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KIPLING, STALKY, REGULUS & CO.: A READING OF HORACE *ODES* 3.5[1]

By T. J. LEARY

Although born in India, like others of his class and generation Rudyard Kipling was sent back to England for his schooling. From 1878 he attended the United Services College (USC) at Westward Ho! in North Devon, a school that had been recently established under the headmastership of a family friend, Cormell Price, to accommodate the children of Indian Army officers unable to afford the fees of institutions such as Wellington College, originally established to prepare boys for the military academies at Sandhurst and Woolwich. The school was later to provide the inspiration for Kipling's *Stalky & Co.*, a collection of stories first assembled for publication in book form in 1899 and re-issued, with five further tales, in 1929. The reception of this work and the characters within it was not universally favourable,[2] the school upon which it was based was in many ways atypical of the standard English public school (if ever such a thing existed),[3] and, although unquestionably a 'school story', it is not in line with the tradition fathered by *Tom Brown*.[4]

[1] I have used I. Quigly's text: *Rudyard Kipling. Stalky & Co.* (Oxford, 1987), page references to which are given as unqualified numbers. Some of the material in the opening paragraphs is drawn from T. J. Leary, 'Kipling knew his Ho-o-race, Lollius knew Lloyd George', *CA News* 36 (2007), 6–7. Although I am entirely responsible for what follows, I am grateful to the following for their suggestions: Professor S. J. Harrison, Dr Christopher Stray, and, for the early paragraphs, Professor D. A. West; also, the anonymous referees appointed by *Greece and Rome*.

[2] Quigly (n. 1), xiii, quotes from G. Sampson, *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge 1942), 959: 'An unpleasant book about unpleasant boys at an unpleasant school'. Sampson may have been influenced by his background (he was a former elementary schoolteacher, headmaster, and London County Council inspector of schools: online *ODNB*, accessed 21 July 2007); but note also R. Buchanan, 'The Voice of the Hooligan', *Contemporary Review*, December 1899, quoted by A. Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* (London, 1999), 79: 'Only the spoiled child of an utterly brutalised public could possibly have written *Stalky & Co* . . . the vulgarity, the brutality, the savagery . . . reeks on every page.' Further such judgements are collected by I. Quigly, *The Heirs of Tom Brown. The English School Story* (London, 1982), 110.

[3] '[T]he school was without tradition, without money, without many amenities and quite unable to attract students apart from the narrow clientele for which it had been invented.' (T. Pinney [ed.], *Rudyard Kipling. Something of Myself and other Autobiographical Writings* [Cambridge, 1991], x). It was an 'odd school': Quigly (n. 1), xv. For the difficulty of defining a 'public school', see C. Stray, *Classics Transformed. Schools, Universities, and Society in England, 1830–1960* (Oxford, 1998), 181; J. R. de S. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe. The Development of the Victorian Public School* (London and Blandford, Dorset, 1977), ch. 4 and note especially 258, where the view quoted of a *Public School Magazine* correspondent would exclude the USC.

[4] Quigly (n. 2), 109–10; Quigly (n. 1), xiv.

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However, in other ways it conformed, for instance in the curriculum it describes – as dictated by the Army entrance requirements. While the position of Classics was pre-eminent in the public school curriculum of the late nineteenth century,[5] provision was nonetheless often also made for Army classes and Modern Sides. (Cormell Price had previously been head of the Modern Side at Haileybury.) The initial intention in setting up a Modern Side at Harrow had been to offer a parallel curriculum for non-classical pupils[6] but, by the 1880s, they tended generally to be regarded as 'sinks' for the academically less able.[7] Those cramming for Army exams were frequently also the less scholarly. Nevertheless, in addition to 'modern' subjects such as English, languages, science, and mathematics, Modern or Army classes also received a very solid grounding in Latin, this being a significant social marker, the difference between the officer-gentleman class and the lower orders.[8] This is reflected by the tags, dog Latin, and quotations that pervade *Stalky & Co.*,[9] and is stated explicitly in the story 'Regulus':

> The Fifth Form had been dragged several times . . . from one end of the school Horace to the other. Those were the years when the Army examiners gave thousands of marks for Latin, and it was Mr. King's hated business to defeat them. (157)

According to Kipling's autobiographical *Something of Myself* (published posthumously in 1937), the model for King was 'C-' (William

[5] Stray (n. 3), 185–6.

[6] See E. E. Bowen's 'Memorandum on the Modern Side, 1869–1881' (10 September 1881), in *A Memoir* (London, 1902), 103.

[7] Stray (n. 3), 187; cf. Bowen (n. 6), 105: '[T]he Modern Side consists for the most part of average boys'.

[8] For Latin as a 'bulwark against ochlocracy', especially as the importance of Greek declined, see e.g. C. Stray, 'Schoolboys and Gentlemen', in Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone (eds.), *Pedagogy and Power. Rhetoric of Classical Learning* (Cambridge, 1998), 29. At Winchester in 1888, instead of Greek the Army Class learnt German: Stray (n. 3), 37.

