

The Kipling Motoring Diaries

March/April 1925



The Kiplings went south in March/April 1925 to spend a fortnight at Biarritz. They took their time getting down there and varied their journey by crossing by the Southampton-Le Havre route. They spent two nights at Chartres, making a dart towards Paris in between to meet Elsie at Rambouillet, on the S W outskirts of Paris, before setting off for the southwest. On their return trip they went into Paris and spent a week with their friends the Stanleys while the Duchess was fettled up by the Rolls Royce garage in Paris (in charge of their old friend Parsons who had provided them with such excellent service in 1921, as recorded in that year's Motoring Diary).

Mar. 12 1925

Left Bateman's 3.15, clear, cold, sunny day: N.E. wind with flakes of snow now and then. Roads perfect and no special traffic. Brighton – Portslade – Shoreham – Arundel – Chichester, etc. W. Sussex roads very little improved but immense building activity all along. One of the two thermoses broke and spattered lunch box with hot coffee. Kept top and cork and threw corpse into hedge at wayside halt after Fareham.

Reached ferry about 3.15 (*it cannot have been – 6.15 must be meant*): making without halt for coffee, S'hampton, say 3' 10" from Bateman's. Glorious copper, opal and green sunset: reached S.W. Hotel at 6.35 app. – dist. 92m. app. Went on to boat after dinner @ 9.30.

Their route lay along the old road, today the A.259, which went through the centre of the Brighton/Hove/Shoreham conurbation. I think we must 'Tut' at the casual disposal of the Thermos 'corpse' under a hedge. We have commented elsewhere that the Southampton-Le Havre route, travelling overnight, was considered to be the 'civilised' way to cross the channel – a leisurely dinner in the South Western Hotel before embarking in the Southern Railway's Nomannia and a comfortable cabin for a decent night's sleep, and a breakfast-time arrival at le Havre, ready for a day's travel deeper into France.

Mar. 13

Went to bed midnight – dead calm passage but slept little. Woke 5.15 to clear bright day but cold. Ashore 7. Very nice Purser on SS *Normannia* who had been steward of the Bulawayo Express twenty years ago. Also an aged caretaker at gangway (Barnes) who was an ex-steward of UCSL (*Union Castle Shipping Line*) and well remembered the children. Walked with L(*andon*) in clear morning light to Tortoni's next to Grand Hotel and had petit déj. (Place Gambetta) and discussed plans till 9. When Taylor arrived and we got under way: taking river road (Tancarville, etc.) to Rouen. Found it good, all except a few kms potholed and the whole land frosted like a bridecake with light sun – dazzling snow. A wicked and noisy Lancia passed us. Caudebec looked very beautiful in front of dead-still river. Got into Rouen (de la Poste) @ 10.30.



St Sever War Cemetery, Rouen

Put small things into our rooms and went off at once to Cemetery (3400 headstones up out of 11,000) where saw gardener and contractor. All the place has been levelled up and looks sloppy and dirty. All beams in, but when the headstones arrive, everything planted will have to be torn up again. General result rather crude. Back at 12.30 for déj. (Corton not so bad) and then at 2 to Bois Guillaume Cem, whose inwards weren't finished and didn't look nice. It's jammed next to the communal Cem. and there is a deposit of ordures nearby. Then back to R(ouen) and on foot to market-place to do penance at where Joan was burned. Then C. and I to the Cathedral and after had chocolate at a shop – a bad dinner but decent champagne and so to bed.

*It was on this visit to the cemetery at Rouen that Kipling was inspired to write one of his most memorable stories, "The Gardener". See our notes on the poem "Chartres Windows", and March 14th below. Tancarville is now a crossing place, the lowest on the Seine, with an imposing suspension bridge, with a main span nearly half-a-mile long, and a total length of almost a mile. It is interesting that in 1922, when they were in Belgium at the time of the King's visit to the war cemeteries (see *Motoring Diary for May 1922*), Kipling was dismissive of champagne at dinner, preferring to drink whisky: he seems to have changed his mind now.*

The reference to Joan, is to St. Joan of Arc (St. Jeanne d'Arc), burnt at the stake as a heretic in 1431 by the English, at the instance of the Burgundians, after a show trial which was a travesty of justice: hence Kipling's 'penance'.

During the transcription and annotation of the diary of this tour, this editor commented to his co-editor that he was surprised at the enormous number of casualties buried in the main Rouen cemetery at St Sever, and in its extension (11,000). As a rule the dead were buried in cemeteries close to where they fell: and there were other cemeteries close to the base hospitals in the Boulogne area which treated the casualties from the Ypres salient, (Etaples and Tyne Cot) but he hadn't thought that there would have been so many in the Rouen area, which for the whole of the war was never closer than 60 miles from the front line. There were in fact, ten General and Stationary Hospitals in the vicinity of Rouen which dealt with all soldiers requiring hospital treatment for injuries and illness, however acquired.

