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  
24 January 1896

*ALS*

*Naulakha, Waite, Vermont.*

Jan: 24. 96

Dear Watt:

As you justly remark it is some time since I have written to you: but I have been busy with a new 10,000 w. story, wh. should go to you in a few days, for disposition at your judgment.¹

In regard to the most important thing, I’ve been pondering your remarks as to a possible Scribner edition of my works; and the upshot is that I have now written to “our Mr Doubleday” of that firm and told him that he must communicate with you in the matter as I am totally averse to taking up such a business.² It seems to me desirable that the arrangement should be put through and as you well know I have entire confidence in your capacity. I should not like to do anything that would in any way be prejudicial to the other publishers who are now issuing my books, at varying prices: but at the same time I should be glad to get as much money as possible out of the American sales of an edition de luxe. The matter therefore is entirely in your hands and I shall look forward with interest to the negotiations. You will find “our Mr. Doubleday” rather a handful, I fear: but I believe, with you, that there may be money in it.

What you write about McClure is curious. The man himself—lean, keen and enthusiastic, paid us a flying visit the other day.³ He is putting $80,000 into his new printing plant—the paper company give him 13 mo. credit and he is really doing a good business.

Prosperity, by the way, is making him even more religious than usual. Did you ever know McClure was religious?⁴
I am perfectly willing that you should let him have the tales he wants\textsuperscript{5} \textit{but he must not alter my titles}. I can’t guarantee four or any number ahead. When he was here I told him that I didn’t think I’d do any work for some time. I loathe the feeling of feeling pledged in advance.

\textit{Nota Bene}. So long as McC. sticks to his present way, it is all right: but the man’s colossal vanity (he has a right to be proud) leads him to think of starting yet another magazine. In which case I don’t think he’ll do so well. This is just a hint for future reference. He is a study in himself.

I shall be glad if on receipt of this you will forward me a draft for what money may be to my credit in the bank, less the usual reserve, as before. I think the war scare has blown by.\textsuperscript{6}

The Birthday book I hope to send in the course of a mail or so: and must thank you for the splendid binding of my works which you have given to my wife. By the way did I tell you that we expect the baby’s sister (or brother) in a week or two. The wife is very well and brave and was out today driving her horses.

With best regards from us both to you all

Yours ever sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes

24 January 1896


2. RK’s letter to Doubleday, 25 January 1896, directing him to “open negotiations” with Watt, concludes by saying “If you had to do business with me direct it would end in sorrow and tears on both sides” (ALS, Princeton University).

3. McClure called on 14 January (CK Diary).

4. McClure’s parents joined the Plymouth Brethren, so he knew a specially strict separatist brand of Christianity. At one time he considered entering the ministry, but only as one of many alternatives.

5. For the next few years \textit{McClure’s Magazine} was the main American outlet for RK’s work, displacing the \textit{Century Magazine}, \textit{Scribner’s}, \textit{The Ladies’ Home Journal}, and \textit{St. Nicholas}. 
6. A border dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana had led President Cleveland in December 1895 to invoke the Monroe Doctrine, creating a “war scare.” The affair was settled by arbitration, but the anti-English feeling it generated in America helped to determine RK to leave the country. As he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, “this folly puts an end to my good wholesome life here, and to me that is the saddest part of it” (8 January 1896: Letters, II: 225–26).

To A. P. Watt  [3? February 1896]¹

ALS

Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.

Dear Watt—

May I ask you to send the enclosed “domestic occurrence” to the Times for me as I have not 5s in English money.

On the 2nd Feb at Naulakha Waite: Vermont. U.S.A. the wife of Rudyard Kipling of a daughter.²

I may mention incidentally that it is a fine and healthy girl and that Mrs Kipling seems to be progressing famously. The house is full of a pack of clucking women and I know not exactly whether I am on my head or my heels. I shall get to work as soon as possible now that this is safely over.

Ever yours

Rudyard Kipling

Notes  [3?] February 1896

1. Received 13 February 1896 (office date stamp).

2. Elsie (1896–1976), afterwards Mrs. George Bambridge. The notice appears in The Times of 14 February exactly as given here.

To A. P. Watt  7 February 1896

ALS

Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.

Feb 7. 96

Dear Watt—
The house is fair hadden-doun\(^1\) under the heel of women kind but the wife and babe are doing very well and I hasten to acknowledge yrs of the 24 Jan.

By all means let MacM pick his artist and go ahead on a selection of Soldier Tales.\(^2\) I presume he’ll want me to do the selecting. I think it should sell well.

Ever yrs sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

Notes

7 February 1896

1. Oppressed, afflicted.

2. *Soldier Tales*, 1896, is illustrated by A. S. Hartrick (1864–1950), painter and illustrator. RK disliked his work, saying that he “suffered at the hands of a son of Belial who calls himself an artist and in that belief has ‘illustrated’ a vol. of my soldier stories” (to James M. Conland [6 November 1896?]: ALS, Library of Congress).

To A. P. Watt 20 February 1896

*ALS*

*Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.*

20: II: 96.

Dear Watt:

May I trespass on your good nature to ask you to send Mr. W.A. Fuller, Librarian of my old school in Devon, a full set of Rudyard Kipling his works. I want them bound *very strongly* in some iron-clad form of binding as I remember how we used to handle the books in old days. Also I send a slip of paper for the binder to paste in to *Plain Tales*. Please send the things to him as soon as may be

W.A. Fuller

U.S. College

Westward Ho!

N. Devon

and I’ll once more be your debtor.
All goes well with mother and child and I will answer your letter with accounts as soon as I can get through some work I have now started.¹

Ever sincerely

Rudyard Kipling.

Congratulations to Miss Watt’s (that was) husband.² We saw it in the Times. Thanks for your kindly cable.

RK

Note 20 February 1896

1. “Captains Courageous.” RK had returned to work on Kim on 29 January but soon found himself stuck and convinced that he must consult his father about the story (CK Diary, 29 January, 4 February 1896). On 9 February RK’s family doctor, James Conland, formerly a fisherman on the Grand Banks, “calls and supplies me with local colour of life on the Banks” (CK Diary: at this point, following Elsie’s birth, written by RK). Two days later “Captains C. taking shape” (CK Diary, 11 February 1896). No doubt RK and Conland had discussed the subject before 9 February.