[9] See C. Carrington (ed.), *Kipling's Horace* (London, 1978), 17. Note the following: *his rebus infectis* (30), *destricto ense* (30), *pax* (31), *a tergo* (32), *in loco parentis* (40 and passim), *vice* (40), *flagrante delicto* (42), *quis custodiet ipsos custodes* (45, but spoken by the non-school Colonel Dabney), '*suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*' (53), *privatim et seriatim* (62; also e.g. 91), *capivi* (62), *placetne* (63), *actum est* (63), *habet* (65), 'keep *cave*' (76, 93; cf. 108), *ipso facto* (94), *summa* (98), *et ego . . . in Arcadia vixi* (117, but said by the head, *sotto voce*), *oratio directa . . . oratio obliqua* (125), *mea culpa* (144, said by the head), '*habeo capitem crinibus minimis*. I've got him by the short hairs!' (192), *ad hoc* (223), *ab initio* (237), *viva voce* (238, 239), *maxima debetur pueris reverentia* (241, spoken by a master, King), *in absentia* (249), *non omnis moriar* (256, spoken by the head), *elucescebat* (262, spoken by King; cf. 268), *confer orationes Regis furiosissimi* (266), *summo ingenio* (283), *privatim* (287), *consilio et auxilio* (291). Classical allusions include such gems as the 'Caudine Toasting-fork' (48) and there are memorable insults such as 'You preter-pluperfect, fat-ended fool' (153).

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Carr Crofts, 1846–1912),[10] his English and Latin master, whom he describes as

> a scholar who lived in secret hope of translating Thucydides worthily. He had a violent temper, no disadvantage when handling boys used to direct speech, and a gift of schoolmaster's sarcasm which must have been a relief to him and was certainly a treasure trove to me.[11]

The reliability of *Something of Myself* is notoriously questionable,[12] and other inspirations for King have been detected.[13] Nonetheless, and although in *An English School* he was later to question the practical value of his classical education,[14] its influence on his work is undeniable,[15] and, as his collaborative spoof edition of Horace *Odes* 5 testifies,[16] there is some truth in the much-quoted 'C- taught me to loathe Horace for two years; to forget him for twenty, and then to love him for the rest of my days and through many sleepless nights'.[17] Similar things were said by the likes of Tennyson and Trollope.[18]

Although it has been suggested that the 'adolescent loutishness' displayed by No. 5 Study in *Stalky & Co.* is not entirely true of Kipling's own school days[19] and Kipling himself conceded that the

[10] For further details, see <http://www.kipling.org.uk/rg_stalky_characters_p.htm>, accessed 16 July 2007: Merton, Brasenose, and a good oarsman. He was drowned swimming off Sark.

[11] Pinney (n. 3), 21.

[12] Ibid., vii, xxii, xxiv–v.

[13] Cf. Lycett (n. 2), 66; Carrington (n. 9), 17: 'the formidable "Mr King" . . . is not a portrait of Crofts but a composite character partly based upon an even sterner pedagogue, F. W. Haslam, who grounded Kipling in Latin, before departing to become a university professor in New Zealand.' (Haslam, MA Cantab., Scholar of St John's, taught at Tonbridge (1872–4) before moving to USC. He was Professor of Classics at Canterbury College, Christchurch, New Zealand, from 1879 to 1912.)

[14] Pinney (n. 3), 183.

[15] S. Treggiari, 'Kipling's Classics', *The Kipling Journal* 181 (1972), 7–12; S. Medcalf, 'Horace's Kipling', in C. Martindale and D. Hopkins (eds.), *Horace Made New* (Cambridge, 1993), 217–39.

[16] R. Kipling, C. Graves, and A. D. Godley, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum Liber Quintus* (Oxford, 1920). For the story behind this work, see Carrington (n. 9), xix–xx; Lycett (n. 2), 481–2; Medcalf (n. 15), 229–30.

[17] Pinney (n. 3), 22; cf. Lycett (n. 2), 481: after settling at Bateman's in 1902, Kipling began to see Horace as role model – the urbane man of the world who retires to his Sabine (read Sussex) farm to obtain a better perspective on the metropolitan rat race. When addressing the boys at Wellington College in May 1912 on the value of literature, Kipling noted that there were 'bits of Odes from Horace . . . that make one realise later in life, as no other words in any other tongue can, the brotherhood of mankind in time of sorrow or affliction'. In the same month, he acquired a much-loved Medici Press edition of Horace, which he kept in his safe and occasionally annotated. Later, he always travelled with a copy of Horace.

[18] I. Hurst, *Victorian Women Writers and the Classics* (Oxford, 2006), 12–13; cf. E. J. Kenney, '"A Little of it Sticks": The Englishman's Horace', in C. Burnett and N. Mann (eds.), *Britannia Latina. Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages* (London and Turin, 2005), 184, 190–1: Maurice Bowra once said that no one appreciates Horace till he is forty.

[19] See Lycett (n. 2), 62, discussing comments by G. C. Beresford, the original M'Turk; cf. G. C. Beresford, *Schooldays with Stalky* (London, 1936), 88–91.

