

William Henry Giles Kingston

By Andrew Shepherd

Introduction

Born in London's Harley Street on 28 February 1814 and spending many of his formative years in Porto, William Henry Giles Kingston was a writer mainly known in his days for his books for boys about seafaring. Although he is little known today, in 1884 an "opinion poll" of two thousand children voted Kingston as their second favourite author, after Dickens. A man of seemingly inexhaustible energy, his writings occupy over nine pages of the British Museum Catalogue. For a time, he edited the *Colonial Magazine* and, later, briefly published *Kingston's Magazine for Boys*. In Portugal, Kingston wrote *Lusitanian Sketches*, a description of his travels around the north of the country, published in 1845, as well as a novel, *The Prime Minister*, based on the life of the Marquess of Pombal. Returning to England, he played a significant role in upgrading conditions faced by emigrants from the United Kingdom to Australia and elsewhere, and played a major role in the founding of the Society for Missions to Seamen.



Family background

Kingston was the eldest son of Lucy Henry Kingston and Frances Sophia Rooke, one of eleven children of upper-class parents. Around 1770, his grandfather, John Kingston, who became the M.P. for Lymington and a Fellow of the Royal Society, had gone to Porto to join his brother, Benjamin, who was already working in the wine trade. Kingston's father, Lucy Henry Kingston, then followed his father into the business. His parents travelled regularly between England and Portugal, dividing their time between a house in Regent's Park, one in Porto, and a rented summer residence at S. João da Foz. According to his biographer, M.R. Kingsford, trips backwards and forwards to England were carefully planned so that Frances Kingston would be in no danger of giving birth during the voyage.¹

William Kingston would occasionally accompany his parents, writing that he crossed the Bay of Biscay four times before he was nine years old, which must have contributed to his developing a lifelong affection for the sea. However, much of his youth, particularly during school holidays, was spent in and around Lymington in Hants, where he had several relatives. This seafaring area also provided fertile material for Kingston's subsequent writing. He saved up to buy himself a 14-foot dinghy and was soon sailing across the Solent to the Isle of Wight.

One of the former residents of the Lymington area was Sir Harry Burrard, 1st Baronet, of Lymington (1755-1813), who had been initially blamed for the British failure to pursue the French under General Junot after their defeat at the Battle of Vimeiro in 1808 by Wellesley. As commander-in-chief, Burrard instead offered

¹ Kingsford, Maurice Rooke, 1947. *The Life, Work and Influence of William Henry Giles Kingston*. The Ryerson Press, Toronto. p.7

an armistice, which was ratified with the signing of the disastrous Convention of Cintra. This allowed the French to retreat to Lisbon unimpeded and later be repatriated in Royal Navy ships. This agreement was considered to be a disgrace in Britain by both the British public and Parliament and arguably led to the subsequent French invasions of Portugal. The Burrard and Kingston families were closely connected and it was the wife of another Sir Harry Burrard, cousin of the 1st Baronet, who offered Kingston the chance to accompany her on a Grand Tour to France and Italy, when he was 18. He would write about the experience in *My Travels to Foreign Lands*, which was only published much later in 1862, when he was 48.

As noted, the first member of the Kingston family to go to Porto was Benjamin Kingston. According to Sellers, he was known as the “Physician of the Factory House”. William’s grandfather, John, arrived around 1772 according to Kingsford, but it seems to have been slightly earlier as Sellers reports that the first reference he can find to a Kingston in Porto was of John Kingston marrying Catherine Gardener on January 1st 1771.² It was, however, another 17 years before Benjamin would marry. The Kingston’s were associated with a wine exporting firm set up originally by Peter Dowker. As with nearly all of Porto’s wine companies, this firm underwent numerous name changes, as new arrivals took shares and established names either died or chose to retire in England. By 1740, the business was in the hands of Edward Lambert, but in 1772 it bore the name of Lambert, Kingston and Co.^{3,4} John Kingston eventually returned to England, leaving his interest to be managed by William’s father.

First visits to Portugal

William first visited Porto at the age of three. While many British families retired to their Quintas on the Douro during the summer, some, including the Nobles, the Kingstons and the Sandemans, rented summer homes on the north of the Douro estuary at S. João da Foz, or St John’s, as it was called by the British. In *My Travels to Foreign Lands* Kingston describes how furniture would be carried from homes in Porto on the heads of women because it would be damaged if transported in bullock carts.⁵ During one of his childhood visits, he witnessed a Brazilian ship under sail trying to enter the Douro. It hit a rock and most of those on board perished. He wrote that he would dream of this for many years, and shipwrecks featured subsequently in several of his works, most notably in a book called *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*. He made his last childhood visit to Portugal when he was around ten, returning to England for schooling and, according to Kingsford, not visiting Portugal again until 1833.

