Kipling's America
edited by D. H. Stewart

Published by ELT Press

Stewart, edited by D. H.
Kipling's America: Travel Letters, 1889-1895.
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Index

A
alcohol, see liquor and drinking customs
Allahabad xv, xxxvi, 241, 243, 250
African-Americans 37, 41–43, 159, 165, 215
Alaska 21, 250
Alcott, Louisa May 163
Arizona 102

B
Balestier, Caroline xxv, xl
Balestier, Wolcott xxiv, xxv
Black Canyon of the Gunnison 140–41
Bohemian Club of San Francisco xx, xxi, 19, 43
book piracy xviii, xx, xxiii, 12 see also copyright
boomtowns 71–72, 217–20
Boss Buckley 29–30
Breitmann, Hans 1, 47
British Columbia 79–80
Bryce, James 22
Buffalo, New York xv, 179, 184–85, 250, 252
Buffalo Courier xvi, 240, 250

C
cable cars 12, 15, 16, 49, 55, 213, 251
Calcutta 147, 241
California 11, 26, 40, 243
Call, The 199–200
Canada 80, 207, 215–16
Canadian Pacific Railway 74, 78–80
Captains Courageous (Kipling) xiv, xxvi
cards, see gambling
Chautauqua xxxix, 169–78, 255, 256
Chautauqua, Lake 171–72, 180
Chemung River 190
Chicago 9, 31, 44, 148–57, the great fire 151, 161, 179, 181, 250
Chicago Anarchists 9
Chinese quarter (San Francisco) 23
Church of Rome 2, 80
Cinnabar Station 91
Clackamas, the 64–68, 73
Clemens, Samuel, see Mark Twain
Cleveland, Grover xxvi, xxix
Cliff House 16
Colorado 136
Columbia River 56, 58–59, 70
Congress, U.S. 8, 193–94
Connecticut River 203, 221–22, 234
Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (Twain) 200
Constitution, U.S. 9, 173
Cook City, Montana 98, 112
copyright 192–95, see also book piracy
D
Daily Telegraphese 118
Dalles, the 59–60, 62
democracy, U.S. 27, 31, 159–60, 210–12, see also voting
Democratic Party 27, 29
Denver, Colorado 144
Deseret, the valley of 124–25
Dime Museum 151
drinking, see liquor
E
elephants 247–49
Elmira, NY 189–90
Emerson, Ralph Waldo xix, 208–209
England xiv, xvi, xxv, 51, 94, 113, 230, 250
Erie, Lake 179
F
Firehole River 103–104
fishing, see trout, salmon
Fourth of July, see Independence Day
G
gambling 19, 21, 23, 24, 32, 60, 112
Gardiner River 92
Gautier, Theophile 38, 46
geyser 96, 100–104, 108–11, 113
Beehive 110, Castle Geyser 114,
Giantess 110–11, Lioness and the
Cubs 114, Norris Geyser Basin on
Earth 100, Riverside Geyser 108,
Turban 110, Upper Geyser Basin 114
Golden Gate 11
Government, United States Federal
7, 27, 59, 100, 115, 130, 132, 152,
159, 252
Great Northern Train 214 see also
railways
Green Mountains 207
Gunnison River 140
gypsies 233–34
H
Hapers Magazine xxvii
Harrison Hot Springs 78
Harte, Bret xvii, xix, 11, 16, 50–51,
192
Helena, Montana 84
Hell's Halfacre 107–108
Hill, Edmonia (Ted) xiv–xvii,
xxii–xxv, xxxii, xxxix, xl
Hill, S. A. (Aleck), Professor xiv,
xxii–xxiii, xxv, xxxii, xxxix, xl, 2, 11,
167, 168–78
Holmes, Oliver Wendell 16
Howells, William Dean 137
Huckleberry Finn (Twain) 56, 200
278
Immigrants and Immigration, American 31, 40, 75, 92, 144, 170, 211–12, see also the Irish vote
Independence Day 92, 93
India 82, 125, 145–46, 152–53, see also Allahabad, Anglo–India, Calcutta, journalism in India, Simla
Indians see Native Americans
Irish vote, the 8, 28–30 see also voting