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experiences he describes were 'mercifully' denied to him,[20] he must in many ways have been a challenging pupil, and the state of warfare between boy and Master depicted by much of the book cannot have been entirely without foundation.[21] In particular Kipling would provoke his teachers e.g. by '"dumbing down" and showing his familiarity with the latest *Punch* cartoons, the *Boys' Own Paper* or the doggerel of Hans Breitmann'.[22] When asked by Crofts to name his favourite poet, Kipling named Walt Whitman, causing the Master, as intended, 'to explode'.[23] Yet, for all that, just as the boys in *Stalky & Co.* were fully aware that they needed King to get through their army exams,[24] so Crofts was fully aware of Kipling's talents and, like Cormell Price, who taught Kipling extra-curricular Russian and pointed him in the direction of journalism and the newspaper trade, provided him with the means to pursue them. The following anecdote, from *An English School*, bears quoting:

> There was one boy [sc. Kipling] . . . to whom every quantity was an arbitrary mystery,[25] and he wound up his crime by suggesting that he could do better if Latin verses rhymed as decent verse should. He was given an afternoon's reflection to purge himself of his contempt; and feeling certain that he was in for something very warm, he turned '*Donec gratus eram*' into pure Devonshire dialect, rhymed, and showed it up as his contribution to the study of Horace.[26] He was let off , and his master [i.e. Crofts] gave him the run of a big library, where he found as much verse and prose as he wanted; but that ruined his Latin verses and made him write verses of his own.[27]

The two remained friends and correspondents in later life,[28] and it is probably Crofts' enduring influence to which Kipling refers when

[20] Pinney (n. 3), 80. Quigly (n. 2), 113, writes that 'Kipling coarsened and toughened the reality he had known'.

[21] Cf. L.C. Dunsterville (the original Stalky), *Stalky's Reminiscences* (London, 1936), 50.

[22] Lycett (n. 2), 64. On Breitmann and his creator, see J. D. Hart (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to American Literature* (New York, 1978), s.v. 'Leland, Charles Godfrey'. 'Dumbing down' was a charge often later levelled by his critics against the mature Kipling; cf. P. MacKendrick, 'Kipling and the Nature of the Classical', *CJ* 52 (1956), 67.

[23] Lycett (n. 2), 67.

[24] 186: 'King's the best classical cram we've got.'

[25] Cf. 99: 'I [i.e. King] wish to Heaven he [Beetle~Kipling] would transfer a little of his energy . . . to Elegiacs . . . He is, with the single exception of Stalky, the very vilest manufacturer of "barbarous hexameters" that I have dealt with.'

[26] Kipling's translation of Horace *Carm.* 3.9 was first published in the *United Services College Chronicle*, no. 10, 24 July 1882. See A. Rutherford, *Early Verse by Rudyard Kipling* (Oxford, 1986), 160–1; Medcalf (n. 15), 218.

[27] Pinney (n. 3), 188. Comparable to some extent is the way that W. H. D. Rouse, although a Classicist, encouraged Arthur Ransome to pursue his love of English literature: see H. Brogan, *The Life of Arthur Ransome* (London, 1992), 21–2. There are several similarities between Kipling and Ransome: for instance, both were short-sighted, their early schooling was unhappy, and they sought refuge in their imaginations. See, e.g., ibid., 15–16.

[28] Carrington (n. 9), 17.

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writing, in *Something of Myself*, that 'there was a half-chapter [in *Kim*] which was truly beautiful but, as my old Classics Master would have said, "otiose," and it was removed with tears.'[29]

The 'Regulus' chapter in *Stalky & Co.*, and the verses that follow it, have received general comments such as that of Quigly, that in it 'we learn what school stories very seldom tell us, that school work may be vigorously done and sometimes even enjoyed, that a little Latin may actually "stick" and the master may therefore feel his uphill task is worthwhile',[30] or simplifying summaries, such as that of Carrington, who writes of 'the tale of the schoolboys who wrestled with the fifth ode of the Third Book and appreciated the stoical character of the defeated Roman general by instinct' and continues

> The body of the story is the lesson, when 'Mr King' explored the depth of the Roman code of ethics; but the accompanying verse is a light piece, that imitates – even parodies – Horace's style. Though not published until 1917,[31] there is some evidence that *Regulus* and its verse epigraph had been written earlier and perhaps been shown around the author's friends. The Horatian 'ode' . . . was headed 'A Translation', and deals with the scholastic features of the story.[32]

A more searching analysis, especially of the verses, is offered by Medcalf;[33] but there remains, nonetheless, room for exploration of the story in much greater detail.

Horace *Carm*. 3.5 begins with a general statement that, while Jupiter is believed to reign in Heaven because he is the Thunderer, Augustus will be regarded as a god on earth once Britain and Parthia have been conquered. Reference to Parthia leads to the soldiers of Crassus, defeated at Carrhae in 53 AD, who have forgotten their Roman origins and intermarried with the enemy. The rest of the ode deals with the actions to prevent such an outcome by (the near mythical) Marcus Atilius Regulus. He defeated the Carthaginians in 256 BC but was captured by them the following year, and was then sent on parole to Rome to ask either for peace or to request the exchange of prisoners. Regulus advised the senate against making any terms with the enemy and then returned, knowingly and despite the pleas of his relatives and friends, to Carthage and certain execution.

Kipling uses the ode to explore the 'relevance' of Classics generally and specifically within the school curriculum. He does so in two ways:

[29] Pinney (n. 3), 83.
[30] Quigly (n. 1), xxii.
[31] In *A Diversity of Creatures*.
[32] Carrington (n. 9), xix.
[33] Medcalf (n. 15), 226–8.