Joining the wine business

After completing his school education and, for reasons unknown, deciding not to go to university, Kingston needed to find an occupation. At what may appear to us as the young age of 19 he was, he wrote, too old to enter the navy, which would have appealed to him. His father arranged for William to accompany him to Porto and work in the family firm, which by this time had become Lambert, Kingston & Egan. The extent of his involvement in the wine business is unclear as there seem to be no records of his day-to-day activities in the business. Kingston found time to draw some sketches of the Porto area but it seems that he also spent considerable time in England, completing his education with a private tutor. He was, however, elected a member of the Porto Factory House on 7 January 1841, suggesting that he would have been a partner in the family company by that time. In that year, Lambert, Kingston & Egan’s exports of port ranked it fifth among

² Sellers, Charles, 1899. *Oporto Old and New*. p.298 <https://purl.pt/30457/service/media/pdf>

³ *ibid*

⁴ Emiliano Castel-Branco, Maria da Conceição. 2009. *The times and generations of the Kingston family in Portugal: the figure of William Henry Giles Kingston*. In “Famílias Inglesas e a Economia de Portugal”. Fundação Robinson, Portalegre, http://www.fundacaorobinson.pt/multimedia/ficheiros/publicacoes/004_PFR.pdf

⁵ Also described by Sellers in a chapter of his book recently reproduced by the Society. See: https://www.bhsportugal.org/uploads/fotos_artigos/files/OportoOld%26New_PersonalReminiscences.pdf

the numerous exporting firms, shipping 1073 barrels, still, however, being dwarfed by Sandeman which exported 2467 barrels.⁶

The British Navy

Kingston left Falmouth, at the time a very important port, on a paddle steamer on 9 November 1833. The voyage seems to have been a good deal more tolerable than one of his childhood trips, which took three weeks, with the ship almost running out of food. Like Joseph James Forrester, who arrived a couple of years earlier,⁷ Kingston was caught up in the Civil War, where the Liberals led by D. Pedro occupied Porto while the supporters of D. Miguel occupied the other side of the river at Vila Nova de Gaia, where most of the port wine was stored. However, unlike Forrester, whose time was taken up protecting his company's wine stores in Gaia, Kingston seems to have spent much of his time cultivating the friendship of British naval officers on board ships anchored in the Douro. It also appears that he went riding with Admiral Sir Charles Napier, who had become Commander of the Liberal Navy.⁸ In March-April 1834, he was invited to join H.M. Sloop *Orestes* for a voyage to assess the strength of the Carlists⁹ in Spain. He visited Vigo, Corunna, Santander, San Sebastian and Bilbao before the *Orestes* was ordered to sail to Lisbon. These experiences gave him a firm foundation for his novel for boys called *The Three Midshipmen*, which was published in 1860.

First writings

In the 1840s Kingston wrote several articles about Portugal for English newspapers and these were later translated into Portuguese. It is generally considered that these articles had a positive influence on Anglo-Portuguese relations and contributed to creating a favourable climate for the signing of the Trade and Navigation Treaty between the two countries on 3 July 1842. Kingston maintained that the commercial relationship that united the two nations for so many centuries could continue to be beneficial. While some of his countrymen often despised the links with Portugal, emphasizing the poverty of the country, he underlined the injustice with which Britain sometimes treated Portugal.¹⁰ His reward was to be made a Knight of the Military Order of Christ by Queen Maria II. In the same period, Kingston wrote *The Circassian Chief*, his first novel, based on the struggle for freedom of Circassian tribes in the North Caucasus against encroachment by Russia.¹¹

This was followed in 1845 by another novel, *The Prime Minister*,¹² based on the life of the Marquess of Pombal. It is clear that he carried out detailed research for the story, writing to friends in Lisbon who “put at my disposal all the documents they possessed relating to the private histories of their families”. He also had access to the Porto public library, which he much admired. It is interesting to note that the novel begins with a description of a sea voyage, the subject of most of Kingston's subsequent novels. Throughout the book, he makes use of the voice of the narrator, who constantly asserts the accuracy of the facts narrated. However, it is clearly a novel rather than an historical work.¹³