Japan xiv, xx–xxi, 2, 6, 80, 250
Jewish–Americans 40, 132–33, 233
Johnstown Flood 75, see “mad preacher” 173
journalism, in India xxx, 12, 188, 240–42, 243, 252–54
journalists see reporters
Jungle Books, The (Kipling) xxii, xxvi, xxix
Just So Stories (Kipling) xxviii

Kipling, Rudyard, as journalist xiv, xvi, 19, 240–57
Kipling, John Lockwood xxxi

K

Lakewood, New York 171, 178, 179

Life on the Mississippi (Twain) 195–96
Life’s Handicap (Kipling) xxiv
The Light That Failed (Kipling) xxiv
liquor and drinking customs in America xvii, 18, 25–26, 28, 36, 48, 60, 72, prohibition of 161–62, 170, 185–86, 250–51, 252
Livingston, Montana 86–89, 119, 122
London xvi, 255–56
Louisiana State Lottery Tickets 18
Lovell, John xxiv

M
Mahaffey, John Pentland, Professor 173
Main Street, U.S.A. 205–209, 221, 228
Mammoth Hot Springs 91, 95, 101, 103
Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel 93, 95
Many Inventions (Kipling) xxvi
Market Street (San Francisco) 12, 22
Marent Gulch Trestle xxxiii, xl
Mission Street (San Francisco) 41
Mexico 133
military, United States xxxiii, 21, 57, 97, 100, 102, 109, 112, 120, 130, 182, 251–52
Monadnock 208–209, 228
Monongahela River 161, 166,
Montana xxxiii, 82, 87
Mormonism, the Mormon Church 123–31
Mormon, the Book of 126–27
Mount Hood 58
murder, in the U.S. 21, 22, 23, 31, 49, 75, 84
Musquash (Beaver, Pennsylvania) xiv, 161–67, 168, 170

N
Native Americans 74, 83, 89, 105, 112, 123, 150, see also warfare

Naulahka: A Story of East and West, The (Kipling and Balestier) xxiv
New England 51, 91, 93, 158, 202, 204–208, 229–38
New Hampshire 208
New Westminster 81
New York City 17, 18, 31, 202, 210–12, 216, 252
New York Herald xxxix
New York State 169, 189, 209
New York Sun xxvii
Niagara Falls 169, 184, 188, 189, 250
Nob Hill (San Francisco) 72
Northern Pacific Railway 82, see also railways
Northern Lights 236

O
Ogden, Utah xxix, 123
Ohio River 168
Old Faithful 110–11
Omaha, Nebraska xvii, 135, 144
Oregon 48, 54–56, 250
Oregon Railway and Navigation Company xl, see also railways
O-Toyo 19, 37
over-seas social clubs 19, 20, 78, 81

P
Parthia 78
Pacific Mail Company 1, 2
Palace Hotel 12, 13, 240–41, 243
Palmer House 147, 151
Pasco Junction 83
Pennsylvania 158, 170
poker, see gambling
politics, American 36, 41–46, 180, 215–16
polygamy 125, 129
Portland, Oregon 48, 54–56, 62, 64, 71, 218
presidency of the United States 6, 27, 221, 228, see also democracy, voting
Puck 34
Puget Sound 71, 74, 79, 81

280
Rayment’s Tours 91, 93
reporters, American see also journalism 14, 16, 240, 241, 243
Republican Party 27
*Robert Elsmere* (Ward) 4, 197
Rocky Mountains 83–85, 135–39, 142–43, 250
Russia 8, 80

