.

My wife desires me to thank you on her behalf very much indeed for the service of plate (I’m going to get it marked, now that I know the baby’s name, to her from you). She has not started to write letters yet but otherwise she is vastly well.

Ever yours sincerely
Rudyard Kipling.

Notes
4 February 1893

1. For Josephine Kipling, born 29 December 1892.

2. Acts 19:34: “all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”

To A. P. Watt  5 February 1893

ALS

Brattleboro: /Vt:
Feb. 5: 93.

Dear Watt and Co

My last note was but a hasty scrawl to save a boat.

I have to acknowledge your letter of the 21st ult. with the MacM. Accounts for Plain Tales and the others. They are decidedly cheering. Also what you say about the B.B’s is fine.

The Son of his Father has been proof read and returned but who or what the dooce is the Home Magazine and how the dooce do you expect me to turn out my quota for the Strand and the Idler if you divert the stream of fancy and give it to other people? I might go on for ever trying to finish my six tales at that rate.
In regard to the Chicago proposition S. S. Mcclure wrote me about it saying he’d written you and I hinted he might have saved the stamps. ’Twouldn’t pay me even if I did the work which I should particularly loathe.

The cedar chest I think I told you has arrived but we didn’t have to bother Houghton-M. as we keep a tame commission broker somewhere down by the N.Y. docks and he does the sweating.

I’ve told Captain Swynton that if Methuen don’t object he can reprint my ballads in his old regimental magazine. That’s a good business.

Moberley Bell’s idea about the Novel is distinctly good. I may have something that he may care to look at as soon as I get the present work off my shoulders. Until the MacM. book is off my hands I can do nothing. It’s only waiting now for the typed copy of the last tale.

Here are the tales I have sent in by registered letter to MacM.:

- the disturber of Traffic
- A Conference of the Powers
- My Lord the Elephant
- Two Tales
- One view of the question
- The Finest story in the world
- [illegible: Ayles ?]
- His private Honour
- Macmillan
- A matter of fact
- Macm
- The Lost Legion.

The others to be sent are

- In the Rukh (new)
- Brugglesmith
- Love o’ women (new)
- Badalia Herodsfoot
- Judson and the Empire (new)
- The Children of the Zodiac

No copyright infringed there I think. The new tales tot up to about 20,000 words and it seems to me that Appleton’s 20% is not too festively generous. No matter. Tell them to hurry them along as soon as possible. That’s all this week but please let me know from week to week how things go in the world.
Let me tender my best congratulations to the Co. May his shadow never grow less. R. H. Davis has gone to Genoa (he is tied foot and soul to the Harpers). I go down to New York may be next month for a few weeks and I shall keep my weather eye lifted for anything that comes along.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

Notes 5 February 1893

1. “The Son of His Father” was first published in Today, December 1893 and January 1894, not in Home Magazine.

2. Possibly Capt. George Herbert Taylor Swinton (1852–1920), originally of the Bengal Civil Service but joined the 2nd Battalion, 16th Bedfordshire Regiment; Captain, 1884; retired 1893 (Who Was Who).

3. Bell (1847–1911), manager of The Times since 1890.

4. This list is followed exactly in Many Inventions.

To A. P. Watt 14 February 1893

ALS
Brattleboro / Vt:

Dear Watt,

Enclosed I send you Love o’ women the third new tale in Many Inventions to be type written and forwarded to MacMillan as soon as possible. I have sent all the rest of the book to MacMillans now so they can go ahead on it at once. Don’t forget to remind ’em that I want proofs as soon as possible. Only type write the last M.S. pages.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

N.B. I have done nothing in the way of sending word to Appletons. The three new tales I suppose ought to be copyrighted for America. Will you look after that?
To A. P. Watt  28 February 1893

ALS

[Brattleboro]

28: 2. 93

Dear Watt,

A line in haste to catch the boat; to return proof of the *Legs of Sister Ursula*,¹ to acknowledge receipt of your circular, and letter (forwarded) to the Pater; as well as your last dated Feb. 17:th. Did I not tell you that Judson and the Empire,

In the Rukh

and  Love of women

are *three* new tales. They are all much too long for any use in the Strand or the Idler. I am returning the four notices of the O.B.C. 3 of which I understand you can now negotiate. The fourth needs time as I cannot quite recall (since I am a man of scattered possessions) where the receipts are. Isn’t there some sort of quit-claim that I might swear in, if I were unable to produce the vouchers—releasing them from all claims? You did not enclose the stamps. I wish you had. If you will I shall be very happy to give you the power of attorney. In regard the Macmillan accts. *NO*. I think with you it won’t kill them to give semi-annual returns.

What in the world has happened to *The Last Chantey*; the poem that went to *Scribners*?²

Please tell Sheard³ to forward me all copies of my old songs and some notices of how they went in the music halls.

The remainder of the book has gone to MacM. who ought to be advertising it by this time.

You’ll see my noble Roman hand in May in an Imperial Institute ode for the English Illustrated of all papers.⁴ I wanted to do it for the country not for myself and (don’t faint) I haven’t charged a penny for it. The Lord has been good to us: so we must be generous now and again. Besides it’s patriotic.

Good news [illegible word] golf clubs.
Sincerely
Rudyard.

P.S. Why one circular only. Say six. I want to send one to Mary Hallock Foote among others.