2. Elizabeth Watt, younger daughter of A. P. Watt, married Duncan Dempster on 29 January 1896 (The Times, 30 January 1896).

To A. P. Watt 7 March 1896

ALS

Naulakha, / Waité, / Vermont.

Mar. 7. 96.

Dear Watt

(Before I begin—just as I was beginning indeed—the spoon and porringer came for Baby Elsie. She was too full of her dinner to send you her thanks but we two thank you on her behalf. Now she is as “weel tochered”¹ as her sister. It was a beautiful bit of work: dull silver on bright so she’s all but born with a silver spoon in her mouth.)

Many thanks for the draft for £750: sent in your letter of Feb. 19th.

I have sent you the copy of the Birthday book and with it my father’s drawings for the signs of the zodiac to accompany it, one between each
month. Please tell them to reproduce the drawings as large as the page will allow.

Kindly draw up and forward to me an agreement between myself and Joseph Finn, who has compiled the book, stating that he is to receive half the net profits of the sale of the book.² This is a personal agreement between myself and the man—only I want it done in proper form.

The agreements between the publisher of the book and myself of course do not include any mention of the compiler but deal with me alone.

I have sent you several copies of a book “The Cup of Trembling” by Mrs Mary Hallock Foote³ for which I would beg your best offices, in getting reviewed and setting before the public. As you know, she has her own reputation here but I have a theory that she has not yet come to her rightful place on the other side. I have never seen her and so am unprejudiced. The St James’s struck me as a good paper: but I want you to exercise your best judgment in placing the copies. I note, with great distinctness, what you say about Stephen Crane; and shall do my possible [sic] to steer him into the fold. Help me about Mary Hallock Foote and we’ll call it even.

In regard to my verses—I sent copy of one half of them down to Ripley Hitchcock⁴ to estimate on the length set-up. He sent them back after giving me a very hopeful estimate: 122. pt. or a little more than one half, and they are now back on my desk for revision.

Hurry no man’s Pegasus. Hope to have them ready in the fall.

In regard to McClure his Palestine scheme. He laid it before me in writing some time ago. What he is really driving at is a popular magazine set of articles on Christ and I am not going to play that game for him.⁵ Also I don’t care for cholera or ophthalmia: as you will see from the cable. Many thanks for Montbard illustrations of Soldier and Sailor too.⁶ That song, I believe, will be popular. What [illegible initial] wants in the way of “Brave Deeds” is rather fascinating but that is a matter that we must hold over till I come to England this year. It isn’t a thing to be tackled in a hurry but tell him with my compliments that I will think it over.
I am afraid I have been scandalously neglectful of my duty to the Prince of agents but you see I have been agent for a small baby and the wife wasn’t very well, and I have been sair thrang\(^7\) with all matter [sic] of domestic matters besides------a 40-or 50,000 word tale for boys which breaks entirely new ground and is now 3/4\(^{th}\)s done.\(^8\) It deals entirely with life on the cod-fisheries on the Grand banks—has cost me more time and bother than I care to think of, and should be a blazing success.

After this frivolous interruption we will continue.\(^9\) You might have known I shouldn’t have held my peace so long had I not been up to my eyes with new work. That tale will beat Mowgli hollow. It is American, and marine; special, technical and adventurous. McClure would jump at it. St Nicholas would gape for it but I fear would not pay the money. I’ll send it to you as soon as it is done and you will see and dispose of it.

As to the 20 royalty [sic] on the colonial Edition (payable to Wheeler’s people) sold in India you have my entire authority to state that I am willing to take 4d.

That I think is all and it was very patient of you not to pursue me with reminders. But when you see the new tale (the book sales alone will be gorgeous) you will see how busy I was.

With our united best regards

[illegible closing: Ever ?]

Rudyard K.

Notes 7 March 1896

1. Dowered.

2. For “Joseph Finn” see 22 October 1894.

3. For Mrs. Foote, see 28 February 1893. She sent a copy of *The Cup of Trembling and Other Stories*, Boston, 1895, to RK, and his letter in response concluded: “P.S. If you wouldn’t think it impertinent I’d like to have three (3) copies to send over [to] the other side with an eye to reviews and if you’d care to have me write to my literary agent A.P. Watt with a view to pushing it and making new English contracts, I’d be even better pleased.” She says that her book made no “splash,” but that her correspondence with RK continued until the time of his illness in New York in 1899 (*A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West*, 339–40).

5. RK advised McClure to “get a young and pushing archæologist from the American School in Athens, send him to Palestine with a free hand and a blank cheque book and get some enthusiastic clergyman to revise his M.S.S. when he sends it in. I know too much of the heat and dirt and flies and ophthalmia of the holy land” (5 February 1896: ALS, Princeton University).

6. Georges Montbard, in McClure’s, April 1896.

7. Very busy.

8. The story was finished by August 1896, and the contract for publication by the Century Co. dated 2 September 1896 (Watt UNC 451.26).

9. At the end of the preceding sentence CK has intruded a remark: “This [being “scandalously neglectful”] is untrue its because I have been up stairs and did not know of your unanswered letters C.K.”

To A. P. Watt 16 March 1896

ALS

Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.

Mar. 16. 96

Dear Watt,

Your note of the 29th to hand. I’m blessed if I can “cast off” Soldier tales to the length of the Jungle book but it seems to me:

With the Main guard:
The Drums of the Fore and Aft.
The Man who was:
The courting of Dinah Shadd.
The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney
Love o’ women

would, in large type with pictures, be about the size M[acmillan]. wants. Any way it would be a very good little book. If he wants it larger, slip in The Taking of Lungtungpen, and the Madness of Private Orth-eris. If he wants it shorter substitute those two for Love of women.1 By all means get it out for Xmas.