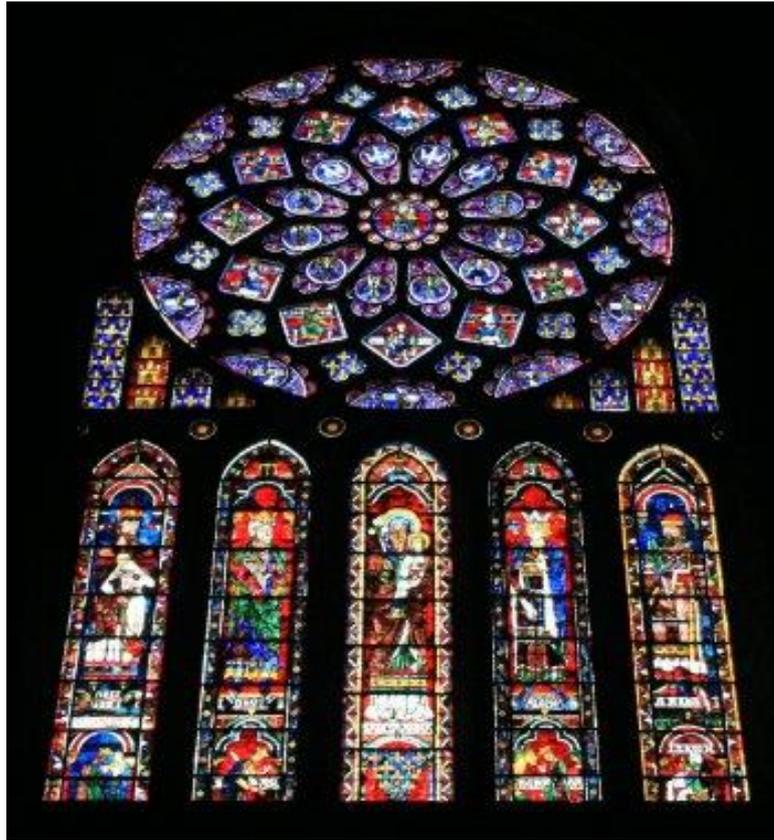
Mar. 14

Frost turned to damp and wet: got away at 10.30 for Les Andelys: arr. 1130 saw Cathedral. Lunch (v.g.) at Grand Cerf and leisurely away – after talk with small boy who said his father was English (‘Azell – Hazell?) and who understood a map By GCs to Evreux through forests and saw Cathedral. Thence (L. on bridge) to Dreux where saw Cathedral more starkly Gothic than usual. Weather worsening. Thence to Chartres (see far off across the plain) wh. reached at 5.30, Grand Hotel. Grand Monarque had been modernised to intense disgust. The Cathedral (a glory and a wonder) at 5.30 just as all the light had gone; but the windows were like spirits incarnate and made sad and proud together: broke up the deeps. Then back to extremely bad dinner – broken by tel. call from E. from Paris who expects to meet us at Rambouillet tomorrow: reporting foul weather in Paris. Sat about after dinn. and did naught.

Have begun a few lines on the story of Helen Turrell and her “nephew” and the gardener in the great 20,000 cemetery.

*Les Andelys lies on the Seine, just off the direct route from Rouen to Evreux, Dreux and Chartres. (They had been there in 1911.) It has a remarkable Norman castle, and the church, although large and quite imposing, is not, in fact, a cathedral. Evreux and Dreux are cathedrals, as is Chartres. The cryptic entry “(L. on the bridge)” we take to mean that Landon was doing the navigating. This editor has had the same experience of seeing Chartres “**far off across the plain**” – the surrounding area is absolutely flat – grain-growing country – and the cathedral can be seen for ten miles – even today, there are virtually no high-rise buildings in Chartres.*

It is not entirely clear where they stayed – we think that the first reference to the Grand, was, in fact, to the Grand Monarque, and the Kiplings evidently did not appreciate its modernisation (the hotel is in Chartres to this day).



Kipling was obviously deeply moved by the great windows of Chartres Cathedral, although his entry here is slightly incoherent, and he makes no mention of the fact that he started a sonnet on the windows of the cathedral.

See our notes on 'Chartres Windows' in the New Readers' Guide where we record his feelings, as he expressed them in a letter to Rider Haggard. The last sentence of this entry records the start of 'The Gardener' (Debits and Credits), one of his finest stories.