Notes 28 February 1893
3. Publisher of musical settings of *Barrack-Room Ballads*: see 20 July 1892.
5. Foote (1847–1938), American writer and illustrator, specializing in western subjects. RK commissioned her to illustrate the western American parts of *The Naulakha* and hoped to get JLK to illustrate the Indian parts. He got two drawings from Mrs. Foote, but nothing from JLK, so the project died (*Letters*, II: 57). As late as 1895 RK was hoping to recruit Foote as one of Watt’s clients, without success. See Mary Hallock Foote, *A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West*, Rodman Paul, ed. (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1980, 339–40.

To A. S. Watt [Early April? 1893]

*ALS*

The Dunmore / 230 W. 42 St.
New York¹

Dear Watt,

I have to acknowledge with thanks your draught for £200 in American money. Also enclosures relating to O.B.C. and p[ower] / attorney forms and cheques.

The powers of attorney I return and hope they are all right. I have made the cheques payable to you. Will you send the money of all three in one draft separate from my other accts, without paying it into my bank.

You have not answered my question in regard to my fixed deposits in the bank. The vouchers are somewhere in my desk across the water
and as I can’t get at them I want to make a swear or affidavit clearing
the bank of any after claim. This is urgent. Please look to it like a good
fellow.

Sincerely
R. Kipling

Proofs have been going steadily to Appleton. I’ll write anon as to what
I want done with the last books continental rights.

I haven’t heard from your father for long and hope he is mending now
and give him my best salaams.²

Address Brattleboro as usual

Notes  [EarlyApril? 1893]

1. The three Kiplings left for New York on 17 March and returned to Brattle-
   boro on 20 April (CK Diary).
2. A. P. Watt had been ill: see 21 April 1893.

To A. S. Watt  14 April 1893

ALS

230 W. 42 St. / New York
April 14 / 93

private

Dear Aleck

I’ve been very busy of late but write now to say that the Poetry man
who wants extracts for his book about poets of the nineteenth century
can do what he likes.¹ I send a German letter asking for translation
rights. Will you take care of it?

Now to business. Mark Twain dined with us the other night and we
drifted into talking shop—royalties and the like.² He does all his busi-
ness himself and has been—well, not exactly overloaded with royalties.
Of course in the aggregate it comes to people with his sales but still
he might make more. I naturally told him about you and he said that
he’d try you with his next story. I gave him the address and much good
advice. If this comes off it ought to be heaps to you and remember you owe it to me. Of course you’ll sit perfectly tight. Don’t approach him in any way. If he puts his Chatto and Windus business into your hands you’ll have your work cut out for you.  

But what I want is for him to try you with a short tale (he does no syndicating himself) and then you can show him what you can do when you stretch yourself. He ought to be the biggest fish yet, both for the name and the cash.

I am not charging commission this time but only urge you to keep an eye on the O.B.C. bank business for me—as I write to you. Clement Shorter\(^4\) of the Illustrated called yesterday asking for a tale for the Xmas no. The old trick, trying to get me to deal direct with him. I’ve said I’ll do my best through you. Heinemann is here breathing fire and flame against Lovell\(^5\) from whom I presume he expects to get many shekels. I shall watch that fight with interest.

That is all but look out for Mark.

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes 14 April 1893

1. Alfred Henry Miles published *The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century* in ten volumes, London, 1892–97. The selections from RK, in volume 8, “Robert Bridges and Contemporary Poets,” are “The Story of Uriah” and “The Galley-Slave” from *Departmental Ditties*, and “Tommy,” “Fuzzy-Wuzzy,” “The Conundrum of the Workshops,” and “The Ballad of East and West” from *Barrack-Room Ballads*. The poems are prefaced by a brief biographical and critical sketch by Miles which quotes at length from “Mandalay” and ends by “hoping great things” of RK.

2. They met Twain on 5 April (“who reminds us of Mr. Whistler”) and dined with him on 7 April (CK Diary).


5. John W. Lovell (1851–1932), a Canadian who had set up in New York, 1876, as a publisher specializing in cheap reprints. He soon had a huge list and annual sales of seven million books. Wolcott Balestier was Lovell’s agent in England, and it was through Balestier that RK’s first “authorized” publications appeared in America from Lovell’s firm. An unscrupulous megalomaniac, Lovell attempted to corner the American market for cheap reprints by buying up the plates of his competitors to produce a flood of reprints in a wide range of “series.” Lovell’s United States Book Company went into receivership in April 1893, and it is probable that Heinemann was in New York to see what he might recover from the wreck. Lovell was no longer in charge. See John Tebbel, A History of Book Publishing in the United States (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1975), II: 344–52.

To A. P. Watt 21 April 1893

ALS

Brattleboro: April 21: 93.

Dear Watt

Yours of the 8th inst with first of draft for $1460 to hand. Many thanks. Yes, we left for New York for a month to avoid the breaking up of winter and came back yesterday. You’ll see from my last letter that I did a little attempt at business for you. Many thanks for Moreau’s little rendition. I’ll instruct what to do about the continental library so soon as I can get a business word out of Heineman.

I am sending a new copy of the song beginning “King Solomon” to the Editor of the Pall Mall care of you.¹ That’s the copy he is to follow as there are changes and additions in it.

The report of the new book of poems is the usual Lie.

I haven’t had all my proofs from MacMillan yet nor more than half from Appleton. You must see that they come to a clear understanding as to the simultaneous publication.²

This is the first real fair and square book I’ve published on both sides and I’m anxious to see how it goes. In regard to Sheard’s musical
Barrack room ballads, he needn’t worry about Morris’s settings. Since I’ve been in New York I’ve heard Gerard Cobbe’s things on the piano and with the exception of two they couldn’t well be more inadequate. I can’t say anything to him of course (he’s done his best) and he writes to me as satisfied and as happily as a hen with one chick. But they are bad. If Morris can do worse he’s a genius.

