

The Rudyard Kipling Medal

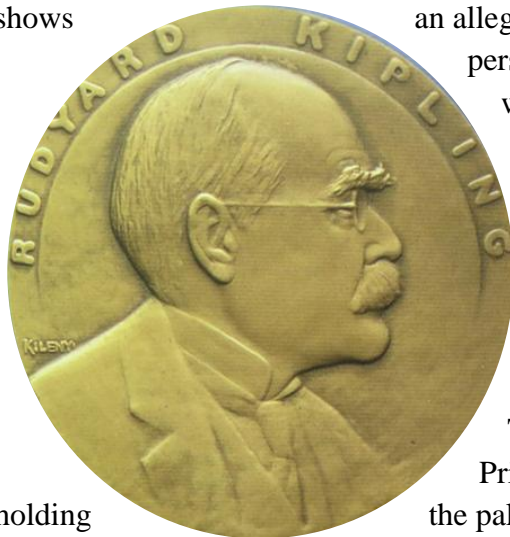
By Barrie Renwick FRCNA, FCNRS

In 1935 as Rudyard Kipling, world-famous poet and author, approached his seventieth birthday, Solton Engel, a devotee and literary scholar in America, sponsored a medal in tribute. Engel had his friend US sculptor Julio Kilenyi design this medal to celebrate Kipling's seventieth birthday and to commend Kipling's most noteworthy literary success: his Nobel Laureate in Literature in 1907.

Kilenyi sent Kipling, in England, a medal from the two-hundred pieces struck. Kipling replied his thanks in a letter December 6, 1935, just weeks before his birth date, December 30. Kipling's letter to Kilenyi later gave Engel solace when news arrived saying Kipling had died January 18, 1936. He had been seventy for just twenty days.

Joseph Rudyard Kipling had been born in India to British parents living and working there. He got called Rudyard in fond remembrance of an English lake frequented by his parents before emigrating. Rudyard, educated in England, later worked in India as a journalist, wrote poetry and short stories. He left, travelled widely and eventually married an American, the sister of a colleague. The couple lived for many years in the US while Kipling wrote and acquired literary success. In time, the Kiplings settled in England where Rudyard drew fame and joined life among English society's elite. After his death, his lifelong contribution to fine arts and culture was honoured when his ashes were interred in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey, London. Today, much of his literature and poems remain classic.

The Kipling medal is bronze, 76 mm. Its obverse shows a bespectacled portrait of Kipling facing right; above on a Deco-style recessed border is his name in bold lettering. Its reverse shows



an allegoric scene: two women personification; Fine with a lyre, standing at the pinnacle of a mount



in Arts,

representing The Nobel Prize Foundation,

holding the palm frond of triumph and announcing the laureate —and the Laureate for Literature lying, with an open book, at the apex of the mount, absorbing the honour. The medal is catalogued BHM 4281. Its artist, Julio Kilenyi (1885–1959), a Romanian, is a listed American sculptor-medallist.