
David Alan Richards. *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. 145p.

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Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind by David Alan Richards is the companion catalog to an exhibition of books, manuscripts, letters, magazines, newspapers, and sheet music presented at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The exhibition was on display from June 1 through September 15, 2007. The exhibition featured the Kipling collection of David Alan Richards and included items from the collections of Chauncy Depew and Matilda Tyler. The catalog begins with introductions to the exhibition by David Alan Richards and Thomas Pinney. *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind* is a publication of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and Yale University Press, 2007.

I first discovered *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind* in the company of a large collection of other scholarly works. I was attracted to the catalog because of its striking cover and its attractive size and proportions. My interest increased when I discovered that the subject of the collection was the life and work of the famous author Rudyard Kipling. My acquaintance with Kipling began as a young boy. I was fascinated by the characters and illustrations in *The Jungle Books* and the *Just So Stories*. I read and learned by heart the famous poem *If*. I encountered photographs and other likenesses of Kipling again and again. In the years that followed, I became more and more familiar with Kipling. I also became more and more curious and full of questions and speculations about the man and his work. Then I discovered *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind*. I read the catalog and thereby entered, more fully than ever before, the world of Kipling the Writer.

The catalog begins with a cover that is appealing in design and rich in colors and images. The images include details of illustrations from two works by Kipling: "The Absent Minded Beggar" and *The Seven Seas*. They also include two portraits of Kipling by William Nicholson and "Spy." All of the images are reproduced in a manner that is faithful to their original appearance in the exhibition. On the back of the cover is a clear and concise description of the contents. The size and proportions of the book are 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Once the reader opens the catalog, it soon becomes clear that you can (sometimes) "tell a book by its cover."

Part one of the catalog features two essays: "Colors in Kipling" by David Alan Richards and "On Collecting Kipling" by Thomas Pinney. Both essays are conversational in tone and share the pleasures and unique challenges of collecting books, manuscripts, letters, and ephemera associated with the author who at the height of his career was "the most-read and the best-selling of writers in English" (14). Richards

acknowledges his enthusiasm for collecting: “Collecting, of course, is not history: history is work, while collecting is play” (7). At the same time, the challenges of collecting Kipling can be daunting: “The Kipling collector often feels he’s jousting not only with fate, but with the man himself” (8). The reader will come to appreciate the words of Thomas Pinney: “Kipling never suffered writer’s block, never took a holiday from writing, and never struggled to find a subject for his pen” (13).

Part two of the catalog features the items in the exhibition, presented in chronological order and by subject. Each section includes a subject and theme, a quotation from Kipling, a discussion of the relevance of the subject and theme to the life and work of Kipling, a list of items, and images of one or more items in the exhibition. The result is an illustrated checklist of the original exhibition.

The thirty-two sections of the catalog are rich in information and in visual glimpses into the world of Rudyard Kipling. Although they are complete unto themselves, they also serve as incentives for further research and study. My personal favorite is titled “‘Naulakha’, Yale, and ‘Captains Courageous.’” The section begins with the following quotation from Kipling’s “Pan in Vermont”:

But where his goat’s hoof cut the crust—beloved, look below—
He’s left us (I’ll forgive him all) the may-flower ‘neath the snow! (57).

The quotation is followed by a description of the life of the Kipling family at Naulakha: the home which he and his new wife Caroline built in Brattleboro, Vermont, and where they lived together with their daughter Josephine. The section also includes descriptions of a meeting of the Kipling Club of Yale College and the background to the writing of Kipling’s *Captains Courageous*. In the same section appears a list of eight items in the exhibition and an illustration from the First English Edition of *Captains Courageous*.

“Naulakha” is Hindi for “The Jewel Beyond Price.” Kipling envisioned a house in the shape of a ship, with his study at the bow. The architect was Henry Rutgers Marshall, and the Kiplings lived in the house from 1893 to 1896. During that time, Kipling wrote *The Jungle Books*, *Captains Courageous*, *A Day’s Work*, and began writing *Kim* and the *Just So Stories*. In the nursery at Naulakha, Josephine was the first person to hear the *Just So Stories*.

The Landmark Trust USA purchased and restored Naulakha, the first visitors arriving in 1993. Since then many visitors have spent one or more days and nights living in the house. In addition, many adults and children have been entertained by programs and workshops featured in that historic setting. Especially popular are the occasions when the actor Jackson Gillman impersonates Rudyard Kipling and then tells several of the *Just So Stories* in the manner of the Master. In conversation,

Gillman told me how he prepares to tell the stories: “I love the photos of Kipling with Josephine and that’s probably my main source for trying to capture the comfortable ease that he enjoyed with his children. It reminds me of my grandfather, and I hope that I embody the same with my own children.”

Special attention must be given to the images that appear throughout *Rudyard Kipling: The Books I Leave Behind*. The positive attributes of the cover continue to flourish. The overall design is imaginative and appealing. The colors are rich and inviting. Finally, and most importantly, the images themselves are reproduced with remarkable fidelity to the original items in the exhibition. The subtle beauty of the original items—including the enhancing effects of time—is readily apparent with respect to every image in the catalog.

Two books and one essay serve as excellent companions to the catalog. They are Irving Howe’s *The Portable Kipling*; Angus Wilson’s *The Strange Ride of Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Works*; and Edmund Wilson’s “The Kipling That Nobody Read.” ✱