I do hope that your health is better. You say nothing about it but I hear from London you haven’t been well. If evil wishes have any effect you’d be permanently in bed. I never knew a man so catholicly hated on the business side as you are. Every mail and every visitor almost brings me lists of your crimes and Alick’s crimes—all the way from burglary upwards and downwards and I listen and take notes. Some day I shall do a story about it. Besant is the other man who is execrated generally and Clement Shorter almost danced around the room on his little hind legs when I explained I should send my tale (if any) in through you.

I think it is as well for you to know these things because you might be wasting a letter in telling me not to believe them, some day. They are very funny and some day I’ll show you an assortment.

Ever yours

R. K.

Notes 21 April 1893


2. The American and English editions of Many Inventions were published within a week of each other: 31 May and 6 June 1893.

3. See the 6th of the undated letters at the end of 1890.

4. Gerard Francis Cobb (1838–1904) was fellow and Junior Bursar of Trinity College, Cambridge; he was active as an organist and composer, though regarded as an amateur in those roles.

To A. P. Watt 2 May [1893]

ALS

Brattleboro. /Vt: May. 2.

Dear Watt,
In regard to the English Library rights of _Many Inventions_ Wm. Heineman is sending me here draft for £100 on account of royalties 2d in the copy of my 1st book. Will you please draw up the contract in those terms and give it to any authorized agent of his.

I have to acknowledge receipt of drafts for the O.B.C. account of $877.35 one and $2000 (odd) the other. Many thanks for your care in this matter.

I agree with you that we need not sweat to put short stories into the _Times—as yet. They are like the Dutch in “giving too little and asking too much.”_1

The Pall Mall Gazette’s idea is interesting but let us get through with the work in hand. Your experience with the _Home Magazine_ has made me grin.2 When I saw the lithoed prospectus I whistled but didn’t say much Why don’t you give the yarn to the Idler (if we ever get it back). They wouldn’t be particular to a thousand words or two. I am doing a short tale for them.3 In future let us avoid the new and frisky “mags.” They are alluring but deceptive.

All your circulars etc. have come to hand and be sure to let me know when you hear from Twain. H. R[jider]. H[aggard]. has given you a big certificate in his article.4 It would have been better if he had mentioned the name in the Idler.

Sincerely,

Rudyard Kipling.

Notes 2 May [1893]

1. George Canning, when Foreign Secretary: “In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch / Is giving too little and asking too much.”

2. See 5 February 1893.

3. Not identified. “The Legs of Sister Ursula,” _Idler_, June 1893, had already been returned in proof to Watt (see 28 February 1893); no other story by RK appears in the _Idler_ until “My Sunday at Home” in 1895.

4. In his contribution to the series called “My First Book” in _The Idler_, March 1893, Haggard had described a disastrous contract that he made with an unnamed publisher [J and R. Maxwell]. “Things looked black indeed, when, thanks to the diplomacy of my agent” [not named] the contract was cancelled and Haggard “avoided disaster.” He tells the same story in the letter to Watt, dated 4 June 1892, just published in the 1893 edition of _Letters Addressed To A. P. Watt_.

To A. P. Watt  22 May 1893

ALS

Brattleboro

May 22. 93

Dear Watt:

Very many thanks for the two drafts of three thousand odd and $1460 which came to hand duly. Also for the papers and what you tell me about your health. Of course I didn’t believe what I heard but Alick said once or twice this winter that you were a little below par and knowing what a devilish thing an English winter is I was concerned.

I am thinking of adding say half a dozen new poems to the American Edition of B. Bs. Nearly nine tenths of that was issued in some form or other before Macmillan took hold of it and Brett here tells me that it has sold about c. 6000 in a year. A few new verses would freshen it up I think and make a new sale. Of course I don’t want the English edition touched as it is all new over there. The poems are of no particular value but they will serve to prop up the rather rotten [?] copyright. I should never put them into a regular book of verses. Will you please tell Methuen what you think he ought to know on this head.

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes  22 May 1893


2. *Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads: New Edition with Additional Poems*, New York, 1893, adds to the original edition of 1892 “The Lost Legion,” “The Dove of Dacca,” “An Answer,” and “In the Neolithic Age.” All of these had been published before, but copyright was obtained for them at the same time as for the book (Richards, *Bibliography*, 76).

To A. P. Watt  15 July 1893

AL

Brattleboro.

July. 15: 93.
Dear Watt

Your budget of the 5th to hand. In the first place let me thank you on my father’s behalf for your promptitude in sending his cable on to my mother. It was an important matter and took great loads off our mind.¹

1. I return herewith the Heineman Balestier agreement signed and note what you say about sale of Dutch rights.

2. I will send you all new verses that may be put in to the American B Bs. for [refreshing?] as you suggest.

3. The E[nglish] I[llustrated] M[agazine] poem² being purely English does not go in this land so I didn’t copyright it here. It will only be needed, if at all, for some new book of verses next year.

5. [sic] To the best of my remembrance my royalty with Wheeler was 1d per copy.³ I don’t a bit like the high and lofty tone of his letter which seems to me unbusinesslike. I see no account of sales in England after 1891. Now his Indian sales are sure to be small. What we must keep track of are the English sales.