Mar. 15 (Sunday)

Left at 11.30 for Rambouillet. Arr. 12.30 to find E, and Frances and Stanley at the St. Hubert. All was overwhelmed with lunching Parisians, in such sort that it took us close on 2 hours to get over luncheon. E. looking very well, and visibly plumper. Thereafter walked a little in the grounds of the Chateau and parted in the street (grey but no rain) at about 3.30. Not good road. Returned to Chartres at 4.30 and saw the Cathedral for an hour, nearly. Then choc. & then work on “The Gardener” – (R6-7). Not a very bad beginning.

Rambouillet is on the outer fringe of the south western suburbs of Paris, about 30 miles from the centre.

Frances and Peter Stanley were the Kiplings’ old friends, Frances being a daughter of Julia Catlin/Depew/Taufflieb.

We do not know the significance of “(R6-7)”.



Julia Depew (née Catlin)

Mar. 16

Got away at 10.5 for La Ferté Bernard where we were to lunch at the Chateau of L’s frie(n)d – the Princess of Monaco. Fine clear and at last cloudless day. Missed the Chateau badly by not asking before we left La Ferté Bernard – whereby we arrived at 12.30.

The whole Chateau in papillottes – the walls covered against painting, pictures, glasses, furniture all hooded up and everything “in reparation” (*being redecorated*). But a charming lunch in a be-panelled saloon. The agent and butler both charming.

Lunch with at least four offered wines, enormous and perfect: (hors d’oeuvres; scrambled eggs; veal; chicken – a dream – peas; cream cake ; cheese, fruits and coffee).

Afterwards in a state of repletion (*not surprised!*) (while L. went to give a present to Elise who had looked after him before) with the agent to look at the Basse-Cour (silver-pencilled Wyandottes: top-knots, & some Red Rhode Islanders) and the wonderful gardens and orchid house where the head gardener gave C. a bouquet of orchids.

Young English gardener from Kew orchid house. Away leisurely in sunshine for Le Mans where saw the Cathedral and the 12th cent. glass, and my plaque to the 1,000,000 English dead, wh. also I took Taylor in to see. Left, still replete at 4.10 or thereabouts and picked up our heels through La Flèche to Angers where we arrived at 8.30 (Hotel Anjou). The proprietress valiantly talking English. Choc. and to the Cathedral in the falling light just as the electrics were coming out.

The Princess of Monaco who was Landon's friend, was the Princess Alice, an American by birth who had married Prince Albert 1 of Monaco in 1897, after having been widowed in 1880. It is not too much to say that she and her children nearly constituted a whole Almanac de Gotha (the Guide to the aristocracy of Europe) in themselves. She and her husband had separated in 1902, but never divorced. She died, later this year.



Then back to write up this and see if I can get a little work in on 'The Gardener.'

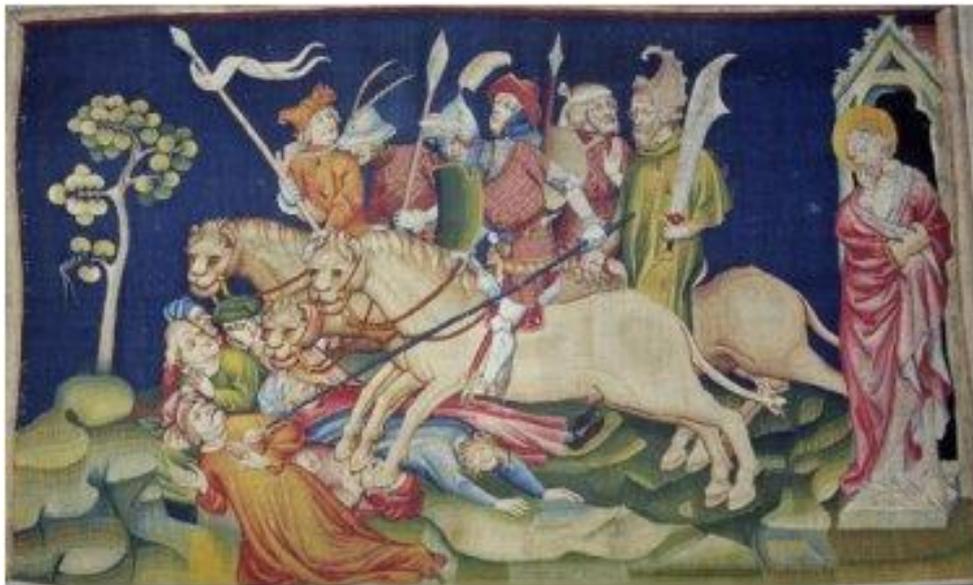
In papillotes, is literally in foil – it's usually used as a cooking phrase, but here Kipling means that it has all been shut up, because the Princess wasn't actually living there at the moment. She obviously owned several houses in Europe and America – her family were mega-rich on both her father's side (American banking) and her mother's (European banking).

The silver-pencilled Wyandottes and Rhode Island Reds are both breeds of domestic chicken. It was not unusual from young men (and today, women) from the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew to be loaned to well-known private gardens throughout Europe to gain experience.