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first, a parallel is drawn between Regulus and one of the boys, and second, the poem affords an opportunity for rehearsing the respective educational merits of the Sciences and Arts, this being very much a topic of contemporary debate – as will be explained in greater detail below. In addition, however, his description of the Latin lesson in which the ode is read is revealing as to how the curriculum was implemented in his day. (To illustrate this I have generally quoted more extensively from the story than is strictly necessary to illustrate my immediate points.) While a social marker and therefore valued by aspiring or ambitious parents,[34] the symbolic status of the Classics or Latin meant that often the fact that, rather than the way in which, it was taught was of greatest importance. In consequence, lessons were often ritualized for delivery so as to cater for social expectations but hold little interest or appeal to the pupils.[35] Kipling's professed early loathing for Horace, while doubtless exaggerated for literary effect, can be set in this context. Nevertheless, as the beginning of the tale shows, this distaste was not necessarily confined to the boys:

> 'Aha!' [King] began, rubbing his hands. '*Cras ingens iterabimus aequor.* Our portion today is the Fifth Ode of the Third Book, I believe – concerning one Regulus, a gentleman. And how often have we been through it?'
>
> 'Twice, sir,' said Malpass, head of the Form.
>
> Mr King shuddered. 'Yes, twice, quite literally,' he said. 'Today, with an eye to our Army *viva-voce* examinations – ugh! – I shall exact somewhat freer and more florid renditions. With feeling and comprehension if that be possible. (157)

It is interesting that our first glimpse of King here[36] betrays a certain amount of distaste on his part too ('shuddered', 'ugh!'), not for Horace, but for the way he is obliged to teach him, labouring through each poem several times with a class of conscripts whose army exams are in view; and, while his sarcasm under the circumstances is perhaps understandable, his hopes of a translation with 'feeling' allow a glimpse, later to be expanded, of his passion for the poem and for Latin literature generally, especially also for Virgil.

King's sarcasm is unforgivable when judged against modern ideas of political correctness and pastoral care, and it would not be condoned in the classroom today; but, as noted above, Kipling regarded it as a 'gift', a 'relief' and a 'treasure trove', which would suggest that, at

[34] Cf. Stray (n. 3), 180, and above, on officers and gentlemen.
[35] Cf. Stray (n. 3), 185.
[36] Note too the section from 157, quoted earlier.

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any rate in later years, he fully appreciated his master's frustrations.[37] It is certainly no worse than the parade-ground invective that the boys themselves inflict on one another when drilling in the cadet corps (213). It was to a large extent all part of the game, what was expected; and, while doubtless often unpleasant for its subject at the time, is the sort of thing that fuels fond old-boy reminiscences in the future, and thus makes for a good school story, documenting experience with which boys and their fathers can identify together.[38]

Despite his desire for 'somewhat freer and more florid renditions', King's approach initially in the lesson is entirely traditional. He picks first on Beetle and, fully aware that his Latin is weak, asks him to construe the text closely, and Beetle's response, also entirely traditional, is to do so 'confident in the possession of a guaranteed construe' (157) prepared not by himself but by his more Latinate study mate, M'Turk.[39] After having laboriously worked through the first three stanzas, Beetle asks, 'with an air of hardly restrained zeal' whether he should continue, and King's sarcasm is again clearly a cloak to pain:

> Mr King winced. 'No thank you. You have indeed given us a translation! May I ask if it conveys any meaning whatever to your so-called mind?'
>
> 'Oh, I think so.' This with gentle toleration for Horace and all his works.
>
> 'We envy you. Sit down.' (159)

This sarcasm is further evidenced later, in a more extreme form, when Vernon, who is no great scholar and from whom 'no one expected fireworks' (161), has badly mis-construed his appointed section:

> 'I am painfully aware by bitter experience that I cannot give you any idea of the passion, the power, the – the essential guts of the lines which you have so foully outraged in our presence. But –' the note changed, 'so far as in me lies, I will strive to bring home to you, Vernon, the fact that there exist in Latin a few pitiful rules of grammar, of syntax, nay, even of declension, which were not created for your incult sport – your Boeotian diversion. You will, therefore, Vernon, write out and bring to me to-morrow a word-for-word English–Latin translation of the Ode, together with a full list of all adjectives – an adjective is not a verb, Vernon, as the Lower Third will tell you – all adjectives, their number, case, and gender. Even now I haven't begun to deal with you faithfully.'
>
> 'I – I'm very sorry, sir,' Vernon stammered.

[37] Compare Dunsterville (n. 21), 50: 'Looking back on my . . . school days, I am filled with an intense sympathy for schoolmasters. What a wearysome and thankless task is theirs!'

[38] Compare Kipling's comments in *Something of Myself* (Pinney [n. 3], 111) on *Rewards and Fairies* and his intended readers – grown-ups, although children had to read the tales first before this was realized.

[39] Cf. Study 5's joint preparation of Hor. *Carm.* 3.12 (226–8). For greater detail on the study's division of academic labour, see 99.