Yours ever

Rudyard Kipling.
To A. P. Watt 25 April 1896

ALS

262 4th Ave / New York City
Ap. 25. ’96

Dear Watt:

Very many thanks for your letters enclosing Methuen and MacMillan accts—you will have received my cable in regard to Scribner’s Edition and it seems to me that the “consideration” which Brett proposes is an eminently reasonable one.2

I am going off in a few moments to lunch with Stephen Crane who I hope to steer into the fold shortly.3 There is one thing in which I must ask your particular attention—viz the songs etc. sent over to you by Raymond Hunt.4 Please do everything you can for this person who is making a musical reputation very fast and is one whom Boosey should know.5

In regard to “Captains Courageous” my American boys story, it should come out serially in England in time to be published in book form for the Xmas sale.6 This is somewhat important when selling English rights. Just at present the millionaire proprietor of a New York paper 7 is hanging round for the American serial rights and if I can get him to spring the fancy price I want, I shall close with him here and cable you. It ought to be a big thing.

Ever yours sincerely

Rudyard Kipling

Notes 25 April 1896

1. RK and CK left for New York on 8 April for lodgings at this address, paying $100 a week inclusive; they returned to Naulakha on 28 April (CK Diary).
2. Doubleday writes that he offered Brett $2,000 for the right to reprint RK’s work in Macmillan’s hands: “Mr. Brett said that he saw no objection to it, but raised the price, I think, five hundred or a thousand dollars, and I accepted it” (Memoirs of a Publisher, 21).

3. The lunch guests, besides Crane, included Ripley Hitchcock and William Dean Howells (CK Diary, 25 April 1896): see [23?] May 1896.


5. The long-established music publisher, now Boosey and Hawkes.

6. The English serialization was in Pearson’s Magazine, December 1896–April 1897.

7. See 30 April 1896.

To A. P. Watt 30 April 1896

ALS

Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.

Ap: 30: 1896:

Dear Watt:

In regard to my new 50,000 word story: Captains Courageous: affairs stand thus: Scott the President of the Century Co. wants the book badly for publication in the Magazine and in book form. Has offered me $100 a thousand for Am and English rights, which I have refused, as insufficient. Is coming over per steamer May 6th and wishes to negotiate with you personally for book and serial rights. Mills1 of Longmans branch over here is also anxious for book rights: and so is Brett. McClure is with you now I presume and it seems to me that he would pay a fancy price for the story for his magazine.2

On the other hand, a New York paper The Journal, owned by a millionaire, heard of the tale and wanted it.3 I wanted $10,000 American serial and syndicate rights but this they did not see their way to. So all negotiations in that quarter are stopped.*

So far as I can see, the choice for serial publication in America lies between McClure and the Century and the former I think will pay the better price. My desire is that the tale should be published about September-October-November; so as to allow a Xmas book to be made of
it this year. I do not wish the English and American rights to be sold together—but if that is essential I want at least $120 a thousand and as much more as I can get.

*There was no advantage in letting the Journal have it unless it paid a fancy price. They have expressed a hope that if the tale is syndicated through McClure’s they may be allowed to bid. In which event take it out of McClure’s prices.

The first half of the tale comes to you this week and the second follows as soon as may be.

Yours ever
Rudyard Kipling

Notes  30 April 1896
1. C. J. Mills, manager of the American branch of Longmans, Green, since its establishment in 1889.
2. RK wrote to McClure on 2 April 1896: “If you want your circulation sent up by leaps and bounds apply to Watt for serial use of my new yarn when its ready and get half a dozen illustrators to stand by” (ALS, Princeton University).
3. William Randolph Hearst (1863–1951), bought the New York Morning Journal in 1895, the first of his papers on the east coast.

To Unidentified Recipient,  7 May [1896?] 1

ALS

Naulakha, Waite, Vermont.
May. 7

Dear Sir

I am today in receipt of yours of the 16th ultimo and am very pleased to learn that you have been translating a tale of mine. I am not sure however that the tale—“The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes”—has not been translated into German already. My literary agent, Mr A. P. Watt: Hastings House Norfolk Street Strand. London W.C. can, however, advise you on this head.

Very sincerely yours
Rudyard Kipling
Note 7 May [1896]

1. This letter was written the day after RK’s fateful encounter with his brother-in-law Beatty Balestier on the road from Naulakha to Brattleboro, when Balestier threatened to kill him if he did not retract certain “lies” about Balestier that RK was allegedly circulating in Brattleboro. On this day, 7 May, RK laid charges against Balestier before the sheriff and Balestier was arrested. The hearing and the publicity that followed determined RK, already alienated by the anti-English feeling created by the conflict in Venezuela (see 24 January 1896 n. 6), to return to England.

To A. P. Watt 8 May 1896

ALS

Naulkha, Waite, Vermont.

May. 8. 96.

Dear Watt:

I am in receipt of yours of April 21st. with enclosures, papers etc.:

I note with satisfaction that you have come to an understanding with Mr. Sheard: who does not seem to be a person of an exalted commercial morality. The dates of the ballads as you enclose them are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I must compliment you on the way in which you have managed the affair. Copies of “Shiv and the grasshopper” have been received. I should prefer that at present you made no further arrangements in regard to Raymond Hunt’s music “The Song of the English” till the book of verses containing the “Song of the English” in full appears.¹ At any rate make all business arrangements you see fit but subject to the date of the publication of the book of verse. I should like Boosey to pay Raymond Hunt.

The queried proof of the Birthday book—Jan to Mar—have [sic] been read and are returned but the agreement between myself and Joseph Finn was not enclosed. Please send me a duplicate of it. The MacMillan agreement I shall sign and return. I presume you have enquired of Thacker, Spink, the publishers of “the Departmental Ditties” and ascertained that they have no objection to the poems in that book being quoted from.

In regard to the title of the illustrated MacM. book of stories from Soldiers Three, I can’t say that I have come to any definite idea on the
subject. Why not call it “Soldier Tales,” or “selections from R.K’s soldier tales.”

As regards the cheap Edition of *Naulakha* (Am) of course MacM. are at liberty to put this money to balance the £700 advanced. I suppose Brett ought to have consulted us before making a cheap edition of the book but the firm lost heavily on the *Naulakha* anyway.

As to Heineman and Balestier give them three months to consider the question of printed [sic] The Second Jungle book and if at the end of that time they cannot see their way to it, approach the Baron.²

I wish to thank you very heartily for your kind offices in regard to “The Cup of Trembling.” That woman (Mrs Mary Hallock Foote) deserves to succeed much better than she has done.³

My cable to you of this day’s date will have settled the matter of the new 50,000 word story.