“My plaque to the 1,000,000 English dead” was the one on which Kipling had been working when they stayed at Aix-les-Bains on the way home from the south of France in May 1923 (see our notes in Carrie’s diary for 6 May 1923).

March 17

Left after seeing the marvellous tapestries in the Musée @ 11 for Saumur (good lunch at La Paix). Then through strict forest down to Poitiers (Trois Piliers) and saw Cathedral 4 p.m. Grey cold foggish weather. Roads not so bad.



The “marvellous tapestries” are displayed in the Musée de la Tapisserie in the Chateau d’Angers, and are, indeed, marvellous. They are much more impressive than the more famous Bayeux Tapestries, which are strictly embroidery rather than tapestries. Their colours look as intense as when they were woven, in the last quarter of the 1300s.

March 18th 1925

Queer and insanitary hotel at Poitiers with W.C. on a balcony & crowded garage . Food not too good. Got away at 10.30 (after sending telegrams to G.S. about Clarke and to Cook; and Watt and the Hotel du Palais at Biarritz) – a short run into Niort (Raisin de Bourgogne) & saw donjon and market. Also bought scarves for maids. Day clearing to blue skies & chill wind. Reached La Rochelle (La France) about 3. Chocolate in a café & then a long walk to the port and about the town – two interviewers in the evening & a very good dinner but no bathroom. Roads very good.

French toilet facilities in hotels outside Paris remained a bit hit-or-miss for many years after this visit. The balcony must have been an interior one, looking over an inner courtyard. "G.S". would have been Miss Gardner-Smith, the Secretary, left in charge at Bateman's. "Clarke" was Carrie's maid and "Cook" was the travel agent who was to arrange for Clarke to travel to Biarritz (see entry for March 24). Watt was Kipling's agent.

Mar. 19

Got away at 9.15 for Angoulême – fine clear cold day. Roads good. Arr. Angoulême 11.50. Nouvel Hotel and good déj and wine. To Cathedral on foot at 1.15 in clear warm sun. Away at 1.50 for Perigueux which reached at 3.30. Went to Cath. (immensely effective): saw old houses by river, and choc. at shop kept by fat woman. Worked on story and had extraordinarily bad dinner. Wrote Rider Haggard.



Perigueux

This letter was one of a series which RK wrote to Rider Haggard during this trip (PINNEY, Letters, pp. 210-227, seven letters in all). He wrote once more, from Bateman's on 5 May, before Rider Haggard died on 14 May after an operation.

Mar 20th. Friday

Hotel de France. This is quite one of the worst hotels in France and we are staying here one day! Weather fine but even the p. déj. croissants uneatable (a cow lowed all night – in the heart of the city!). Went to river in morn and watched Landon sketch an old house.

He washed it later in the river to the wild joy of the inhabitants and later gave it to C. Déj. at Didons (Hotel de Commerce, which was good, & so ordered dinner there). Went for walk after déj. & there developed idea of going to the Caves of the Dordogne next day. An hour's discussion and maps and then an hour's work on The Gardener and out for chocolate.

A really good dinner at the Hotel du Commerce and to bed early having touched up sonnet on Chartres windows which is coming into shape. Went over, also in aft. to orange and black striped garage to consult about routes for the morrow with the proprietor, his wife and coughing child.

The river is the river L'Isle, a tributary of the Dordogne. The "Caves of the Dordogne" were the pre-historic remains and cave paintings at Les Eyzies which latter can reasonably be described as one of the wonders of the prehistoric world.

Mar 21: Saturday

Got away a little before nine (dull, cold day and spitting rain which continued in desultory spurts all day). Most of the track was v.g. so took the bridge myself and worked her down to Eyzies-le-Tayac, 46 kms. in less than an hour, all along the gorges and winding of the river . Found no one in particular at Eyzies, so took a fat girl out of a photo shop to guide us to the first grotto – on the face of a cliff.