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'You mistake the symptoms, Vernon. You are possibly discomfited by the imposition, but sorrow postulates some sort of mind, intellect, *nous*. Your rendering of *probrosis* alone [i.e. as a verb][40] stamps you as lower than the beasts of the field . . .' (162)

King's use of the traditional construe is not to be criticized out of hand: the class had to get through the lines, and he did not have recourse to the modern teaching aids that can serve to vary delivery today.[41] That he was nonetheless alive to the passion in the ode, is very clear – and his frustration at hearing it mangled is understandable. Nevertheless, while his response to Beetle is not unamusing, his treatment of the slower Vernon appears unnecessarily cruel. His dedication to the task of capturing exactly the right feeling and sense is undoubted, however, as he shows when dealing with Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.21:

'Howell, what do you make of that doubled "Vidi ego–ego vidi"? It wasn't put in to fill up the metre, you know.'

'Isn't it intensive, sir?' said Howell afflicted by a genuine interest in what he read. 'Regulus was a bit in earnest about Rome making no terms with Carthage – and he wanted to let the Romans understand it, didn't he?'

'Less than your usual grace, but the fact. Regulus *was* in earnest. He was also engaged at the same time in cutting his throat with every word he uttered. . . . Regulus was not thinking about his own life. He was telling Rome the truth. He was playing for his side. Those lines from the eighteenth to the fortieth ought to be written in blood. Yet there are things in human garments which will tell you that Horace was a flaneur – a man about town. Avoid such beings. Horace knew a very great deal. He knew! *Erit ille fortis* – "will he be brave who once to faithless foes has knelt?" And again . . . *hic unde vitam sumeret inscius*. That means roughly – but I perceive I am ahead of my translators.' (161, emphasis in original)

It is impossible to say whether Howell's affliction is because of or in spite of King's methods; but he is certainly stimulated by the Ode and alive to its force. Further evidence of King's own close appreciation of the poem's passion ('cutting his throat', 'written in blood')[42] is none-

[40] Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.39.

[41] Kipling was later to express full approval of these methods: see Medcalf (n. 15), 224–5, quoting from Kipling's *Book of Words* (London, 1928), 90–1: 'I grant you that the kind of translations one serves up at school are as bad and as bald as they can be . . . Yet, by a painful and laborious acquaintance with the mechanism of that particular tongue; by being made to take it to pieces and put it together again, and by that means only, we can arrive at a state of mind in which, though we cannot re-express the idea in any adequate words, we can realise and feel and absorb the idea.'

[42] Despite King's distaste for Army exam cramming, something of the traditional Newbolt/Public School 'do or die' heroic ideal is betrayed by 'He was playing for his side'. This is in contrast to Kipling's brand of hero who 'does and survives through craftiness'. Cf. Quigly (n. 2), 116–7.

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theless occasioned by Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.25, while the consideration given in the two extracts below to rendering line 49 is careful and scholarly:

[When Winton] rendered *scilicet* as 'forsooth,' King erupted.

'Regulus,' he said, 'was not a leader-writer for the penny press, nor, for that matter, was Horace. Regulus says: "The soldier ransomed by gold will come keener for the fight – will he by – by gum!" That's the meaning of *scilicet*. It indicates contempt – bitter contempt. "Forsooth," forsooth! You'll be talking about "speckled beauties" and "eventually transpire" next. (161)

'Now then for *atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus tortor pararet*. The whole force of it lies in the *atqui*.'

'Although he knew,' Winton suggested.

'Stronger than that, I think.'

'He who knew well,' Malpass interpolated.

'Ye-es. "Well though he knew." I don't like Conington's "well-witting." It's Wardour Street."[43] (163)

The depiction of King so far has mostly been unfavourable; but, despite his earlier handling of Vernon, it transpires later in the lesson that he is not incapable of kindness, and of a more gentle humour – although he attempts to conceal it. He is also ready to praise when praise is due, and this praise is the more telling for not being effusively expressed. An illustration of this is occasioned when the class is disturbed mid-course by fumes from a lesson taught by King's Science Side colleague, Mr Hartopp, which results in the following exchange with the same boy:

Vernon . . . chuckled as he underlined his Horace.

'It appears to amuse you,' said King. 'Let us participate. What is it?'

'The last two lines of the Tenth Ode, in this book, sir,' was Vernon's amazing reply.

'What? Oh, I see. *Non hoc semper erit liminis aut aquae caelestis patiens latus*' King's mouth twitched to hide a grin. 'Was that done with intention?'

'I – I thought it fitted, sir.'

'It does. It's distinctly happy. What put it into your thick head, Paddy?'

'I don't know, sir, except we did the Ode last term.'

'And you remembered? The same head that minted *probrosis* as a verb! Vernon, you are an enigma. No! This Side will not always be patient of unheavenly gases and waters. I will make representations to our so-called Moderns. Meantime (who shall say I am not just?) I remit you your accrued pains and penalties in regard to *probosim*,

[43] i.e. pseudo-archaic. Cf. King's insistence elsewhere on finding the 'right' word: 'wife' is preferable to 'spouse' for *coniuge* (line 5) and 'troublesome' is better than 'grave' or 'stern' for *gravibus* (line 4) (158). He does not like 'virile' for *virilem*, line 43 (162).

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probosis, *probosit* and other enormities. I oughtn't to do it, but the Side is occasionally human. By no means bad, Paddy.' (164–5)

That King does not use Vernon's surname here is particularly telling.