6. The note from the Manchester schoolboy has not come to hand.

7. Don’t hurry Mother Maturin. “The old lady” is as you say good for a great deal but she isn’t ripe yet.

8. I suppose Gerard Cobb isn’t any worse than any one else. At any rate most of the songs stand in his name. He’d better go on.

9. The Webster letter looks to me like an indirect bid for you.⁴ It’s amazingly difficult for me to tell what books will or will not go across the water here but were I you I think I should try the job for a little at any rate. Now why not, if you haven’t done it, send Mark a copy of your lambs in the fold?

10. I’ve just spoken to my father about the illustrations of the B. Bs. He says he doesn’t much care for soldiers but he’s ready for the purely native ones—such as Gunga Din. Methuen ought to be able to get good army artists for the business and I should like it. Also my father will be glad to do some head and tail pieces for native scenes.⁵ Tell Methuen this and see if they mean business.

12. [sic] In regard to Stevenson—nothing is to be gained. McClure who lunched with me on Wednesday has got him tight—bought a novel from him at a fancy price and so forth. If I knew or had met R. L. S. I’d
do it like a shot but … well I’ll tell you when we meet. It’s an overlook [sic: overlong?] tale to write. Did you get Richard Harding Davis.

13. I expect Besant back on his way from Chicago almost any time. He crossed with my father and we all lunched together at New York and he spoke much and lovingly of you the other day.6

14. Yo [ ] the National Review.[ ]7 the N[ational].R[evie]. wants with a child’s tale but I suppose it’s all right.8

15. I am enclosing with this a long poem in the nature of a Scots ballad for which you might find a place. The price need not be high as the thing is avowedly a copy. It deals with the notion of Knighting men in our business and perhaps should go to a literary paper.9

But of that you will be the best judge. Please get it typed.

I haven’t heard any news of Alick for some time. How does he get along. Is he on his summer holiday.

Our little girl grows and is well and I am busy with tales that should be ready anon

[closing and signature cut away].

Notes 15 July 1893

1. RK’s parents had left India for good in April. His mother stopped in England but JLK continued to the United States. He arrived in Vermont on 19 June and, after a good deal of travelling in New England and Canada, left for England on 27 September (CK Diary).

2. “A Song of the English.”

3. For the titles in the “Indian Railway Library,” published in Allahabad by A. H. Wheeler and Co.

4. Perhaps the publishing firm of Charles L. Webster is meant. It was founded by Mark Twain in 1884 to publish his own books, with Twain’s nephew, Charles L. Webster, as manager. After early successes in the subscription book business it was, by this time, in financial trouble, and the panic of 1893 in the latter half of that year “killed it.” See John Tebbel, A History of Book Publishing in the United States (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1975), II: 526.

5. No edition of Barrack-Room Ballads with illustrations by JLK is known.

6. RK went to New York on 16 June to meet his father, who was “travelling with W. Besant” (CK Diary).
7. About four lines and part of a fifth have been lost here when the signature and closing on the other side of the leaf were cut out.

8. “The White Seal,” National Review, August 1893. The Review, which had published little fiction, had just changed hands and was looking for more lively content.

9. The poem is “The Last Rhyme of True Thomas,” To-day, 17 March 1894. I do not know what RK means by calling it “avowedly a copy” rather than an imitation. The poem is a response to the complaint that literary men in England have not been knighted.

To A. P. Watt 22 July 1893

ALS

Brattleboro’
July: 22: 93

Dear Watt

I am sending herewith four (4) new and original B.B.B’s [sic] which, it seems to me, Methuen might be willing to buy at a price for insertion in a new Edition of the poems.¹

Now it seems to me (I throw this out merely as a suggestion) that you might be able to vend the ballads serially somewhere before offering ’em to Methuen and by that get all that there is in them.²

In America I shall give them to Macmillan³ as I hinted before and I want you to save copyright on them in this country.

Your letter about McClure and the White Seal’s delay has just come in. I note that you have charged the cables for this matter to my account. I think we’ll make 10% cover cables and postage stamps henceforward. Thanks for the lesson read to Harpers. I trust it will be profitable unto them.

Clement Shorter has written to me asking for a tale for the Xmas Illustrated.⁴ I shall be sending to you in a few weeks an 8000 or 9000 wd tale which ought to just suit his case, and I want him made to see that it has to be well illustrated.

Sincerely
Rudyard Kipling.
Notes  

22 July 1893

1. No new English edition of *Barrack-Room Ballads* was published. Since the appearance of the volume in May 1892, CK’s Diary records the composition of “Follow Me ‘Ome” (9 October 1892) and “Back to the Army Again” (21 July 1893). These and other new Barrack-Room Ballads were held over for publication in *The Seven Seas* which has 19 new titles under that heading.

2. Eleven of the nineteen new poems published as “Barrack-Room Ballads” in *The Seven Seas* were published in periodicals before being collected.

3. The American edition of *The Seven Seas* was published by Appleton.

4. “The Bridge Builders”: See 14 April 1893. The story was illustrated by R. Caton Woodville, who later created the famous figure of The Absent-Minded Beggar of RK’s poem.

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To A. P. Watt  

13 September 1893

*ALS*

Brattleboro  

Sept. 13. 1893

Dear Watt:

I enclose herewith two letters which seem to need your friendly care. The woman who wants to translate appears to be poor and I’d like you to help her.

Brett (who by the way has copyrighted the four B. B’s)\(^1\) sent a casual parcel to my address the other day and thinking it was old B.B. books I opened it without enthusiasm. Then seeing your splendid gift I shouted. *That* is the way to publish Rabelais. I do not know any other but *what* is A. P. W. doing as a publisher?\(^2\) It’s sumptuous—royally and generously got up and I’m more and again your debtor.