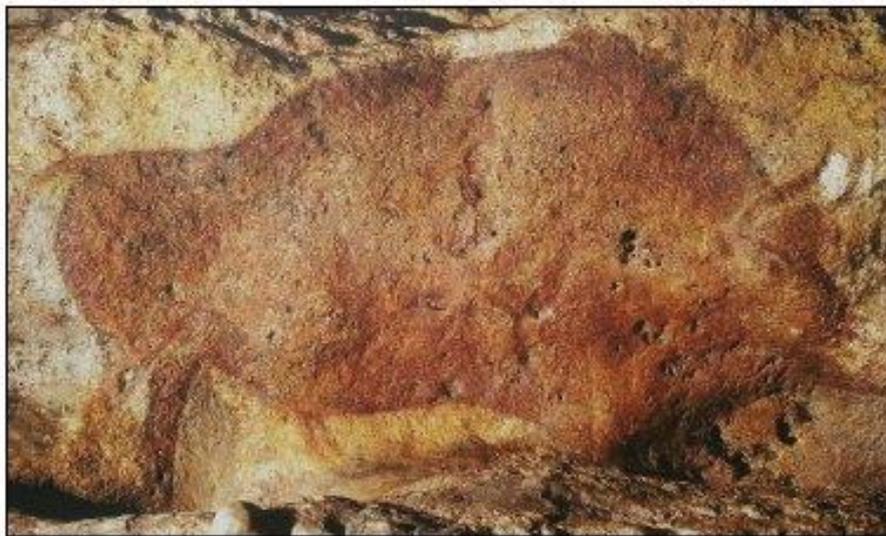
Les Eyzies de Tayac, Dordogne

The gardienne an old woman who went slowly. Grotto lit by electricity. Prehistoric paintings almost invisible and some had initials cut on 'em. But very interesting. They are better in reproduction than in situ.

Then about 10.45 to La Moulle grotto (found by father of present-day elderly she-proprietaire while excavating a potato cellar). Quite a family affair. She boiled eight eggs for us while we went with son into grotto.

Here were bison incised of a better type and art but air very hot and close. P.L. however went on to end of grotto and saw a beast or two more. Having provided ourselves with ham, croissants butter and cheese at Perigueux early in the morn, we decided to lunch by the wayside. Worked down to the beautiful hill town of Belvès, raised a bott. of red & 1 of white, a bott. Vichy & bought two drinking glasses from amused nice hostess. Halted in pine and oak scrub above Belvès, en route to Montpensier, and there comfortably lunch in grey drizzle. Thence to Villeneuve-sur-Lot, Agen and to Auch at 5.30, getting some chocolate and biscuits in a forlorn town (La Lectoure) at the queerest old and empty inn. Saw La Lectoure Cathedral whose stained glass windows were awful. So were those in Auch Cathedral. No baths at Hotel de France, Auch, but pressing wind & the square full of the dust of market day. A bad dinner and not a nice patronne.

The first site they visited was probably Font de Gaume, which is a cave in a cliff. According to Wikipedia, it is the only antiquity in the area which can still be visited – pressure of tourism has resulted in the many other pre-historic remains in the area being closed, to preserve the paintings, in particular, which are now reproduced in various museums in the area. We think that 'La Moulle' may be identified today as La Mouthe, now closed to the public.

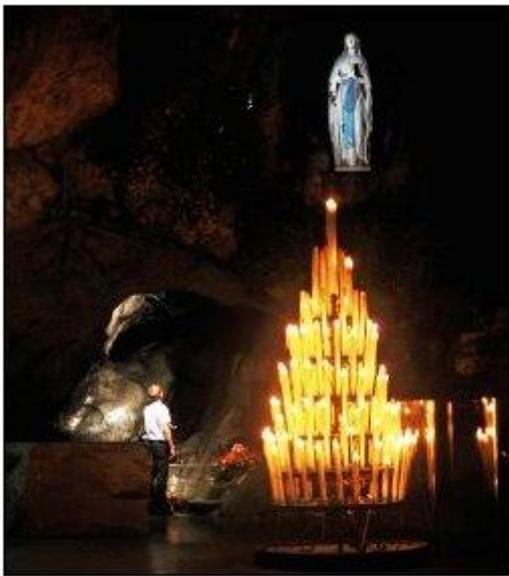


Bison in Font-de-Gaume cave, Dordogne

La Lectoure's church is not strictly a cathedral, but a very large collegiate abbey. Auch is memorable to this editor as being the first (and only) place he has knowingly eaten frogs' legs.

Mar, 22

Got away at 9.45 – bitter cold with squalls of snow – for Lourdes via Tarbes. But for the nose-wipe (*windscreen-wipers – Kipling being jocular*) should (*he surely meant 'would'*) have been blinded. Lourdes (quite empty and no miracles going on) at 11.45. Went to church before lunch (Hotel Moderne), saw people come in, most earnest. Mod(*erate*) déj.: after to Grotto which was most impressive – smears of (*candle-*)grease on the stones, blaze of candles and the whole manufactory of emotion laid out.



The Grotto at Lourdes

But before going saw the Panorama which was very good. Later I met the man in charge and his small daughter. He consulted me about her obstinate constipation following on enteric. Advised orange juice and Vichy. Got away from Lourdes in snow-squalls at 3.30. Hotel de France landed us with a suite on the grounds of being crowded. But there was no one in the Hotel. Choc. at 4 – after got to work on The Gardener and finished rough draft. Tried to tel. Cigolini - but he was out, but I understand that the rooms I wired for are reserved.