As is often the case, this unexpected interruption to the lesson is what ultimately makes its success, since it allows King to escape from his Army exam crammer mode, and, as the boys appreciate, give vent to his true enthusiasm:

Then King, with a few brisk remarks about Science, headed them back to Regulus, of whom and of Horace and Rome and evil-minded Carthage and of the democracy eternally futile,[44] he explained, in all ages and climes, he spoke for ten minutes; passing thence to the next Ode – *Delicta majorum* – where he fetched up, full-voiced, upon '*Dis te minorem quodgeris imperas*' (Thou rulest because thou bearest thyself as lower than the Gods) – making it a text for a discourse on manners, morals and respect for authority as distinct from bottled gases, which lasted till the bell rang. Then Beetle, concertinaing his books, observed to Winton, 'When King's really on tap he's an interesting dog. Hartopp's chlorine really uncorked him.' (165)

It is to the context of the science lesson interruption that the spoof 'ode', so generally described by Carrington, specifically belongs[45] and it is only when this context is appreciated that it can be fully enjoyed. It begins:

> There are whose study is of smells,
> And to attentive schools rehearse
> How something mixed with something else
> Makes something worse.[46]

The debate regarding the educational value and 'relevance' of the Arts as opposed to the utility of the Sciences and the consequences of this for the School Curriculum remains alive today; but it was particularly relevant in the context of and to the time of *Stalky & Co.* Although Latin occupied a prominent place in the USC curriculum, King might well have felt some considerable insecurity given that the 'Classical Side' was in fact significantly diluted by the total absence of Greek,[47] that as such it did not balance the 'modern' subjects taught

[44] For Kipling's own anti-democratic feeling, see MacKendrick (n. 22), 71–2.

[45] Carrington (n. 9), xix, quoted above.

[46] 180. There is perhaps some poignancy behind the words 'Of what the unaltering Gods require' in the last stanza, given that the boys in the 'Regulus' story were cramming for Army exams and that the tale was published in the year that Kipling was finally convinced of the death of his only son John, missing in action at Loos in October 1915. Cf. Medcalf (n. 15), 229.

[47] Cf. Stray (n. 3), 180: (non-Clarendon) secondary schools offering Latin but not Greek were classed by the Taunton Commissioners (1868) as 'Second Grade'.

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to the same boys, and that the headmaster was himself a 'Modernist'; but the 'Regulus' story goes beyond the school in engaging with developments and expressing concerns felt not only by King but also emerging at a national level. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the rise of social and political pressures to embrace and incorporate all classes of society[48] and anxieties occasioned by the growth of economic competitors abroad. This gave impetus to increased state intervention in education and, in particular, education of a utilitarian or practical nature. Concern for the place and future of Classics in the curriculum was a natural concomitant.

Perhaps most prominent in airing this concern was J. P. Postgate, Professor of Comparative Philology at University College London from 1880 to 1910, one of the leading Latinists in Cambridge, founding father of the Classical Association, and editor of the *Classical Review* from 1899.[49] In a *Classical Review* editorial in 1903 he comments that 'Classics are now being pressed on one side by the advance of science, on the other by that of modern languages'. In doing so he echoes his remarks in an earlier article, 'Are the Classics to go?', which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* in November 1902: 'On many sides we hear confident assertions . . . that the work of Greek and Latin is done – that their day is past'. Of course he denies these assertions; but he is nevertheless realistic and pragmatic in the face of the inevitable curriculum reform:

> At a time when we appear to be on the eve of extensive reconstruction in the higher [i.e. secondary] educational system of the country, the first duty of those who believe that a due recognition of the claims of Latin and Greek is vital to our intellectual welfare is to know what they want. It is clear that Classics will not be allowed the lion's share which has been theirs in the past, and the question is, how much must we struggle to retain.

The vehemence of King's opposition to the Modern Side and Science is understandable in the context of his personal circumstances, but when viewed in wider perspective it is, in contrast to Postgate's position, both blinkered and insupportable: clearly, what was needed, and as Kipling himself seems to have appreciated,[50] was a balanced

[48] See Stray (n. 3), 167 ff.

[49] For what follows, see conveniently C. Stray, *The Classical Association. The First Century 1903–2003* (Oxford, 2003), 5–7.

[50] Note the ambiguities discerned at the end of 'A Translation' by Medcalf (n. 15) 227 and his observation that Kipling was 'perhaps of all writers the one who has paid most attention to men at work', was an enthusiastic motorist, and was fascinated by medical research; cf. MacKendrick (n. 22), 69.