The account and the money for the new poems has come in and I’ve been away from home for a few days with the father so I haven’t been answering your mail.\(^3\)

Richard Harding Davis spent a day here t’other day\(^4\) and I told him what I conceived to be good for his soul’s health. But he says that his books don’t go in London. All the same Harper won’t allow him to publish with any firm but themselves. This may be worth looking into.
The story for the Illustrated London news—of which a proof is imperative—has gone off and should be in your hands by this.

There is no news to tell and I am very busy.

Sincerely always
Rudyard Kipling

Notes 13 September 1893

1. For the new American edition: see 22 May 1893.

2. Watt published *Rabelais: The Five Books and Minor Writings together with Letters and Documents Illustrating His Life*, a new translation with notes by W. F. Smith, London, 2 vols., 1893. Watt as a publisher is said to have issued many works for the Palestine Exploration Fund, of which his client, Sir Walter Besant, was secretary.

3. They had been on a visit to Charles Eliot Norton, Professor of the History of Art at Harvard and a friend of, among other English artists, Burne-Jones, RK’s uncle. The visit, between 8 and 11 September, was to Norton’s summer place, Ashfield, in western Massachusetts (CK Diary). RK’s response to Norton’s invitation is in *Letters*, II: 107.

4. 4 September (CK Diary).

To A. P. Watt 19 September 1893

*ALS*¹

Brattleboro / Vt.

Sep. 19. 93.

Dear Watt—

I have to acknowledge receipt of your draft (1 of 2 of exchange) for 1400 (odd) dollars—I note your advice about Harpers and have wired you “Rudyard.” We may as well take the money out of the firm.

Enclosed please find two letters that need attention. I think I’ll write more fully anon.

Ever yours sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

Note 19 September 1893

1. The letter appears to be in the hand of JLK, who was then still at Naulakha, the new house that the Kiplings moved into in August of this year.
To A. S. Watt  
1 October 1893

ALS

Brattleboro.
Oct 1. 93.

Dear Alick

I am in receipt of yours of the 23rd ult announcing sale to Cust of The Three Sealers\(^1\) as well as J[erome], K[Jerome]’s deal in regard to The Son of his Father.\(^2\)

I am sending by this mail the proofs of The Bridge Builders which has been unusually vilely set up.

I’ve just come back from a week in New York\(^3\) where I’ve heard a good deal about business. You must come over and get the hang of their way of doing things over here. I have written a set of five child stories for St Nick\(^4\) (wh is the Century practically)\(^5\) and they will appear in book form when they are finished—and the Century co want first offer for that book and I have arranged that the business is to be settled through you. That gives you a footing with them that you ought to make good but I do wish that you would find time to come over and look into the workings of the American firms here. At present you are at a disadvantage in dealing with them, in that you cannot know their relative positions and weaknesses nor their methods of doing business, which are curious. Godey’s, Munsey’s; the Cosmopolitan; the Ladies Home Journal (wh. pays fancy prices) the Forum and the Arena, not to mention the New England and smaller ones are all worth knowing and I feel sure that a month or two this side the water would be money in your pocket—not so much as far as I am concerned but as regards other clients.\(^6\) Your father of course has his own knowledge ground to a fine point and it seems to me that now is the time for you to get in a store of knowledge of the American side. You may say to yourself “It isn’t worth while.” I know that it is and will be more worth while year after year. Book sales this side are nothing very alluring but there is a big field in selling to the magazines that have no large circulation in England but circulate immensely here. Talk it over with my father when you come across him and see if he doesn’t agree with me. Also, talk the matter
over with your own father and I fancy he’ll agree too. I’ve been sitting still and watching our business here for a year and keeping my mouth shut and the conclusion I’ve come to is that you ought to come over and see a few things for yourself.

Sincerely

Rudyard.

Notes 1 October 1893
2. See 5 February 1893. To-day was founded by Jerome in 1893.
3. They went with JLK to see him off for England on 23 September and returned to Brattleboro on the 29th (CK Diary).
5. St. Nicholas was published by the Century Company.
6. RK published only in Cosmopolitan and the Ladies’ Home Journal of the magazines named.

To A. P. Watt 29 October 1893

ALS

Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont
Oct 29. 93

Dear Watt,

There has been a long silence your side lately, broken only by an enclosure last mail from a man who wants to compile a birthday book of my work. I enclose herewith the typed copy of an Indian child’s tale which may find a place somewhere. It’s strictly moral and of an elevating tendency. It must be got out inside of four months if possible. If it were not for that I should try the Youths Companion. They paid well once, you’ll remember. St Nicholas have no more money left. I have
cleaned them out, but the Youths Companion is fairly well off, and if it can publish soon you might make a deal.

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling.

Notes 29 October 1893
1. Probably “Servants of the Queen,” which had been rejected by St. Nicholas (CK Diary 27 May 1893), perhaps for the reason given in the letter: “no more money left.” Published, Pall Mall Magazine, March 1894; Harper’s Weekly, 3 March 1894.

2. For “An English School,” Youth’s Companion, 19 October 1893.

3. The magazine paid RK $1,150 for the two stories “Mowgli’s Brothers” and “Tiger! Tiger!” (Rees Extracts, 24 March 1893).

To A. P. Watt 8 November 1893

ALS

Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont

Nov. 8, 93.