⁶ Castel-Branco, op cit

⁷ Shepherd, Andrew. 2020. *Joseph James Forrester*. <https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/joseph-james-forrester>

⁸ See <https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/black-charlie-admiral-sir-charles-napier-kcb-aka-carlos-de-ponza>

⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlism>

¹⁰ Dos Santos, Helena. 2010. *William Kingston, e The Prime Minister: Uma Representação Ficcional da Era Pombalina*. Master's Dissertation in Anglo-Portuguese Studies, Universidade NOVA. Can be downloaded via <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/5504?locale=en>

¹¹ Castel-Branco, op cit

¹² https://books.google.pt/books?id=8JvDDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT1&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false
Parts of the novel can be read here and the full e-book can be purchased for a small fee

¹³ Dos Santos, op cit

Lusitanian Sketches

The Prime Minister was followed, a few months later, by *Lusitanian Sketches of The Pen and Pencil*,¹⁴ which included many drawings by Kingston. There are 33 written sketches in two volumes, which show his great ability to describe the customs, habits, culture and monuments of Portugal, as well as his detailed understanding of the wine industry. In Volume 1, the first two sketches describe his voyage to Portugal, a stop-off in Vigo in Spain and his arrival in Porto, ending with the usual British traveller's complaint about the quality of hotels in the city. He then describes Porto and the Douro, noting both its beauty and the dangers of navigation. Returning to Porto he gives a description of Portuguese society before, concerned that "my readers must by this time be weary of hearing so much about Oporto", he describes a trip inland to the Minho. Sketch 7 describes Guimarães, with a nice drawing of the cathedral, while Sketches 8 and 9 describe the continuation of the journey to Braga. Sketches 10 and 11 follow the route of Marshal Sout's 1809 retreat beyond Braga and Kingston's eventual return to Porto. The twelfth sketch looks at Porto's monasteries but also presents a historical review of monasticism in Porto and the unpopularity of the clergy. In the next sketch Kingston heads out to S. João da Foz and other areas in the vicinity of Porto. Returning to Porto for Sketch 14, he examines the people of Porto, including "the lower orders". Sketch 15 covers a return trip to England, via Vigo, where he caught the steam packet. He concludes the first volume with what he calls a *coup d'œil* of Porto's institutions and buildings, and a final sketch on religious observance in the north of Portugal.



The Cathedral at Guimarães



The Bridge at Misarela over the River Rabagão

Volume II is largely taken up with Kingston's description of one trip south and east of Porto, with a brief excursion into Spain. Sketches 18-25 take him to the Convent of Buçaco and the Buçaco battlefield, the university and city of Coimbra, Viseu, Lamego, Vila Real and Almeida. Kingston seems to have had a hard time on the trip from Viseu to Lamego, complaining about the difficulty of getting a party to leave on time in the morning, the execrable roads and wretched inns. However, he cheered up in Lamego, where the houses were splendid and the cathedral contained some excellent pictures. In the Upper Douro he spent "eight or ten days very pleasantly observing the wine-making, riding in search of the picturesque, sketching, shooting and banqueting with our numerous English and Portuguese friends collected there for the purpose of superintending the vintage".¹⁵ In the east of the country, while heading to Almeida, Kingston is alerted to the shortage of people in the countryside to farm the land, and advances the view that emigration

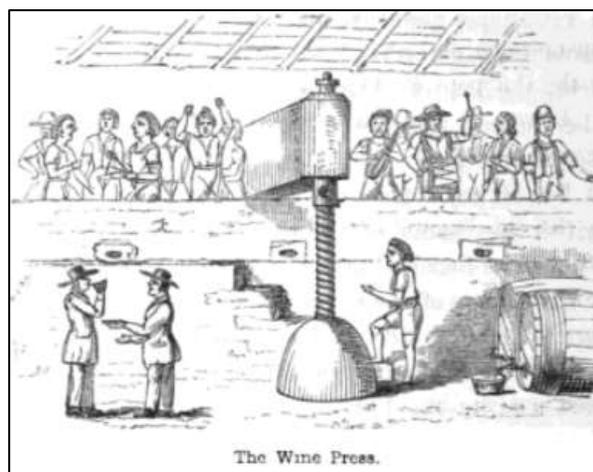
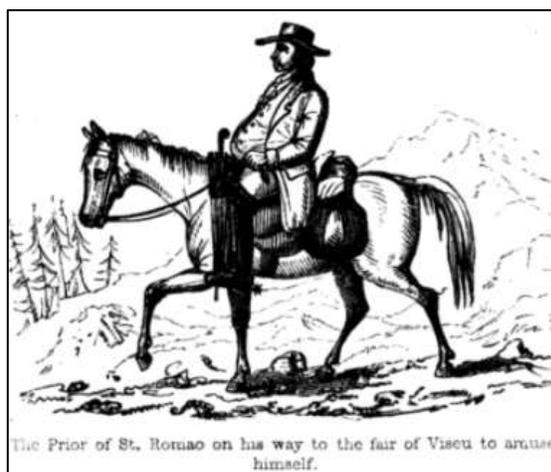
¹⁴ Volume I: <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=CeQVAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&pg=GBS.PP13>