Very sincerely as ever
Rudyard Kipling.

Notes 8 May 1896

1. Raymond Hunt’s setting of “England’s Answer,” the final poem in “A Song of the English,” was published by Boosey and Co. in 1897.

2. Tauchnitz, the dominant publisher of English language literature for the Continent; Heinemann and Balestier was founded to compete with Tauchnitz.

3. The British Library catalogue lists several of Mrs. Foote’s titles published in London after the date of this letter, but most of her books are American editions, many of them modern electronic reprints.

To A. P. Watt  [23] May 1896

*ALS*

*Naulakha, /Waite, /Vermont.*

May. 21. 96

Dear Watt—

I have to acknowledge with many thanks receipt of draft for $3100 etc. as well as yours of 9th May. I have been away on a little seaboard
excursion after a few facts that come into my new tale\(^1\)—which as I have said many times before is going to be a beauty.

Your cable acquainted [me] with the progress of negotiations in regard to it, and I trust my answer made my views plain. So far as serial publication goes I think I would prefer the *Century* to McClure’s *but* the *Century* are mean and skinny and they have for Editor R.U. Johnson in Gilder’s absence who if left to himself would ruin *any* magazine. Not having heard from you further on the subject I assume you are still playing them off one against the other. Either will suit me if they pay a good price.\(^2\) What I expect most from is the American book sales.

Many thanks for your good offices in regard to the income tax. Make it up as picturesquely as you please or as they think satisfactory and send ’em a cheque. Never argue with an Income Tax Commissioner is my motto. They might remember the unpaid years!

In regard to the boxed Edition of my books I can quite see that it is a case of pull Devil pull Baker all round and I shall be most interested to see how you will pull it off. If you can’t, there’s no living man that can; and so I shan’t feel disappointed. Scribners are red-hot on the notion.

I saw Stephen Crane the other day in New York at a lunch with Howells.\(^3\) In strict confidence he is about as unlicked a cub as they make even this side the water; and it doesn’t seem to *me* as if he had any great staying power. He is trying to live up to his reviews, which as we all know by bitter experience, is a futile kind of job. I think he’ll be run out in two years but that’s no reason why he shouldn’t come into the fold if I can get at him. But he’s a [word illegible] little devil.

I have sent off the first batch of my book of verses “The Seven Seas” for Appleton to set up. He seems to be in a hurry about it; and I have asked him to send me the proofs for Methuen as the two Editions will vary slightly.\(^4\) I should like the book to come out as late in the autumn as suits Methuen, because, as you know, I like to fiddle with my proofs up to the last minute.\(^5\) Which reminds me. What has become of the other Barrack Room ballads sent along with *Soldier and Sailor* too. Did Pearson’s weekly buy them all and if so when do they come out?\(^6\) This is rather important.

I expect to go up to Labrador for three weeks or a month, salmon fishing, on or about the 15\(^{th}\) of June\(^7\) and so in your next letter please
write me a full list of everything that is up on the horizon as I shall be out of reach of letters for some time.

I enclose a letter from Sydney which seems to me to need an answer. What’s Methuen’s objection to my ballads being quoted in a school reader in Australia? Please ask them and see if you can settle it. I haven’t heard anything from Alick for a long time. How is he?

Ever yours sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

P.S. If a man didn’t have an agent he couldn’t go salmon fishing in Labrador. Now a man very seldom wants to go to Labrador, but when he does he wants to go very much. There is a moral in this.

Notes  [23] May 1896

1. RK left for Gloucester with his Brattleboro friend and advisor, Dr. James Conland, on 19 May; the visit is described in detail in McAveeney, Kipling in Gloucester, 3–13; 19–22. According to CK’s Diary RK returned to Brattleboro on 23 May, and this date is confirmed by the Gloucester Daily Times, 22 May 1896, which reported that RK and Conland “left town on the 1:25 train this afternoon” (McAveeney, 19). RK’s date on this letter is thus two days out.

2. Both the Century and McClure’s offered $10,000, but “the Century want limits on time and other work” (Rees Extracts, 16 May 1896).

3. On 25 April, Crane had published The Red Badge of Courage to great acclaim in 1895.

4. The English edition contains three poems not in the American: “An Answer”; “The Lost Legion”; and “In the Neolithic Age.” They had already appeared in the U.S. in the 2nd ed. of Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads, 1893, but not in the English equivalent, Barrack-Room Ballads and Other Verses, 1892: see Richards, Bibliography, 93.

5. The Seven Seas was published on 30 October in both America and England.


7. The trip was made with Lockwood de Forest, RK’s New York friend, 15 June–1 July, but not to Labrador, which apparently was too remote: “Of course it’s fiendishly difficult to make connection with Labrador Indians from the inside of New York. Gaspé sounds a heap more feasible” RK wrote to de Forest on 3 June 1896 (ALS, Harvard). Accordingly they went to the Gaspé, where, RK wrote, “Got
a 15-pounder after twenty minutes glorious scuffle in a canoe. There is no sport to compare with it. Also I realized how lovely that part of the world can be in summer and what an art canoeing is” (to F. N. Finney, 7 July 1896: ALS, Dalhousie University). They travelled via St. John, New Brunswick, where, according to RK, he received a “great ovation” (CK Diary, 19 June 1896). If so, the St. John newspapers knew nothing about it; one, the *Daily Sun*, reported merely that RK was in St. John “exploring the town and its surroundings” (19 June 1896); the other, the *Daily Telegraph*, printed a brief interview in which RK praised the beauty of the town, talked of his love of bicycling, and commented on the coming local election (18 June 1896).

To A. P. Watt 8 June 1896

*ALS*

*Naulakha, Waite, Vermont.*

June 8 96.

Dear Watt:

I have to acknowledge with many thanks yours of May 22, with draft for $6,075.95 and a history of the negotiations in regard to *Captains Courageous*. The one important point which, now that you have closed with McClure for serial rights, I should like you to take into consideration is this.