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curriculum, not dominated by any one subject or group of subjects. Nonetheless his views and long-standing either/or debate with Hartopp[51] serve to establish the two extreme positions clearly by contrasting them with one another, and so the bounds of the matter are defined.[52]

After the lesson ends, the focus falls on Winton, a member of King's House, who is earlier described as 'a long, heavy, tow-headed Second Fifteen forward, overdue for his First Fifteen colours, and in aspect like an earnest, elderly horse' (159). Winton is a worthy soul, for whom King has some time (cf. 160), although, just as King's relationship with Vernon is formal unless in exceptional circumstances, this does not win him any outward favours. Hence, for example, the following:

> Winton . . . announced . . . that he had seen 'signs affixed to Punic deluges.' [his rendition of Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.18–19] Half the Form shouted for joy, and the other half for joy that there was something to shout about.
>
> Mr King opened and shut his eyes with great swiftness. '*Signa adfixa delubris*,' he gasped. 'So *delubris* is "deluges" is it? Winton, in all our dealings, have I ever suspected you of a jest?'
>
> 'No, sir' said the rigid and angular Winton, while the Form rocked about him.
>
> 'And yet you assert *delubris* means "deluges." Whether I am a fit subject for such a jape is, of courses, a matter of opinion, but . . . Winton, you are normally conscientious. May we assume you looked out *delubris*?' (159–61)

This incident, incidentally, reveals that King has a good understanding of his charges and their thought processes. It turns out that *delubris* is the one word that Winton had not looked up. Instead, he had asked Beetle the meaning and Beetle had given him the wrong one. Suspecting this, King proceeds to ask Beetle for a correction. Beetle hazards 'ruins', to which King responds, in a correct surmise:

> 'Guessing . . . Guessing, Beetle, as usual, from the look of *delubris* that it bore some relation to *diluvium* or deluge, you imparted the result of your half-baked lucubrations to Winton who seems to have been lost enough to have accepted it. Observing next, your companion's fall, from the presumed security of your undistinguished position in the rear-guard, you took another pot-shot. The turbid chaos of your mind threw up some memory of the word "dilapidations" which you have pitifully attempted to disguise under the synonym of "ruins."' (160)

[51] Cf. 178: 'King and Hartopp were sparring . . . classical *versus* modern as usual', and 172–3, quoted below.

[52] For a less historical but nonetheless complementary take on the above, see J. Mackenzie, '*Stalky & Co*.: the Adversarial Curriculum', *Journal of the Philosophy of Education* 36 (2002), 609–20.

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To return to the worthy Winton, however: in an inexplicable and uncharacteristic lapse into Third Form behaviour, after Latin Winton releases a live mouse in the middle of a mechanical drawing lesson. The drawing master, who commands less authority than the other teaching staff, reports this to the head, who sets Winton 500 lines of Virgil as punishment. As a result of these lines, Winton misses football and has, in addition, to face punishment for this, a thrashing from Mullins, the Captain of Games (who happens also to be Winton's study mate, cousin, and friend). Parallels, admittedly somewhat forced if pressed too far, are drawn between his insistence on taking his punishment, both lines and beating, although the drawing master is prepared to relent (168), and Regulus' insistence, amongst his grieving friends (Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.49–50), and despite the opposition of his family and fellow citizens (Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.47), to return to Carthage and certain death after having delivered the Carthaginians' proposals and having advised Rome not to accept them (166, 167).

Although punished, as it had to be, Winton's action is not entirely condemned by his masters (in the chaplain's view, 'it should have been a rat' [178]): they regard it as an important development in his growing up. The head spares him the embarrassment of having to write his lines in the study that he shares with Mullins by sending him to King's form room (168), and King seeks Winton out, apparently casually, and hastens his task by dictating lines to him. His manner in doing so, incidentally, fully demonstrates his true love for his subject:

> For the next forty minutes, with never a glance at the book, King paid out the glorious hexameters (and King could read Latin as though it were alive), Winton hauling them in and coiling them away behind him as trimmers in a telegraph-ship's hold coil away deep-sea cable. King broke from the Aeneid to the Georgics and back again, pausing now and then to translate some specially loved line or to dwell on the treble-shot texture of the ancient fabric. (169)

King does not allude to Winton's approaching interview with Mullins until right at the end when he says 'I think at this juncture . . . I need not ask you for the precise significance of *atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus tortor*' (Hor. *Carm*. 3.5.49–50). Possibly he felt that he had let his guard down too much in helping Winton and wanted to restore formal relations.[53] The 'ungrateful' Winton certainly understood the

[53] Interesting insights into the relations between masters and their charges are given by the *Horae Mushrianae*, records of lessons with E. D. A. Morshead kept by his pupils at Winchester in the 1880s and 1890s and published by them as part of their *Mushri–English Pronouncing Dictionary*. See Stray (n. 8), esp. 33–4: '"Sir, is that the language of one gentleman to another?" – "No, but I take it, it is the language of a Schoolmaster to a schoolboy!"'

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allusion, however. He 'flushed angrily' as 'King loafed out to take five o' clock call-over, after which he invited little Hartopp to tea and a talk on chlorine gas, a challenge which Hartopp accepted 'like a bantam' (169). Of their long-standing curriculum debate, the following is doubtless typical:

'To go back to what we were discussing,' said King . . ., 'do you pretend that your modern system of inculcating unrelated facts about chlorine, for instance, all of which may be proved fallacies by the time the boys grow up, can have any real bearing on education – even the low type of it that examiners expect?'

'I maintain nothing. But is it any worse than your Chinese reiteration[54] of uncomprehended syllables in a dead tongue?'

'Dead, forsooth!' King fairly danced. 'The only living tongue on earth! Chinese! On my word, Hartopp!'