Dear Watt

I have to acknowledge your long letter and enclosures with statements of MacMillans, Methuen’s and Sheards accounts.

But before we go any further I want to tell you of a fearful mistake that you have made in regard to the Bridge builders. There is a vile little sheet that lives to a large extent on black mail, called Town Topics in New York—a paper that is absolutely tabooed in all decent society. I find that that paper advertises The Bridge Builders which I presume they have purchased either from you or from McClure to whom you sold may have [sold] the American rights. I can’t tell you how grieved and annoyed I am to find my work in such surroundings. It will do me an immense amount of harm this side the water—harm that you don’t realize. Of course you didn’t know what sort of paper you were dealing with or you would never have dreamed of letting them have any work of any of your clients: but all this shows the imperative necessity of knowing something about the trade on this side the Atlantic. I can do
nothing—indeed it is too late—to get the tale recalled so the least said is the soonest mended.

That same foul little sheet pestered me for weeks to get a “spicy” tale out of me—I didn’t take the trouble to answer—any more than I should have answered the “Pink Un” or “Ally Sloper”\(^2\)—and that makes this publication of the Bridge Builders so much the more humiliating.

I will answer your letter in detail anon but in regard to F. Page Wilson, his birthday book, I thought I wrote you that as a compilation the thing was beneath contempt—it does not cover anything but Plain Tales and The Light and such like and I certainly do not intend to authorize it as a birthday book.\(^3\)

In haste, as I have to catch the mail.

Ever yours sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes

8 November 1893

1. *Town Topics: The Journal of Society*, a weekly published in New York. “The Bridge Builders” appeared in four instalments in the magazine, 9, 16, 23, and 30 November. The publication of “The Bridge Builders” in *Town Topics* is not recorded in any of the bibliographies, though Flora Livingston, in the *Supplement* (1938) to her *Bibliography* (1927) records its publications in the collection titled *Tales from Town Topics*, No. 47, vol. 24, 1903. The index to the *Supplement* also gives a reference to *Town Topics* in the *Bibliography*, but no mention of the magazine appears on the page specified. It is known that RK saw galley proofs of the Livingston *Bibliography*, and it is possible that he asked to have the entry deleted. It is difficult to explain how the reference to a non-existent entry appeared in the index to the *Supplement*, published eleven years after the *Bibliography*, which contains no reference to *Town Topics*.

2. “The Pink ’Un” is *The Sporting Times; Ally Sloper’s Half Holiday*, a comic weekly.

3. See 29 October 1893.

To A. P. Watt 12 November 1893

ALS

*Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont*  
Nov 12 93.
Dear Watt

We will now begin to answer yours of the 27th Oct. with the MacMillan, Methuen and Sheard accts.

1. I have received your cable re Sheard and bid you arrange as before. I don’t see myself the pull of a five year clause in songs but, you will see that he does not assume he has rights to any more than those he has annexed. Some day some one song of mine will be popular and we shall reap a great harvest. It is a big mine in it in [sic] the States if properly [raked? ].

2. The new verses of mine in the new American B Bs are all copyrighted in as much as they have all been published—in the Idler, Century, or Nat Observer.

3. I suppose there is no reason why Chambers should not have the Ballad of the Clamperdown but as you say it is a cheap way of making books and—rather a nasty one. I want a sample copy of the poets and poetry of the 19th century with some selections of mine in it.¹ Can you send it please?

4. Fred Ware² too I suppose must have Tommy and Fuzzy Wuzzy—those poems have gone pretty extensively up and down this earth.

5. By the way what became of a poem called The Last Rhyme of True Thomas which I sent to you months ago.³ I don’t remember that you acknowledged it and I know you have said nothing about its placing.

6. I have lost F. Page Wilson’s address. If you send it me I will return his M.S. to him. Honestly, he is no earthly sort of use and as a book his Birthday compilation is beneath contempt.

7. Now about the child’s book—the beast stories of mine. They are as under.

Rikki Tikki Tavi
Mowgli’s brothers
Tiger Tiger    St Nick
Toomai of the Elephants
The White seal
Servants of the Queen    A. P. W.

They are new in notion and though I say it who should not there’s a deal of good stuff in them.
My notion is this. The Century don’t want me to publish ’em in the Spring but that is the best time is it not in England[,] and American book sales in any case are very small as compared with England. Still this book ought to sell well this side the water. The Century want first offer of the book (They like Appleton and the others kick at dealing with A.P.W. but they must). It will be between 30 and 40,000 words. My idea is to issue it unillustrated in England if you think well of that. And on this side the water, if the Century do it, with their illustrations, reserving the right of dispensing with any pictures that are too bad to be tolerated.  

In regard to terms I suppose they should give the same terms as Appleton gave me: and should be made to understand that those are the terms I am accustomed to. A large advance from the Century, need not be insisted upon. Big royalties are more to me than big advances.

The time of publication I leave in your hands If Servants of the Queen is not sold in this country it must of course be copyrighted here.

8. Can you send me a few copies of the English edition of Many Inventions. I have never yet had my six copies of that book.

9. You might, or Alick might, quite casually like, find out what McMillan’s views would be in regard to another book of verses say—another set of barrack rooms and a set of ballads?

That I think is all for this week.

Sincerely ever yours

Rudyard Kipling

P.S. Tell Besant with my salaams that he is making himself adored this side the water by reason of his compliments to the land.

Please send one copy Barrack Room Ballads to

Mrs Sinclair
Waharoa
Auckland
New Zealand.