The Century are, we know, mean and of narrow views, but we mustn’t forget that so far as the sale of a boys’ book is concerned they can give any other firm this side the water 50 percent and a beating in publishing and advertising facilities. They have already the weight and prestige of the two jungle books behind them and could give “Captains Courageous” a splendid push in the market. Now Macmillan in America is a good enough firm but doesn’t begin to have the Century’s facilities for pushing a book. I think your best plan is to let the Century have the book rights if they will only play fair about royalties and advances. I’m rather glad they didn’t beat McClure for serial rights but unless you can bring forward some very convincing proof of Brett’s superiority, I think we should gain in immediate and future sales by letting the book rights go to the Century. Scott is a bit of a fool but their book-dept. business men have heads on their shoulders. Please consider this.
I notice that none of the Century men have written a word to me since Scott had his campaign with you. Perhaps you surprised him!

McClure will doubtless illustrate the tale in his mag. My notion was, if his pictures were good, to make some deal with him for book illustration and if they weren’t to catch an artist of our own. It is emphatically a tale that needs illustration and offers a new hold to the artist.¹

Glad to see that you are slowly but surely pushing through the Scribner Edition. Remember that, in reality, Brett has very few books of mine covered by copyright in his boxed Edition.²

Yours ever
Rudyard Kipling

Notes  8 June 1896

1. “Captains Courageous” in McClure’s had twenty-five illustrations by Isaac W. Taber; these were used in both the English and American editions of the book. RK wrote that “I’m not as pleased with Taber’s work as I thought I should be” (To James Conland, 8–24 November [1896]: Letters, II: 274).

2. No such edition from the American branch of Macmillan is recorded in any of the Kipling bibliographies.

To A. P. Watt  16 June 1896

ALS

Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.

June. 16. 96.

Dear Watt—

This from the Athenæum seems to need looking after.¹ I had hoped to have heard the last of those damned Letters of Marque but they seem fated to turn up. Please make enquiries and once more stop ’em from getting into book form.

Yours ever
Rudyard Kipling.

It might be worth while for you to write to the Athenæum and contradict the rumour.
Notes 16 June 1896

1. The “Literary Gossip” column of the *Athenæum*, 6 June 1896, 747, reported that RK’s “Letters of Marque” had been “published in pamphlet form, but withdrawn owing to some difference with regard to copyrights. This has now, we learn, been amicably settled, and the letters, it is probable, will be brought out in London.”

2. I find no such contradiction in the *Athenæum*. Watt had evidently settled the matter before RK wrote: see the next letter.

To A. P. Watt 19 July 1896

*ALS*

*Naulakha, / Waite, / Vermont.*

July. 19. 96.

Dear Watt:

Yours of the 9th received this morn with the welcome news that you have settled the *Letters of Marque* business. Where in the world did the O.B.C. raise its dividend. I thought they had shut up shop and gone home long ago.

As regards Captains Courageous I have already sent S.S. McClure in New York more than one half of the story to set up in galley proof for me to revise. So you see that matter is well advanced.

*In regard to Scribners.* I have most carefully perused the history of your diplomatic “engagements”—war, I should call it—with all the various firms, and it will make a story as fascinating as anything I could ever write.1 Your letter was crossed by a note sent to you by Doubleday of Scribners dated July. 14th in which he says that Brett thinks *his* side of the business can be settled by my permitting “Naulakha” to be included in the Edition de luxe. If you think that this scheme will in any way facilitate matters you have my consent. “Naulakha” isn’t a book I am very fond of but, as they point out, it adds to the completeness of the edition; and Mrs. Wolcott Balestier, who holds Wolcott Balestier’s share in it, has signified her readiness to allow it to be republished.

Your proposition to give a book of short stories to Brett (when next I issue one) is a very right and reasonable one.2 What a splendid Prime Minister you would have made, in the way in which you play off one
power against another. I agree with you that at the outside he ought not to allow the Scribners to hold the edition de luxe contracts unrenewed for more than 7 years. Ten is too long. Indeed five is the fairest limit but we must make concessions.

My book of verses will be ready by the end of August at latest. Indeed one half of it is already in type and I am only hesitating because I wish to include some new verses.

Very sincerely ever

Rudyard Kipling.

Note 19 July 1896

1. RK means the negotiations with RK’s various publishers to obtain the permissions necessary to publish the Outward Bound Edition—the “Edition de luxe” as RK calls it at this point.

2. When the time came, the American contract for The Day’s Work was not with Brett of Macmillan but with Doubleday and McClure: see 22 March 1897, n.3.

To A. P. Watt 10 September 1896

ALS

Newbery’s Hotel / St Marychurch / Torquay

Sep. 10. 96/

Dear Watt,

We arrived yesterday, after a very pleasant voyage and are now going to move to the siege of the house we have rented. Fifteen trunks have to be handled today and altogether life promises to be exciting for the next few weeks. I have the poems in my trunk, ready to send you as soon as I can: but I haven’t any money. Please send me £20 to go on with as soon as ever you can. I will write of business anon.

Yours ever

Rudyard Kipling.

Notes 10 September 1896

1. RK had been planning at least since the beginning of this year to return to England, though he had not yet determined that it would be a permanent return; “probably for a long stay,” he wrote (to Mrs. Horace Twiss, 24 August 1896: ALS,
The move was prompted by the anti-English feeling generated by the Venezuelan crisis at the end of 1895. The quarrel with Beatty Balestier that led to a court hearing in May was not the cause of the move but certainly helped to confirm it. RK and his family left Brattleboro on 29 August for Morristown, N.J., where they stayed before boarding the S.S. Lahn at Hoboken on 1 September. They arrived at Southampton at midnight 8/9 September and went that day to the Torquay hotel (CK Diary). This note is written on a sheet with the arms of the Nordeutscher Lloyd, Bremen, and headed Dampfer. Lahn.

2. This was Rock House, St. Marychurch, Torquay. The house is still intact. RK had evidently rented it in advance of his leaving America. They took possession of it on 12 September (Rees Extracts).

To A. S. Watt  [14] September 1896

ALS

Rock House / Maidencombe / St Marychurch.

Monday. Sep. 13. 96

Dear Alick.