We can find no reference to a single panorama in Lourdes today – we suggest that Kipling may have been referring to the mosaics in the Rosary Basilica, some of which are panoramic on a small scale.

'Enteric' is 'enteric fever' or 'typhoid fever'. Kipling was clearly able to relate, at a moment's notice to people he met casually.

This editor most certainly would not discuss a small daughter's bowels with a casually met stranger, and a foreigner as well. We assume that 'Cigolini' was the proprietor of the next hotel they were to stay in, at Biarritz.

Mar. 23

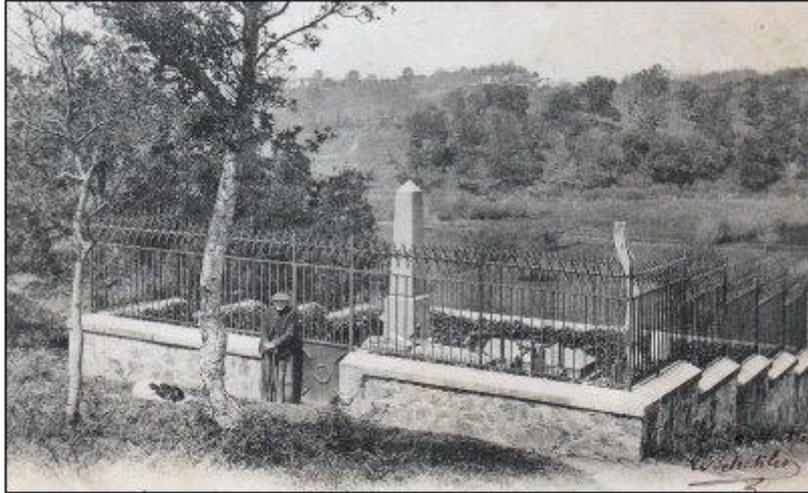
Cold and bitter grey – Ellie Bridson came to lunch and played up to Landon with some nice stories – she was very interesting. To the Chateau in the afternoon – a very well kept collection. An American family (we were all led round by a guide) supplied the human element. Worked on The Gardener and got it finished enough to send to Miss G.S. for typing. A good job not so badly done.

Ellie Bridson was an old friend from Bath. The Chateau de Pau was the birthplace of Henri IV, and an occasional residence of Napoleon I. The collection contained many old tapestries. It is evident that Kipling felt that 'The Gardener', which many consider was one of his finest works, was not a bad bit of work, and had given him much satisfaction in its writing.

Mar. 24th

To bank to get 2000fr. Met E. on the way back. She took C. to her own bonnet shop where bonnet was bought and looks well. Left Pau in clear blue chilly sun at 1 precise (Hotel de F. charges surprisingly moderate). Road good in spots but bad for kilometres until after Peyrehorade – 90 km in 90 min. none the less. Reached the Coldstream Cem. at 2.45. It was in good order (unlike Bayonne) but the other (3rd. Guards) needs a lot of posting and the railings painted and the oak trees putting in order. Also bulbs in beds. To Bayonne (for choc.) at 4 – and an attempt at buying thing for Elsie: Biarritz at 4.40. Rooms most comfy. Clarke there. 2 letters from E. – and later Cigolini – very agreeable. Wrote to E. and went for blow on the beach – just as it was four years ago.

Kipling wrote to Rider Haggard (PINNEY, Letters, pp. 215-218) describing these last few days, the following morning. We are not sure where E. (presumably Elsie) popped up from. There's no mention nor explanation of her arrival, nor of how long she stayed – other than a comment in that same letter to Rider Haggard, dated 31 March, saying that Elsie had gone back to Brussels from Paris.



The Coldstream Cemetery at St Etienne

The Coldstream Cemetery was one of two Guards Brigade cemeteries at St. Etienne, just outside Bayonne, containing the graves of British guardsmen killed in the 'Sortie from Bayonne', an action on 14 April 1814. The '3rd. Guards' later became the Scots Guards. These cemeteries were not the responsibility of the IWGC, whose remit commenced with the dead of World War 1. They were visited by Queen Victoria in 1887, when she was staying at Biarritz, and a memorial stone was erected.

Mar. 25th

Grey and chilly. Went to St. Martin for lunch & came home in wet. Headache, but tried to work on sonnet.

The Extracts from Carrie's Diaries say that it was San Sebastian where they went for lunch. The only St. Martin in the region is that St. Martin the other side of Pau, and so quite some distance from Biarritz. If, in fact, it was there that they chose to go, the run from Biarritz, parallel to the main line of the Pyrenees, must have given them some splendid views. San Sebastian sounds to have been more likely.