Sacramento River 49–50
salmon 58, 62–69, 73, 142
Salt Lake 122, 125, 129, 133–35
Salt Lake City, Utah 123–30, 134, 147
San Francisco, California xix, 6–47, 59, 147, 199, 240, 243, 250–51, 252, 255
San Francisco *Chronicle* 241
San Francisco *Examiner* xxi, 16, 243
San Jo, Texas 136
Samoa 35, 252
Scott, Sir Walter 194
Seattle, Washington 74–76, the fire xvii, 74–75, 217
servants in America 41–43, 165, 224–25, 251
*Seven Seas, The* (Kipling) xxvi
Simla xxxi, 184, 241
Siskiyou Mountains 52
Smith, Joseph and Hyrum 126–27
Smith, Goldwin 215
snakes 243–45
Southern Pacific Line xl, see also railways
SS City of Peking xli, 1, 2, 3, 11, 240, 255
St. Louis 166
St. Paul 212–14
“Star Spangled Banner” 8, 45, 93, 184
Stampede Tunnel xl, 83–84

Tacoma, Washington 71–74, 81, 217
taxes 7, 27, 132, 151, 177
Thomas Cook and Sons Travel 48, 91
*Times, The* (London) xxvii, 255
*Tom Sawyer* (Twain) 190, 194–95
trains, see railways
tram car, see cable car
traveling xxiii–xxiv, 226–228
tROUT fishing 51, 62–69, 77, 80, 89, 141–42
*Truth* 255
Twain, Mark xv, xix, xxiii, xxxix, 56, 189–200, 240, 253, 255, 256
U
Utah 126, 130, 135, 252

V
Vancouver 48, 71, 74, 78 (fire), 79–80
Vermont xiv, xxvi, xxvii, xxx, 204, 209, 214, 222, 232–38
Victoria, Queen of England (The Queen's Birthday) 5, 6, 7, 10, 33, 34
Victoria (Canada) 48, 77, 81
voting, U.S. 28–30, 36 see also democracy, the Irish vote

W
War, American Revolutionary xxviii
War, American Civil xxviii, 10, 121, 160
warfare, Native-American and border 70, 105, 121
Washington, D.C. 10, 122, 194, see also government
Washington Territory 56, 71, 250
Watt, A. P. xxiv, 256
West Point 98, 105, 121, 214
wheat 153, 181–82
Willamette River 56
women, American 37–40, 45–46, 111, 116–18, 164–65, 251
World 255

Y
Yellowstone, the Gorge of xxiii, 117
Yellowstone Lake 119

Yellowstone National Park xvii, xxix, xxxiii, xl, 82, 87–119
Yellowstone River xvii, 88–89, 91, 114, 116–19
Yokohama xx, 3, 78, 252
Young, Brigham 126, 129
Z
Zion Mercantile Co-operative Institute 128–29
KIPLING was just twenty-three years old when he reached San Francisco in May 1889; he immediately began recording the sights and sounds of boom-town America. For four months he toured the United States, publishing accounts of his journey in the *Pioneer*, a major newspaper in western India. A few years later, when he lived in Vermont, Kipling wrote several syndicated articles published in both England and the U.S. Then in 1899 he revised and abridged the *Pioneer* versions and published them in *From Sea to Sea*. The second series of syndicated articles he collected in *Letters of Travel* (1920). Most of these travel writings are now out of print.

In *Kipling’s America*, Professor D. H. Stewart brings all of these articles together and reproduces the original printed versions. Readers are provided with the opportunity to hear again Kipling at his cocky and often opinionated best. From Kipling’s perspective, America unleashed the chaotic energy latent in human beings, and he was uncertain whether this energy inevitably would be productive or destructive.

That some of his impressions were one-dimensional is undeniable, but equally undeniable is his gift of language—his access to a ready lexicon often composed of what he termed a “perpetual Pentecost” to describe the “talking in tongues” heard in British Overseas Clubs throughout the Empire. This hodgepodge of European languages (counter-pointed with pidgin English, Chinese, Hindi, American) produced a symphony (or cacophony) of bountiful word play.

The accounts in *Kipling’s America: Travel Letters, 1889–1895*, reminiscent of a photograph album from a century past and shrewdly prophetic of today’s America, will intrigue Kipling scholars, students of American history and general readers alike.