Many thanks for yours of the 11th with 20 quid enclosed. I am tackling the proofs just as fast as ever I can and they should go back to you tomorrow: Methuen has stuck I see to the old-fashioned type and get up of the first vol. of verses. I confess that I like it. Just before I left Hitchcock of Appleton’s begged me to ask Methuen’s to arrange for publication as early in October as possible. That will be the best time for him; and as his subscription list I suppose is filled it will make no difference to the English side. I wish you would try to carry this point.

As to G. Alexander his play, please tell him, as usual, that I have not yet written a play. I can’t turn ’em out to order and we have had offers in one shape or another from about every other theatrical manager in London.

You are a bold youth in trying to bleed F. Harris for “Bill 'Awkins” and if I know F.H. I’ll bet he will not rise to the price. F.H. is not generous.

In regard to new short stories the forthcoming crop, if any, is pledged to Methuen; so we must be polite to every one and promise nothing. By the way McClure wants to republish in his Magazine “A Lost Le-
“gion” and “A Matter of Fact” both of which have appeared in “Many Inventions.” He offers me as much as he paid for the syndicate rights. I have told him that if he can settle publishers I have no objection. Please tell me how much he gave for syndicate use of those two tales; and I will keep all the money.

McClure has all of Captains Courageous except about 4–5000 words of the conclusion which is still in my hands. My ideas about payment are of course my invariable ones—to get as much as possible of the price, as soon as possible, and I shall feel better when the “why me” has paid up an instalment. He professes himself pleased with the copy—and he ought to be. I wrote Henley that if the New Review expected to get a full-blooded “novel” in Captains Courageous they were mistaken (they had advertised it as a novel and I didn’t want the public to be misled) that the tale was one of adventure. On this W.E.H. pulled out and, I suppose, Pearson’s stepped in. Pearson’s is a better mag for my purpose than the N.R. and no one will be much more sorry than Henley when he comes to read the tale.

I note what you say about Century accts. first and 2nd Jungle books, and arrangements for illustrating the Scribner Edition de luxe. I have already talked to my father in regard to the latter and I think he will do some lovely work. As soon as I come up to town I shall expect from your lips and from your father’s a full true and particular account of the great campaign wherein you settled all the conflicting claims of the various publishers involved in the American deal. It must have been a Napoleonic bit of work.

In regard to Fuzzy Wuzzy I suppose Dunn as manager of the old Scots Observer has the M.S. and wants to send it to the Ludgate; and equally I suppose I shall have to allow it. But this will be a warning to me to have all verses sent to publishers in typewriting. Entre nous his copy of “Fuzzy-wuzzy” isn’t the original.

I haven’t anything by me at present for the Graphic. When do they go to press. My present intention is rather to go fishing than to do much work this winter.

As we are fighting our way into a furnished house I can’t come up to town just yet but will let you know as soon as may be. I think I have
covered all the points in your letter except the Swedish Jungle book\(^{12}\) — and I can’t read Swedish. Can you?

I’m ever so pleased to be back in England again; though it rains with cheerful British solidity.

Ever yours

Rudyard.

Notes

[14] September 1896

1. Monday was the 14th in September 1896

2. That is, of the English edition of *Barrack-Room Ballads*. All of the volumes of verse published by Methuen use the same design.

3. *The Seven Seas* was not published until 30 October.

4. (Sir) George Alexander (1858–1918), distinguished actor and, since 1891, manager of the St. James’s Theater, London.

5. Harris did not rise.

6. This is a mistake for “Macmillan.” Methuen published none of RK’s stories; Macmillan published all of them from 1893.

7. This was not done.

8. No doubt McClure; I cannot explain the allusion.


10. James Nicol Dunn (1856–1919) had been managing editor of the *Scots Observer* from its beginning; he was later (1897–1905) editor of the *Morning Post*.

11. This is perhaps the manuscript, described as a “fair copy, revised,” of which a facsimile appears in E. W. Martindell, *A Bibliography of the Works of Rudyard Kipling (1881–1923)*, 2nd ed., London, 1923.


To A. S. Watt

19 September 1896

*ALS*

Rock House. / Maidencombe / St Marychurch

Sep. 19—96

Dear Alick

Yours of the 17\(^{th}\) inst.
I agree to your arrangement with McClure as to payment in four equal instalments
15 Oct.
15th Nov.
15th Dec
15th Jan 97.
for Captains Courageous.
I will do the best I can for the Graphic, and I am almost sure I can give Harris a set of verses.\(^1\) I’d forgotten all about Bill ’Awkins being out for sale.

I return herewith the MacM. agreements for Captains Courageous, and Soldier Tales signed, and note what you say about the plates of the latter.

Very sincerely
Rudyard Kipling.

Note 19 September 1896
1. The Graphic published “Bread Upon the Waters” in its Christmas number, 1896, but apparently this was already in the magazine’s hands: see 1 December 1895. “The Bell Buoy” was published in the “First Illustrated Supplement” of the Saturday Review, Christmas, 1896.

To A. S. Watt 22 September 1896

ALS
Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.
Sep: 22: 96

Dear Alick—

Enclosed is a demand to translate The King’s Ankus—I suppose that is what she means by Le Yataghan de Roi—into French. I fancy the tale has already been rendered, hasn’t it? If it hasn’t she ought to have it for her “Jeunes filles.”\(^1\) I like to think of young French girls reading my works.

Ever yours
Rudyard.
Note 22 September 1896
1. I do not find anything resembling this among the French translations of RK’s work.

To A. S. Watt [23?] September 1896

_AL_

Rock House / Maidencombe

A.S. Watt Esq.

Dear Alick—

I want you, please, to open an account at my bank in the name of Caroline Kipling and to deposit all money as it comes in to her account. I am weary of having to sign her cheques and like a wise man let my wife manage the business. Better put £50 there just as soon as you can. Housekeeping in this land is not cheap.

[closing and signature cut away]

Note [23?] September 1896
1. Received 23 September 1896 (office date stamp).

To A. S. Watt 27 September 1896

_ALS_

Rock House.

Sep. 27, 96

Dear Alick,

I am sending you today galley proofs 1–39 Captains Courageous for Pearson’s weekly. The remainder follow shortly; and the last 3,000 words of the tale will be sent later, to be set up this side and mailed to McClure.

