



## THE COVER

The bookplate above of Rudyard Kipling, designed by his father John Lockwood Kipling, reflects not only the influence of Kipling's father upon his creative life but also his influence upon the mythological character of his poetry and stories. What makes this bookplate so interesting and significant, apart from its aesthetic value, is the relationship from which it came.

John Lockwood Kipling (1837–1911) moved from London to India with his wife in 1865, accepting an appointment as a teacher in the Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Bombay (Angus Wilson, *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling* [New York: Viking Press, 1978], 15). Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936),

The author wishes to thank Mr. Michael Smith and Mr. Norman Entract of the Kipling Society, Haslemere, Surrey, England; the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin; and Mr. Nilesh Mathuria.

named after Rudyard Lake in Staffordshire where his parents first met, was born in Bombay only a few months after the move (Norman Page, *A Kipling Companion* [London: Macmillan Press, 1984], 1). Apart from his teaching career, John Lockwood Kipling was also a curator at the museum at Lahore and designed the Dunbar Room at Osborne House (Brian North Lee, *British Bookplates: A Pictorial History*, [North Pomfret, Vermont: David and Charles, 1979], 112). He was the author of *Beast and Man in India* (1891) and illustrated many of Rudyard Kipling's books (Page, 30).

The personal library of Rudyard Kipling currently resides in the Sussex house, known as Bateman's at Burwash, in which he lived from 1902 until his death in 1936. After his wife's death in 1939, the house and its contents, including Rudyard's personal library, became part of the National Trust. Occupying several bookshelves that have been described as standing between twenty and twenty-five feet high, the collection is a sizable one. The books cover a variety of topics, from the classics to travel. A large number of the collection is in English, and volumes in French are also well represented.

Two of the books from Rudyard Kipling's personal library found their way into the Harry Ransom Center for Humanities Research at The University of Texas at Austin. One is a copy of Frank Thomas Bullen's *Cruise of the "Cachalot."* The second is a copy of Theodore Roosevelt's *National Strength and International Duty* and is inscribed from the author to Rudyard Kipling.

The bookplate, found on page 113 of Brian North Lee's *British Bookplates: A Pictorial History*, was designed by John Lockwood Kipling for his son Rudyard in 1909. It was one of four bookplates that Lockwood Kipling, an accomplished artist, is known to have created. The second was made for himself. The third and fourth were designed for his grandchildren, Elsie and John. The bookplate in question was produced in three different sizes and was inked in both black and brown (Lee, 112).

The design features the profile of a man riding in an ornate carriage upon the back of a rug-draped Indian elephant. The passenger is reclining with a book propped upon his lap and is smoking a flexible long-stemmed pipe. In front of the carriage is a driver who sits astride the elephant's neck. In back of the carriage is another servant who is holding and perhaps tending the base of the passenger's pipe. All three men are wearing wrapped cloth hats. The servants appear to be Indian. Not surprisingly, the passenger bears a striking resemblance to Rudyard Kipling himself, who at the time of its design would have been forty-four years of age.

The elephant, facing to the left, is draped in three different frayed-edge rugs. The first rug covers the top of its head and almost hides its

only exposed eye. The second is a larger rug which lies over the animal's body from its back to its knees. The third rug is smaller and hangs over the second, but does not descend beyond the elephant's hidden belly. On the third rug are sewn the words "Ex Libris." A bell hangs on the elephant's side by a rope which originates from between the second and third rug. The elephant is holding a large unidentified flower with its trunk, and its exposed tusk is capped.

The ground below the elephant is strewn with flowers and exotic leaves. The background behind the elephant and its riders is completely dark. The whole design is framed by an archway supported on the sides by two carved pillars, which stand upon what appears to be a stone platform, with the name "Rudyard Kipling" engraved and centered upon it. Where the pillar meets the platform on the left side is a rectangle which boasts John Lockwood Kipling's signature or monogram. A similar rectangle on the right side has the year "1909" carved upon it. On the corners of the archway are matching parrots, holding branches in their beaks.

The level of detail involved in the work is a testament to the patient and methodical nature for which John Lockwood Kipling was known (Wilson, 17). Although the bookplate design matches his son's stories' high level of romanticism, John Lockwood Kipling was "anxious to point out how unreal [was] the romantic dream of India that scholars of the old Sanskrit or Buddhist texts have created" (Wilson, 100). His artistically rational sense appears to have left a lasting impression upon his son. In the first chapter of Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim*, there is a tribute to his father in the character of the curator of Lahore Museum, who greets the Lama with both propriety and courtesy (Wilson, 13).

The bookplate's elephant can be seen as a wonderful symbol of the relationship between the father and son. In the Indian culture the god of wisdom is the elephant-headed deity Ganesha. The elephant is symbolically an appropriate subject for a bookplate, considering the high value placed on books and learning. However, there is also an Indian myth of the contest between Ganesha and his brother to see who could circle the world first. The brother physically circled the world, but Ganesha won by walking around his parents. The wisdom that parents comprise and with which they shape one's world view is significant when examining this bookplate, designed by a pragmatic father for his fanciful son.

The bookplate is an indication of the significance of John Lockwood Kipling's influence upon his son's work. Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories for Little Children* (1901) is a wonderful example of how he utilized his father's sense of the rational in order to create fantastic explanations for what appeared in nature (Lord Birkenhead, *Rudyard Kipling*, [London:

Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978], 399). The reason the elephant's trunk was so long was to be found not in Darwinism, but in the actions of a malicious crocodile, who would not let go of the victimized pachyderm's nose. It appears that Rudyard had not abandoned his father's logic of cause and effect but had transformed it and in doing so created a new rational mythology.

It is interesting to note that the two books from Rudyard Kipling's library, which are in the Harry Ransom Center for Humanities Research, both bear a similar bookplate, which appears to be an earlier variation of the same 1909 design. The elephant's rider is bearded and does not look much like the mustached figure of Rudyard Kipling. The bell on the elephant does not sway to one side but hangs straight down. On the left rectangle in place of John Lockwood Kipling's monogram are the capital letters "AD."

The most perplexing difference, however, is found on the right rectangle. The year is given as 1894, as opposed to 1909, and beneath the date are the initials "ULK." If one could be certain that the "U" was actually an over extended "J," it would be possible to posit that these were the initials of John Lockwood Kipling. As it stands, however, there are no such assurances, and the identity of the artist remains unknown. The question then becomes "Did John Lockwood Kipling modify the previous bookplate design of an earlier artist?" And does it matter when one looks at the personalized nature of the modifications for his son?

John Lockwood Kipling's bookplate for Rudyard equally demonstrates the influence that the latter had upon the former. Even though he was sometimes shocked by what Rudyard wrote, he was always proud of his son's achievements (Wilson, 101). He illustrated several of Rudyard's works and consequently showed his own appreciation and ability to generate the fantastic or romantic. The bookplate is a wonderful symbol of the relationship between this father, his son, and their books.

*Philip Randal Jensen*  
*The University of Texas at Austin*