The sonnet was 'Chartres Windows', which Kipling wrote of in his letter to Rider Haggard cited above, "I've done a Sonnet. A real 14 line sonnet – only it breaks a lot of rules that apparently William Shakespeare laid down for the fabrication of sonnets so, you see, it isn't a real sonnet. But, I swear, it reads all right."

We have been cudgelling the collective editorial brains to seek other examples of Kipling's sonnets, and John Walker has given us 'June' and 'September, from 'Two Months', and 'The Houses', while John Radcliffe identified no fewer than fourteen Rudyard had written in 1882 at the age of sixteen while in the throes of his passion for Flo Garrard. These are to be found among the 'Uncollected poems from Schooldays' in the New Readers' Guide.

Mar. 26

Warmer. Lady Headfort lunched with Landon and us. Did nothing. Went for walk in afternoon. Cold and windy. Tried to work on foreword to new collection of verses. Headache always. Landon left at 9.45.



Lady Headfort

Lady Headfort was the wife of the 4th Marquess of Headfort, an English peer living in Ireland, and a Senator of the Irish Free State.

She was Irish-born, and, as Rosie Boote, had been a 'Gaiety Girl' before her marriage.

The 'new collection of verse' would have been 'Inclusive Verse, 1885-1926' which was published by Hodder and Stoughton in 1928. The Extracts of Carrie's Diaries for this date records "Mr. Landon leaves us – great sadness."

Mar. 27

Wet and grey and cold. Madame Louise Guillette – *Gazette de Biarritz-Bayonne* – came for interview and spoilt morning. So did no work but the headache came just the same.

Carrie made no mention of the lady journalist, but did record that “Mr. Landon gone, Rud for once is bored.”

There are then no entries until they left for their return journey on April 7.

Ap. 7

After a fortnight left B. at 2.40 for Mont de Marsan. A greyish, hottish day but no rain and most of the road in perfect condition – a good deal of it tarred too. Arr.

M de M 4.23, 107 km in 103 min. Market day. Queer Hotel Richelieu. Had chocolate and went for a walk through crowded streets – astonishingly good shops – spots of rain. Came in about 5.45. Only a little headache today.

The inference must be that he had had a headache all the time they were at Biarritz, but Carrie makes no mention of it.

Apr. 8th

Left M de M at 9 a.m. (bill 101.5) rather worked up about distance to Ang(oulême). Decided to take straight pavé to Langon via Bazas. T(aylor) pressed her rather and we made very good time. Streaks and washes of storms all the way to Libourne (Hotel Richelieu) where good déj. Prop. had been a year at Brighton besides liaison officer to American troops. Showed us hotel (nos. 1 & 4 with bathrooms) and told us of a monolithic 7th-Cen. Church and things to be seen at St. Emilion. Hotel seems distinctly a new find. Déj. 12-1.

Then left for Angoulême via 10B. Weather clearing all the time. Fine at Angoulême (Hotel Trois Piliers). Remote bathroom. Went for a walk of close on two hours in fine rain, and car struck a nut from luggage carrier to tyre carrier and split one edge of r. mudguard. Helped buy 1 pr. Shoes & a bottle of tonic which turned out to be only ¼ full. Then back for C. and good dinner at 7.30 – wrote Landon beginning of letter before dinner. Looks like a dead clear night. 227km.

The comment about the bathrooms in the hotel at Libourne is a reminder that en-suite bathrooms were a distinct novelty at this time.

Most Britons would, perhaps, be less interested in 7th century churches at St. Emilion, preferring the vineyards, which have for centuries been the home of the finest Bordeaux red wines – ‘claret’ to an Englishman.

Apr. 8.

Bath didn't supply hot water @ 8a.m. Got away 9.20 (chilly grey day) –westward for Poitiers – roads mixed good and bad – Arr. Poitiers (Hotel de France). A most vile déj. about which I had to speak to the proprietor who only said he was sorry. Got away at 1.15 for Tours. Road to Châtellherault very bad. Near Port-de-Piles was halted by a Spaniard in a broken-down Rolls which had suddenly died.

It seemed some trouble with his electrical resistance. T. showed him the cause of the trouble & left him to his own devices.

Arr. Tours (Univers) (*Hotel de l'Univers*) at 3.45p.m. Choc. in shop (crowded) and went for usual walk. Had headache for half the day. (220 km approx.) And at 6.15 Taylor came in with word that we had broken near (*left-hand*) front spring. Wired at once to Parsons, 125, Rue Malakoff, asking for spare spring & man to fit and later telephoned. Caught him & he said he'd send down tonight! Almost too good to be true. Tel. address 33-70 Passy; 39-01 Passy; 39-10.

Nowhere has there been any mention of concern over these recurrent headaches, which Kipling has mentioned very frequently. Dr. Gillian Sheehan, one of our Members, comments "I think Kipling suffered from severe migraine several times during his life, starting when he was a child. It was usually preceded by a spell of overwork or a shock of some kind. On that tour in 1925 he was really doing too much, writing 'The Gardener' travelling through France and then writing 'Chartres Windows'".