Vol.II https://books.google.com.gh/books?id=fEf1JAZpMqwC&pg=PA111&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false

¹⁵ *Lusitanian Sketches*, Vol. 2 pp 155

from overpopulated Ireland to these parts of Portugal would be a good idea.¹⁶ Sketches 26-28 take him to Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca in Spain, while Sketch 29 brings him back to Porto.

The final sketches of Volume 2 review the port wine industry, beginning with a description of the intervention by Pombal in the industry with the establishment of the *Real Companhia das Vinhas do Alto Douro* in 1756. Noting that this intervention was largely based on apocryphal allegations of adulteration, Kingston points out that the only beneficiaries of the company's establishment were those who held positions in the company, who became extremely rich. He describes the 1843 and 1844 vintages and argues that the Company's policy of limiting exports to maintain the price was having a negative impact, as good wine was going off in the stores of Gaia and a shortage of port in the UK was opening up the market to other suppliers, such as France. Sketch 31 might, in modern jargon, best be described as a "value chain" study of the port industry, beginning with cultivation of the vine, through production of the wine and its sale to the exporters. Thus, although there is little historical information about Kingston's day-to-day activities in the wine business, it is clear that it took the trouble to become fully informed of its intricacies. Sketch 32 endeavours to advise his British readers how to find a good port because, as he says at the beginning, a good port is more easily drunk than found. Again, this chapter appears to show considerable knowledge of the relevant issues.



In the last sketch of Volume 2, Kingston sets off with his brother in February 1845 to visit the Douro. The brother is not named, but was probably Charles, the last member of the Kingston family to live in Portugal, who would become Treasurer of the Factory House.¹⁷ William is saddened by the condition of the grape growers he meets and considers the methods of testing the quality of their wines, involving the subjective decisions of corrupt inspectors, to be very unsatisfactory. He notes that some farmers could receive twice the price paid to their peers, even though they have produced an inferior quality. His views seem rather similar to those of Forrester, whose paper *A Word or Two on Port Wine*, had been published in the previous year.¹⁸

Return to England and support for emigration

Kingston appears to have left Porto for the last time in 1845 or fairly soon after. Kingsford says that he then involved himself "in business", although it is not clear whether that was in the wine trade or some other

¹⁶ *Lusitanian Sketches*, Vol. 2 pp 189-91

¹⁷ Castel-Branco, op cit.

¹⁸ Shepherd, op cit

activity. On his return he became one of the first members of the Royal Victorian Yacht Club in Ryde, Isle of Wight, which is still going strong. Between 1846 and 1856 he was heavily involved in work on supporting emigration from the United Kingdom, which had become a matter of some concern because of the prevailing poverty in the country and, to a certain extent, because of the ideas of Thomas Malthus in his 1798 book, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. In 1848, Kingston published a treatise, probably written in 1847 or late 1846, entitled, *A system of general emigration and for the disposal of Convicts in the Colonies*. There was already in place a Colonial Land and Emigration Commission but Kingsford's proposals were more ambitious than the activities of that Commission, calling for an annual expenditure some four times greater. To promote his ideas, he helped to establish the Colonization Society, and became its Honorary Secretary. According to Kingsford, there already was in existence another Colonization Society, set up by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who can be regarded as the true pioneer of emigration for the purposes of colonization. The two similarly named societies shared one member but otherwise appear to have had little contact.