R. K. [the last five lines written on flap of envelope]
Notes  12 November 1893

1. Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century. See 14 April 1893.
2. Not identified.
3. See 15 July 1893,
4. Both the English and the American editions of The Jungle Book are illustrated.
5. I cannot identify these “compliments.” In his conduct of The Author Besant was steadily critical of the American copyright law.

To A. P. Watt  15 November 1893

ALS

Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont

Nov: 15: 93

Dear Watt—

I am sending by this the M.S. of a 200 line poem—McAndrew’s Hymn—which I have been working over for many weeks past.¹ I believe it to be good and hope it will behave as such. Proof is wanted early before publication. Ask good money for hard work.

I send also under another cover a copy of Town Topics with the first instalment of the Bridge Builders in it.² You can then see for yourself what sort of a pimp’s sheet the thing is. I fear it is going to do me no end of harm as I am already getting talked to about it and told that if I take trouble I may even write to the dignity of the Police Gazette. The worst of it is that all the men here know that you do my agency work…. well you can imagine the rest.

Sincerely ever

Rudyard Kipling

Notes  15 November 1893

¹. Scribner’s Magazine, December 1894. There is no reference to the poem in CK Diary until 1 November 1893: “Rud works all morning as usual. This time at the Scottish Engineer’s song, he calls it ‘McAndrew’s Hymn’” (Rees Extracts). The poem as published is of 187 lines.

². The issue of 9 November 1893.
To A. P. Watt  6 December 1893

ALS

Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont
Dec: 6. 1893.

Dear Watt—

In the first place a merry xmas and a happy new year and many and very hearty thanks for all you’ve undertaken and carried out in my behalf during the past twelve months. May you prosper!

Now I will deal seriatim with your letter of the 24th Nov. and second of exchange for $484 25/100. Many thanks. The reason of my cable was not need of money but the lively apprehension of the burned child who has once singed his fingers. There were rumours about Sassoon’s being queer and I didn’t know, if that went down, that I might have a second O.B.C. smash to face. I don’t care to keep my English balance too high in these days and I knew there were a few hundreds on hand there.

2. In regard to the Bridge builders—it’s very sad and annoying and I think unprintable things of McClure. But what is the good of paying two commissions on one piece of work? McClure must have made a neat little heap out of Town Topic’s desire to get my name on its books. Isn’t there any way of dealing with the American mags direct?

3. I approve of all your arrangements in regard to Sheard’s music. Mr Gerard F. Cobbe (whom I cannot love) writes me a regular musician’s letter about his settings and pitches in some long winded story about you not acceding to some of his just and humble demands and how much nicer it would be were I in England to spend my time talking these things over with him. As far as I can make out he seems to think that he is entitled ex-officio to do anything he likes to any and all of my verses. I may have mislead him but it will do no harm to let him and Sheard know that they haven’t a vested interest in every B. B. I may turn out. I agree with you about the musical advertising helping Methuen’s book.

4. While we are on this matter. The sketch you give for an arrangement with Methuen for a new book of verses in eminently satisfactory. Unless something unforeseen happens there should be a volume next autumn—not smaller than the present one.
5. Please send me a typed copy of the Rhyme of True Thomas. I want to make some alterations and additions to him and then he needn’t come back to me for revision in proof which will save time.*

6. *Who* in the deuce is Fred Ware?² My letter files do not show me letters from any such person. Let us have more light on Mr Ware.

7. In regard to the child’s book. Excellent. The touch about the gilding all round and MacM’s anxiety on that head is delicious.³ I have just added a new tale and not one of the worst by any means. Here is a list.

- Mowgli’s Brothers…………………….6500.
- Baloo’s hunting (new tale)⁴……………7000.
- Tiger Tiger………………………….5500.
- Rikki Tikki Tavi…………………….5500.
- Toomai of the Elephants………….6000?
- The White seal…………………….6200?
- servants of the queen………………5500

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There will be a preface of about 1000 words; rhymed chapter headings and very possibly an envoi. So altogether the book should not be much less than 42,000.

*Could you send me what Besant wrote about authors and decorations in the Voice of the Flying Day.*⁵

I have written to my father asking him to do us a few head and tail pieces for the English edition and by the way if he ever wants to see anything of mine in your hands please send him a type written copy.

The experiences of Many Inventions have taught me that we gain nothing by new matter in a book. So I should like to have the servants of the Queen at least printed before the book comes out.⁶ The new tale I expect must go into the book without being sold serially.⁷ What is MacMillan’s notion of Spring? April or May—or March.⁸ I am getting all proofs together and revising them.

The Century as I told you would much prefer to publish in autumn but I want them to see that the English sales are our big hold and we
can’t afford to let ’em slip. If they (the Century) don’t care for the offer I’m sure Appletons would jump at it.

The terms you are making (very many thanks for the figures) seem thoroughly good. Some good man ought to design the cover and I think as soon as you have decided upon MacM. that that firm might write my father and ask him how many of the illustrations, including cover design, he is willing to do. If we can get him to work there is none better for our purposes.

Let me know as soon as may be proposed date of publication.

8. This I think covers all the questions at issue. Frankly I hope rather a big sale for the child’s book. The English poets (1 vol) and Many Inventions (1 vol) have come in and they round out the measure of my gratitude.

Yes, the new form of letter rubricated is an invention and gives me great help in reading and referring.

With best wishes to yourself and also believe me

Always [?] yours sincerely

Rudyard Kipling.