Parsons, a 'Burwash boy', had helped them before, when they were at Hyères in 1921, and he was in charge of the Rolls-Royce operations in Nice. He had evidently been translated to the Paris office, and once again came to their rescue.

Apr. 10

We seem to have 'lost' a day – if Parsons was as good as his word, then the first part of this entry should refer to April 9.

Gastaldi, the R.R. mechanic arrived early morning by train from Paris and had spring repaired by 10.30. He put in a new leaf in place of broken one, saying that our springs were 'fatigued' and that, anyhow, R.R. English springs were not equal to present state of French roads. Road to Chartres reported by two Drexel boys, met last night, as "awful". Gave him (*Gastaldi*) Fr. 100 and letter to Parsons at Avenue Malakoff, thanking him for his promptitude – went out and got hair cut – decided to get under way for Chartres at 3 this afternoon. Headache again and some difficulty of vision in left eye.

Fine day with sun and high-piled clouds. Got away at 2.50 for Chartres via Orleans – by way of Vouvray side of river. Road not so bad into Orleans which reached a little after 5. Then struck beautiful road of more than marble smoothness & thought all was well. Had mins. stand-easy. From Artenay took N.R. 145 which was wholly damnably potholy, avoiding all villages and didn't get to Chartres till 7.

Din. @ 7.30 (improved a lot save that a whole lot of English schoolgirls, same as we'd met at Tours, were there. Never saw so many bare arms.) Avoided all talk & to room at 9.15. Headache all afternoon but eyes cleared a little.

As far as Rolls-Royce was concerned, it paid to have 'friends in high places' Parsons seems to have 'pulled out all the stops' for Kipling. The 'Drexel boys' were two scions of a Philadelphia banking family, one of who had married the sister of one of John's friends in the Irish Guards. The Avenue Malakoff (or 'de Malakoff') was the address of the Rolls-Royce showroom in Paris. It is in the 16th arrondissement, a fashionable district, like Kensington & Chelsea in London, with many affluent families living there (Fort Malakoff had been the scene of a French victory in the Crimean War). 'The Vouvray side' was the northern side of the Loire, and the road ran for much of the way close alongside the Loire.

PARIS

Apr. 11

The new spring not too satisfactory. Rolled into Paris @ 30 m.p.h. cautiously, and sent car straight to R.R. garage for further inspection. Parsons in charge & anxious & willing to make a good job of it. English springs aren't good enough for French roads – that's a fact. Reached *Belles Feuilles* 12.30. Bless 'em.

The succeeding days were devoted to the care of the Duchess and (Apr. 16th) not only was her spring renewed in front, but all her transmission noise was eliminated by Parsons and she is now as nearly perfect as can be.

They were staying with the Stanleys – whether by previous arrangement or as an emergency because of the Duchess's being off the road is not clear. From the length of their stay, it was probably by prior invitation.

Apr. 19

To Compiègne, thence to Ham to see the Cemetery and the 8 headstones at Eppeville. 230 kms in crowded traffic on return. The Duchess moving like a dream. Parsons really seems to have abolished her noises for good.



British Cemetery at Muille-Villette, near Ham

Apr. 20

Off the morn for Boulogne, via Pont La Chapelle. A very cold and windy day. Lunch at Chantilly bad and expensive. Left C(*hantilly*) at 12.45 for Amiens. Good roads. 15 k. N. of Amiens at 3 p.m. tyre gave out. Horseshoe nail had perforated inner tube. Lost 30 min. on road as Taylor found new tyre needed a little pumping up. Clouds cleared to sun with strong east wind. Reached B. 5.15. A lot of cars waiting. We went in first & I fear her top was scratched. An uneasy passage. Left 15 min. late.

Arr. F(*olkestone*) 9 p.m. Indescribable anarchy and darkness, cold & exposure, as usual. No taxis. Wandered about town in dark until we reached the upper levels, found a bus which dropped us at Earls Avenue, not far from Burlington Hotel. It was an unlicensed house. Fed on the fragments of the lunch Frances gave us, at night. Very comfy hotel after all. Got away at 11 (her top was scratched) and reached Bateman's at 12.30 on 21st April. A very good & beautifully driven tour, and the Duchess is improved vastly by her treatment at Paris.

The ferry was not designed to take cars in the manner of today's 'roll-on, roll-off' ferries. They carried them like any other cargo, in the hold, or on deck. Cars were lifted on by crane, with four wire slings on a tray, and it was only too easy to mis-handle a sling, so that it scratched the body-work of a car. They must have been greatly relieved to get back to Bateman's.