I note your letter of the 20th with remarks about a hog. Yes. “Soldier Tales” would be the better name if there is going to be any bother.
Frankly I am pleased that Pearson is going to put C.C. in the weekly. I don’t think much of his mag but the weekly will get at a lot of people.¹

Ever yours
Rudyard

Note  27 September 1896
1. But “Captains Courageous” was published in Pearson’s Magazine, December 1896–April 1897.

To A. S. Watt  6 November 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.

Nov. 6. 96

Dear Alick—

Many thanks for your two last letters.

Please write at once to the cheerful burglars who propose to allude to the “suppressed works” of Rudyard Kipling and explain to them politely but firmly that there is no sense in “suppressing” works if fellows of their kidney publish ’em. Stop them by all means in your power.

As to the ballad about Peace mentioned in your letter this morning that is a job, as you rightfully think, which I do not care to undertake.

J. L. Molloy¹ has written me asking if he can use an incident in the Drums of the Fore and Aft and calls it “two little dots in Red.” I don’t know which incident he wants but have given him permission. By the way, now is your time to look sharp after the musical rights of the new B.B’s. I fancy a good many people will be wanting to publish ’em as songs, and you might find a more solvent publisher than Sheard.

Ever yours
Rudyard Kipling

Proof (corrected) of the Bell Buoy enclosed.

Note  6 November 1896
1. Molloy (1837–1909), composer (“Love’s Old Sweet Song”); his setting of “The Drums of the Fore and Aft” published 1897.
To A. S. Watt 8 November 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.
8. Nov. 96

Dear Alick

D---- her Majesty’s commissioners of Income Tax—I seem to be paying income-tax about once every twenty minutes. Will you please make them out a cheque and take care the beasts give you a receipt. It was only £60 the last time I paid.

I return the Literary World’s proofs which are harmless though inaccurate\(^1\) and shall be writing at length on the Scribner contract.

A week of heavenly bicycle weather.\(^2\) I found a new way into Newton Abbott—half an hours hard climb and then 20 minutes back pedalling, through superb woods.

Ever yours
Rudyard

Note 8 November 1896

1. This must refer to a biographical sketch, “Mr. Rudyard Kipling,” in the Literary World for 20 November 1896. I find a few minor mis-statements in it, but it seems otherwise accurate. It was prompted by the publication of The Seven Seas, which is reviewed in the same number of the magazine, and by RK’s recent return to England.

2. RK learned to ride a bicycle in March of this year on a winter break at Lakewood, New Jersey (CK Diary, 21, 31 March 1896). He was riding a bicycle when he encountered the drunken Beatty Balestier on the road to Waite in May of this year. In England he and CK were given a tandem (they also had individual bicycles: see 29 November 1896) by S.S. McClure, a gift that was greeted enthusiastically: “It’s a kind and gentle free goer: absolutely free from vice and beautiful to behold” (to Robert McClure, [21 June 1897]: ALS, Cornell University). The enthusiasm did not last: “On this devil’s toast-rack we took exercise, each believing that the other liked it…. But, one fortunate day, it skidded and decanted us on to the road-metal. Almost before we had risen from our knees, we made mutual confession of our common loathing of wheels, pushed the Hell-Spider home by hand, and rode it no more” (Something of Myself, 133–34).
To A. S. Watt 8 November 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.
Nov. 8. 96

Dear Alick,

We will now discuss the Scribners (draught) contract for the edition de luxe.

First and foremost, how do they propose to sell the edition en bloc and at the same time to add to it in uniform binding all books that I may publish within the next seven years? Will they sell these additional vols. only to those who have already purchased the 11-vol set—or how? This is rather a curious point. Make them explain.

Personally, if Methuen and Macmillan do not find their Canadian rights infringed and have no objection to their selling the edition in Canada, I suppose a $24 box of books is not likely to affect the sale of cheaper editions

My idea is that the first vol. should not be published later than February 1897—or January if they can—but I fear they will not be able to manage it on account of the illustrations.¹

The terms and times of payment seem satisfactory—except I do not like no royalty advance being paid till the fifth vol. is published. You see by subscribing it, they get their money in bright and early and have the use of it for all those months.

I want the statement of sales made six months after date of publication of first vol. as you will see. I note you marked the vagueness.

I should like 20% on editions de luxe—because they will be $100 and $20 of that is a reasonable and round sum.² They probably won’t rise to it.

You will see that I have approved of the contract generally and I much like the six-months cash settlement.

Ever yours sincerely

Rudyard Kipling.

I enclose herewith a 10/6 claim from the Institute of Journalists³ which please settle it.
Notes  8 November 1896

1. The first eleven volumes of the Outward Bound Edition were sold only as a set by subscription: the first volume appeared in January, the eleventh in November 1897 (Richards, Bibliography, 572–73).


3. Founded in 1884. In 1928 RK wrote the one-line epitaph “Journalists” as a memorial now on a panel at the Institute in London: “We have served our day.”

To A. P. Watt  13 November 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.

Nov. 13. 96

Dear Watt:

Thanks for yours of the 10th and 11th about my “suppressed” works and Scribner. Of course the mere quotation doesn’t matter—though I observe he tells a lie about the way they were issued. What a mean little world it is.

Yours of the 11th explains the knotty points in the Scribner contract. So long as new vols of the Edition are only sent to old subscribers all is well. By every means get the advance out of them as early as possible.

It was a great joy to us to have Alick and his wife down here; and I hope some day when you yourself need a rest you’ll tell us and come down to vegetate awhile.

Ever yours sincerely
Rudyard Kipling

To A. P. Watt  14 November 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.

Nov. 14. 96

Dear Watt:

Your two notes of the 12th.
That is good news about Scribners Canadian rights. No. I don’t know how Heinemann arranges about the Canadian rights of Naualkha but I think, with you, it would be best that Scribners should send their man to him. I don’t see why we should do all Scribners work in this direction.

As to the scheme for a co-operative Queen-book¹ I’m afraid I can’t take part in it as I should have to ask about a year’s work before I put a line on paper. Besides I am keeping my hands free just now—ready for a new notion when it comes along. Anyhow I don’t approve of schemes whose success would “depend entirely on (authors) names” as the prospectus has it. ’Tisn’t fair to the author or the public.

