

June 1, 2007
News Release

RUDYARD KIPLING: The Books I Leave Behind

An exhibition at the Beinecke Library

The Appeal

*If I have given you delight
By aught that I have done,
Let me lie quiet in that night
Which shall be yours anon:*

*And for that little, little span
The dead are borne in mind
Seek not to question other than
The books I leave behind.*

(published posthumously, 1939)



The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University announces its summer exhibition, *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind*, on view from June 1 through September 15, 2007. For the last decade of the nineteenth century and at least the first two decades of the twentieth, Kipling (1865-1936) was one of the most popular writers in the English language, in both prose and verse. He was among the last British poets to command a mass audience, appealing to readers of all social classes and ages. Although his few novels, except *Kim*, were only a mixed success, in the medium of the short story Kipling extended the range of English fiction in both subject matter and technique and perhaps did more than any other author in the English language to blur the division between popular and high art.

This exhibition, the first comprehensive show to be presented anywhere in over 50 years, tracks the development of his work, from journalistic beginnings in India, through sudden and sustained success in England and the United States, and follows his transformation from the exuberant bard and binder of Empire, to the public poet of the battles and cemeteries of the Great War which claimed his only son, to the dismayed observer of the post-war years who resisted the drive for the independence of India and foretold the growing threat of Hitler.

The exhibition gives special attention to the bibliographic intricacies of Kipling's printed output. His popularity meant that many editions of his work were issued—with revised texts and variant bindings, in special formats, and especially as unauthorized or “pirate” versions. The books and

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manuscripts shown here, gathered over the years by keen and discerning collectors, provide a picture of how Kipling's stories and images traveled around the world in a wide range of formats.

Among the featured items on display are documents from Kipling's schooldays, manuscripts in Kipling's hand, a copy of *The Jungle Book* with a unique watercolor of Shere Khan, and an extremely rare set of *The Friend*, a South African newspaper published during the Boer War, annotated by Kipling to mark his contributions. Also on view are a scale model of Zam-zammah, the cannon from *Kim*, sheet music for songs by Kipling, a tea-set emblazoned with one of his most popular poems, "The Absent-Minded Beggar," and a tin of "Kipling Plug Cut" tobacco from Louisville, Kentucky.

The exhibition is curated by David Alan Richards (Yale College Class of 1967, Yale Law School Class of 1972), and the majority of items on display are from the Kipling Collection he created and donated to the Beinecke Library. The exhibition also draws from the Kipling collections of Chauncey Depew and Matilda Tyler.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Beinecke Library is publishing a catalog that celebrates Kipling's multi-faceted achievements and, with 80 full-color illustrations, underscores the variety and breadth of his printed production. An introductory essay by David Alan Richards traces the challenges and joys of building a Kipling bibliography. Thomas Pinney, emeritus professor of English at Pomona College, contributes an essay on how collecting Kipling reflects the writer's literary status.

The book is organized chronologically, beginning with Kipling's birth in India in 1865 and extending to movies, plays, and new editions of his works that have appeared since his death in 1936. The selected items create a time-line of his life and popular works, including *The Jungle Books* and *The Just So Stories*. Admirers of Kipling's genius and lovers of literature in general will appreciate this rare glimpse into his extraordinary world.

The catalogue, *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind* by David Alan Richards (ISBN 978-0-300-12674-7) will be available through www.yale.edu/yup or your local bookstore.



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