'And at the end of seven years – how often have I said it?' Hartopp went on, – 'seven years of two hundred and twenty days of six hours each, your victims go away with nothing, absolutely nothing, except, perhaps, if they've been very attentive, a dozen – no, I'll grant you twenty – one score of totally unrelated Latin tags which any child of twelve could have absorbed in two terms.'

But – can't you realise that if our system brings later – at any rate – at a pinch – a simple understanding – grammar and Latinity apart – a mere glimpse of the significance (foul word!) of, we'll say, one Ode of Horace, one twenty lines of Virgil, we've got what we poor devils of ushers are striving after?'

'And what might that be?' said Hartopp.

'Balance, proportion, perspective – life. Your scientific man is the unrelated animal – the beast without background. Haven't you ever realised *that* in your atmosphere of stinks?'

'Meantime you make them lose life for the sake of living, eh?'

'Blind again, Hartopp! I told you about Paddy's quotation this morning.' (172–3)

Nevertheless, on this occasion and further to Vernon's earlier citation of Hor. *Carm*. 3.10, their exchange is afforded some practical illumination by the circumstances surrounding Winton. While at it, they are interrupted by a brawl in King's form room and go to investigate: in a second act of uncharacteristic behaviour, Winton has attacked Vernon for referring to his imminent encounter with the Captain of Games, and is pulled off eventually and with some difficulty by the others. King addresses them by quoting the 'Regulus' Ode:

'Oh,' said King. '*Dimovit obstantes propinquos*. You, I presume, are the *populus* delaying Winton's return to – Mullins, eh?

'No, sir,' said Stalky behind his claret-coloured [i.e. blood-stained] handkerchief.

[54] i.e. 'meaningless'? (Cf. 'Chinese whispers', perhaps – although this usage is first attested (surprisingly?) in 1964: *OED* online, accessed 21 July 2007.)

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'We're the *maerentes amicos*.'

'Not bad! You see, some of it sticks after all,'[55] King chuckled to Hartopp, and the two masters left without further inquiries. (171–2)

Their decision not to interfere further is surely well judged.

The two comparisons drawn between Winton and Regulus so far have both been initiated by King; but on both occasions they are understood and in the latter case extended by the boys. Here King seems to emerge as a clear victor over Hartopp, and his victory appears to be confirmed by the conclusion to the story, where it also receives a sort of divine sanction:

Ten o' clock struck and the Army Class boys in the further studies coming to their houses after an hour's extra work passed along the gravel path below. Some one was chanting, to the tune of 'White sand and grey sand,' *Dis te minorem quod geris imperas*. He stopped outside Mullins' study. They heard Mullins' window slide up and then Stalky's voice:

'Ah! Good-evening, Mullins, my *barbarus tortor*. We're the waits. We have come to enquire after the local Berserk. Is he doin' as well as can be expected in his new caree-ah?'

'Better than you will, in a sec, Stalky,' Mullins grunted.

'Glad of that. We thought he'd like to know that Paddy has been carried to the sick-house in ravin' delirium. They think it's concussion of the brain.'

'Why, he was all right at prayers,' Winton began earnestly, and they heard a laugh in the background as Mullins slammed down the window.

'Night, Regulus,' Stalky sang out, and the light footsteps went on.

'You see. It sticks. A little of it sticks among the barbarians,' said King. 'Amen,' said the Reverend John. 'Go to bed.' (178–9)

Nonetheless, as the weary School Chaplain clearly appreciates, the issue will not die between the two; and their successors continue to debate it.

It remains to draw what general conclusions are possible from the story.

Although much of it is as marked by literary talent as was anything written by Kipling, in compositional terms, the tale is not one of Kipling's best: Edmund Wilson wrote of the whole collection that it was 'from the artistic point of view, certainly the worst of Kipling's books: crude in writing, trashy in feeling, implausible in a series of contrivances that resemble moving-picture "gags"',[56] and, while this is

[55] Cf. the title to Kenney (n. 18).

[56] E. Wilson, 'The Kipling that Nobody Read', in A. Rutherford (ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art* (Edinburgh, 1964), 23, quoted in Quigly (n. 1), xxv.

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overly harsh, it must be conceded that the 'Regulus' plot is rather contrived: that, in spite of any corrective ambiguity in the poem that follows it,[57] the debate it illustrates is over-simplified, and King's victory is neither decisive nor a lasting one. Nonetheless Kipling was surely correct in maintaining in *Something of Myself* that *Stalky & Co.* was 'a truly valuable collection of tracts'.[58] 'Regulus' is an important social and historical document, reflecting the way in which English education was conducted at a certain type of school, and with a particular type of boy and social background in mind, at a time when significant changes were being considered. Further, the questions that it raises about curriculum content and classroom methods are still relevant. Also, unlike many of the other Stalky stories where the schoolboys are the winners and the adults, usually masters, are discomfited,[59] it shows a clear understanding and appreciation of, and even sympathy with, King as he performs duties that are not always pleasant to him.[60] It demonstrates too that, notwithstanding these unpleasant duties and although Kipling professed to loathe Horace at school, King's was nonetheless a lesson that the boys for a good part appreciated, enjoyed, and remembered.

[57] Cf. n. 50 above.
[58] Pinney (n. 3), 80.
[59] Quigly (n. 1), xx.
[60] Cf. Medcalf (n. 15), 224.

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