Always sincerely,
Rudyard Kipling

Note 14 November 1896
¹. For the occasion of Victoria’s diamond jubilee in July 1897. RK began work on a “commemorative ode” next month (CK Diary, 7 December 1896).

To A. P. Watt 15 November 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.

Nov. 15. 96.

Dear Watt—

That Wilson is a man of fine literary taste. Of course let him have his hymn with my compliments. That was one of the things I wrote it for. We’ll live to see it in “Hymns Ancient and Modern” yet.

Ever yours
Rudyard Kipling.

To A. P. Watt [23? November 1896]

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.

Dear Watt,
I forward with this a musical setting of J. Lionel Bennet, of “Soldier and Sailor too.”\(^1\) Will you kindly get a competent musical critic to pass on it: and if there is any good in it, could you arrange for its publication. No one, so far as I remember, has yet set the new B.B’s: and I am rather anxious to oblige a relative of Ruskin’s in the matter.\(^2\)

Ever yours
Rudyard Kipling

P.S. It might be possible to sell the thing outright.

Notes  [23? November 1896]
1. Received 25 November 1896 (office date stamp).
2. No setting of the poem by Bennet appears in Richards, *Bibliography*. I have not identified him, despite the relation to Ruskin that RK speaks of.

To A. P. Watt    24 November 1896

*ALS*

*Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.*

Nov: 24: 96.

Dear Watt:

I’ve been away at Tisbury with my people\(^1\) and so have not acknowledged yours of the 18\(^{th}\): in which you tell me Chichester’s\(^2\) views of illustrating Captains Courageous. Doubleday of Scribners by the way writes me he is very keen to get Captains Courageous for the *edition de luxe*, and he wants the deal settled as soon as may be. What have you done in the matter exactly?

I note in yours of the 23\(^{rd}\) that Sheard is paying up his lawful debts.

I have written Methuen direct about misprints asking them to send me a copy for revise.\(^3\)

I am reminded that we pay my father for the illustrations in the Birthday book, so will you kindly send him a cheque for 30 guineas for his illustrations.\(^4\) Another time I shall make MacMillan pay heavily. Simply say that that is his payment and don’t say it is from me.

Yours ever
Rudyard Kipling
Notes 24 November 1896
1. He left on 19 November and returned on 23 (CK Diary; Rees Extracts).
2. Charles F. Chichester, treasurer of The Century Company.
3. Of *The Seven Seas*, published on 30 October.
4. See 22 October 1894 and n. 4.

To A. P. Watt 26 November 1896

*AL*

*Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.*

Nov: 26. 96.

Dear Watt:

I am sorry I overlooked the Tauchnitz offers for the *Second Jungle Book* and *The Seven Seas*. I don’t think there is much money in continental royalties so better settle with him for outright purchase: only make him pay in the same proportion for *The Seven Seas* as he proposes for the Jungle book.

The wife says: many thanks for your investment letter: the contents of which she will digest and will write in a day or two.

[closing and signature cut away]

I think you have done admirably in regard to the songs.

RK.

To A. S. Watt 29 November 1896

*ALS*

*Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.*

Nov: 29: 96

Dear Alick,

Yours of the 27th. I had a notion that a good many Sheets had been helping themselves rather freely to the verses: but I can’t see why Methuen wants me to help him. He has the money and a going con-
cern at his back. If I sell a rich firm a patent for a term of years they look after infringements. I don’t want to play in that game. As to Sheard—the firm seems thoroughly shady: and I entirely agree with you nothing should be done till they have paid up their past debts. Couldn’t you also, besides reading him the Riot Act generally, get a bonus or a forfeit or whatever you choose to call it out of him for going ahead without leave. I don’t love Sheard and should like to see him made to pay.

As to Piccolomini1 (Golly! What a name) all right: but do see that Sheard doesn’t fall behind.

If you can get the automatic cut-off clause into contracts with you, you are even a greater genius than I took you for.

We’ve had perfect bicycling weather and the wife now ducks in and out of the traffic in Union Street Torquay with great sereneness. In fine weather there is nothing to beat a Columbia with a roller break [sic].

Tell your revered parent that it is all right about the Baron and the continental rights of the Seven Seas and the Jungle Book. Also, please, hint to Methuen I want a batch of S.S. reviews.2 I can’t quite make out from samples to hand where [sic] I “bear the seal of a sovereign destiny on a brow” (which I take it is journalese for growing bald) or whether I am an ’owling costermonger, with a taste for shouting smut at the top of my voice.

Ever yours sincerely
Rudyard.

By the way, don’t let any one try a musical setting of “The English Flag.” A very big fish is nibbling at that and I want to hook him.3

R K

Notes 29 November 1896
1. Not identified.
3. This was (Sir) John Frederick Bridge (1844–1924), eminent composer, organist, and writer, principal organist at Westminster Abbey, 1882–1918. His “The Flag of England,” a cantata, was published in 1897. On 26 November 1896 RK wrote to Dean F. W. Farrar (presumably acting as intermediary for Bridge) that “I
am tremendously pleased that Dr. Bridge cares to set ‘The English Flag’ to music. Please tell him that he has my cordial ‘permission’ to honour my verses as he proposes” (ALS, New York University). On 28 November he wrote to Bridge that “you are at entire liberty to use as much or as little of it as you may think necessary or musically practicable, and if I can make any of the words more open I shall be happy to do so” (copy, Cornell University). Such a willingness to make changes in his published work, other than correcting errors, is extremely rare on RK’s part.

To A. S. Watt 17 December 1896

ALS

Rock House, / Maidencombe, / St. Marychurch.

Dec 17. 96

Dear Alick—

As to Mrs Steele she was a friend of my father and mother—I knew her, of course, but only as a very young man knows the wife of a Deputy Commissioner—for she was a big “person” officially in those days. You can bet your sweet life that Heinemann won’t let her go from his grip if he can help it. But if I meet her she’ll be told a lot of good advice of course.

Ever yours

Rudyard Kipling

Note 17 December 1896

1. Flora Annie Steel (1847–1929), novelist of Indian life, the wife of the Indian Civil Servant Henry William Steel, with whom she spent twenty-one years in India. Her novels and stories were all written after she left India in 1889.