

**THE LOG OF H.M.A.  
R34 JOURNEY TO  
AMERICA AND BACK**

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The log of H.M.A. R34 journey to America and back by E. M. Maitland & Rudyard Kipling

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**E. M. MAITLAND & RUDYARD KIPLING**

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AMERICA AND BACK**



THE LOG OF H.M.A.  
R 34

*JOURNEY TO AMERICA AND BACK*

BY  
AIR-COMMODORE E. M. MAITLAND  
C.M.G., D.S.O., A.F.C., ROYAL AIR FORCE

WITH A LETTER FROM RUDYARD KIPLING

*ILLUSTRATED*

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A LETTER FROM  
MR. RUDYARD KIPLING

*Bateman's, Burwash,  
Sussex,  
November 26, 1920.*

DEAR GENERAL MAITLAND,

Many thanks for your letter. I shall look out for R 34's log most keenly, and the more since, in my own mind, I always fancied the dirigible against the aeroplane for the overhead haulage of the years to come.

It's curious to think that R 34's work has been, relatively, no more than young James Watts' brooding over the kettle on his mother's hob. Watt, I expect, didn't realize the steam-loco (indeed, I believe he objected to it), but you, and every one aboard R 34, must have felt that you stood at the opening verse of an opening chapter of endless possibilities, and—I know what my own interest and pride were in seeing a dream shape itself and come true! There was not any one who was more earnestly and unbrokenly

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interested while your voyage was under way; and if I had only known any saint who could have been trusted with the direction of our higher atmospheric interests at that time, I should have besieged him with offerings. So you see, in asking for my "blessing," as you put it, you have had it from the first.

Ever sincerely,

RUDYARD KIPLING.



## INTRODUCTION

It is often thought necessary to preface a first literary effort with apologies from the author for its shortcomings. In this instance no one could be more aware of such a necessity than myself. But am I entitled to make apologies? R 34 is not a literary effort—neither, therefore, am I an author.

In writing a story such as this, the obvious and comparatively simple course would have been the adoption of the conventional narrative form, helped by notes and memories, ample time and thought and a comfortable arm-chair.

Apart, however, from its practical usefulness or official importance, R 34's journey was just one long, wonderful and delightful experience.

To look upon this journey coldly as part of yesterday, or to treat it with recognized convention, would be to lose both the essence and the spirit.

My only hope of convincing my reader of this

is to try and induce him to share our adventure—taking him with us upon our flight.

Every word of this diary was written on board the Airship during the journey, with the exception of the explanatory footnotes and, of course, the appendices:—the writer perched in odd corners, and amid continuous interruptions and ever-changing surroundings, to the silent accompaniment of the wireless, like ghostly whispers across lonely space. Every incident, important or trifling, was recorded at the actual time of happening. Even to stop to focus or to pigeon-hole these would have been to destroy actuality.

If only I can share a little of that fascinating and buoyant adventure with any readers of these pages I shall be content. I only hope my ship-mates may not find their journey too dull; if they do they must not blame R 34, for the fault will be mine.

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