Notes  6 December 1893

1. The bank of David Sassoon and Co.

2. See 12 November 1893.

3. The English edition of The Jungle Book has “all edges gilt” (Richards, Bibliography, 80). The contract with Macmillan for the book is dated 22 December 1893 (Watt UNC 452.47: 7).


5. RK perhaps means an article of this title dated 8 May 1891; I do not know where it originally appeared, but it is on line from the South Australian Chronicle of 27 June 1891. After describing the splendor of the uniforms and decorations on display at the annual dinner of the Royal Academy, 4 May 1891, assembled to do honor to the art of painting, Besant wonders “when … will literature be able to call together such a gathering?” RK was probably working on “The Last Rhyme of True Thomas” (Tó-day, 17 March 1894), which treats the question of official honors for literature with lofty scorn.

6. It was: see 29 October 1893.
7. “Kaa’s Hunting” appeared in *To-day*, 31 March 7 April 1894; and in *McClure’s*, June 1894 (after publication of *The Jungle Book*).

8. *The Jungle Book* was published on 22 May 1894 in both England and the U.S.

To A. P. Watt 17 December [1893]

*ALS*

*Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont*

Dec. 17.

Dear Watt—

In regard to the *Town Topics* business what we have to see about now is whether McClure hasn’t sold ’em American book rights of the *Bridge Builders* to use in a poisonous series of paper backs which they bring out from time to time entitled *Tales from Town Topics*.1 *This is important.* If he has they’ll use my name for all it is worth. As it is they can put me down as one of their contributors, and that is quite bad enough. I hope you have explained yourself clearly to McClure—

Does the O.B.C. show any signs of paying another dividend?2 I should like to know.

By next mail I hope to be sending five out of the seven tales that make up the MacM. child’s book—with songs for each story. These must be printed on separate pages.3

I want the book to be called “The Jungle Book” as with the exception of *The White Seal* it is all jungle4—It has taken me some time to arrange and still keeps me busy. I note what you say about increased cost of gilding.

Sincerely ever

Rudyard Kipling

P. S: I agree with you in regard to the German translations—enclosed is a letter on the same subject—the volume of contemporary verse has arrived.

Notes 17 December [1893]

1. The story appears in the series, though not until vol. 47, 1903.
2. The next dividend noted in CK’s Diary is a payment of $2,444 on 5 February 1894.

3. The verse headpieces appear at the beginning of the text; the tailpieces are on separate pages.

4. Only four of the seven stories are of the jungle.

To A. P. Watt 25 December 1893

ALS

Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont
Dec. 25: 93

Dear Watt,

Your cable asking me to send “Baloo” for serial use has been acted upon. You will get registered under separate cover the 8500 word tale of Kaa’s Hunting which is Baloo under its new name. As the tale refers directly to Mowgli’s Brothers in St Nicholas I confess I don’t see how another magazine will make it fit in.\(^1\) I want proofs as soon as possible.

The poem on separate sheet “The Road Song of the Bandar Log” must be held over to follow the tale when it is printed in book form.

The more I think of the Jungle Book the more it seems to me that I’ve underestimated the size. It will be near 50,000 all told. I have a notion that the Century people would very much like to postpone the publication of the Jungle Book till next Autumn, but this is exactly what we do not want. At the most they can bring the book out in America in spring and lie low about it until till next October and boom it up then but, as I have before pointed out, American sales of a $1.50 book do not count as compared with the English returns. We must disabuse their minds of the postponement idea.

That is the most important thing on hand.

Ever yours sincerely

Rudyard Kipling.

P. S. In dealing with the Cosmop and other American mags, if we do in future, $125 or $100 a thousand is the price which may be asked. I got $100 p 1000 from St Nick.
To A. P. Watt  31 December 1893

ALS

Naulakha / Brattleboro / Vermont
Dec. 31. 93.

Dear Watt,

There seems to have been a breakdown somewhere in regard to the American copyright of *The Rhyme of the Three Sealers*. As you know MacMillan entered it for us in the Congressional Library here.

The *Tribune*\(^1\) of Dec 27\(^{th}\) took the whole poem bodily from the *Pall Mall Gazette*,\(^2\) heading it by the way, *Kipling’s Poor Ballad*. I wired to McClure to know whether he had bought the American rights. He replied he knew nothing of the poem. I then asked Appleton for a copy of the *Pall Mall Gazette* explaining what had happened. They very kindly consulted their copyright lawyer and he gave it as his opinion that the *P.M.G.* should have marked the poem “copyright etc.” I received a letter to the same effect from the Congressional Library.\(^3\)

Now, if the *P.M.G.* has not done this, the copyrighting of the poem this side the water has been no good whatever and we must look into the matter searchingly. There must be a fault somewhere. Anyhow we are left without our American copyright for without the “copyright etc.” I am assured that we have no case to go upon. This is intensely annoying and I want an explanation from the *P.M.G.*

In looking over the American copyright law I find that for the sum of c 50/ it is possible to obtain a certificate with date of copyrighting. In the matter of books, not single poems, it will be convenient to obtain and file such a certificate for reference. Will you therefore get for me all back-certificates on books that are available.

Sincerely

Rudyard Kipling
Notes 31 December 1893


2. A mistake for *Pall Mall Budget.*

3. This was the accepted view. “We discover that our American Copyright in the Three Sealers does not hold because the P.M.G. failed to mention copyright on it” (Rees Extracts, 31 December 1831). RK was careful after this to insist upon such a mention. When, in January 1894, the *Tribune* “in a most insolent note,” offered £50 for “The White Seal” RK refused it (Rees Extracts, 13 January 1894).