Following a report by Sir John McNeill on the *Islands and Highlands of Scotland*, calling attention to the poor condition of the people there, Kingston was commissioned to visit the poorest areas, including Skye, where he formed a society to aid emigration. In the Shetlands he formed the Shetland Female Emigration Fund to assist the passage to Australia of 40 young women, "with two respectable married women to assist in taking charge of them". The fund was to give each woman £5 for their costs during the journey and provide for their travel from the Shetlands to Depford, from where the ships sailed. He felt that it would be desirable to improve the educational standards of those emigrating and introduced a scheme for teachers to emigrate at the same time, being paid to give basic lessons while at sea. He was also involved with a programme for chaplains to sail with the emigrants, to take care of their religious education. Kingston would later use his experiences in the Scottish islands to write one of his stories for boys, *Ronald Morton*.

In January 1850, Kingston published *How to emigrate; or, The British Colonists; a tale for all classes. With an Appendix, forming a complete manual for intending Colonists*.¹⁹ The first 200 pages of this are written as a didactic novel, following the fortunes of the Collins family as they prepare to leave England, sail to Australia and take their first steps to settle. This is followed by a large number of appendices that include, in no obvious order, one on what to pack, an appendix on the North London Needlewomen's Association, which he recommends emigrants should use to buy their shirts, and a letter from the Bishop of Adelaide expressing a willingness to support all of those who arrive in Adelaide with a letter of recommendation from their local clergy in the UK. Kingston seems to have omitted very little that could be of use to new emigrants and even has articles on possible destinations for potential emigrants, such as New Zealand and Natal, South Africa. Practical advice on what to do when you arrived in a colony was rather lacking, but that was the only omission.

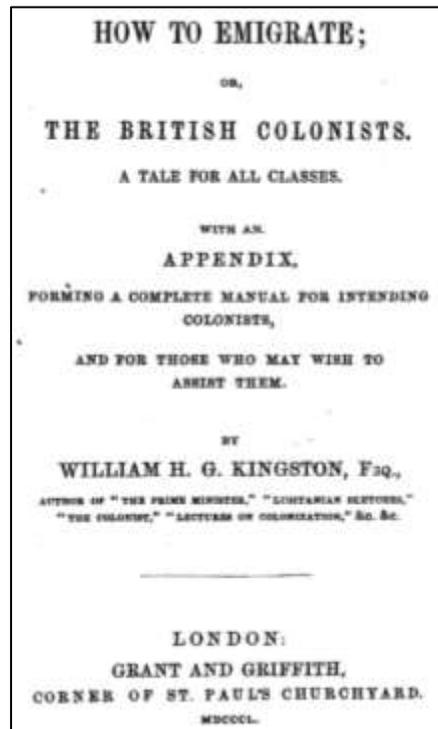
He also prepared four short manuals for the emigrants. One, entitled *The Emigrant Voyager's Manual*, started with a five-page description of the ship with advice on matters such as the function of the rudder. He then gives practical advice on activities that can be carried out in preparation for arrival, such as rope and mat making. He also recommends keeping a diary while on board and doing gymnastics and other exercises. According to Hassam, Kingston saw diary writing in the same way as he saw gymnastic exercises, as a way of promoting healthy habits on board.²⁰ He concludes with:

"And now, my friends, I must bid you farewell. I wish that I could have spent a longer time on the composition of this little book, and have made it more worthy of your acceptance; but still, I trust that, taking it in the spirit in which it is written, you will not find it altogether useless. And at all events, if you

¹⁹ See https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=bkdWAAAACAAJ&hl=en_GB&pg=GBS.PP11

²⁰ Hassam, Andrew, 1994. *Sailing to Australia. Shipboard diaries by nineteenth-century British emigrants*. Manchester University Press

do unto others as you would be done by—if you live in Christian love and charity with all, and cheerfully follow the regulations laid down for your comfort, and obey the officers placed over you, I can promise, with nearly a certainty, as I hope most sincerely, you will enjoy a pleasant and prosperous voyage, and success and happiness in the new land to which you are bound.”²¹



From the Spring of 1849 to 1852 he edited the *Colonial Magazine*. This started life in 1840 as *The Colonial magazine and commercial maritime journal*, was subsequently changed to the *Colonial Magazine and Foreign Miscellany*, and by the time Kingston took over in 1849 had become the *Colonial Magazine and East India Review*. With monthly issues the magazine under Kingston addressed a wide variety of topics including emigration. Between July and December 1849, for example, subjects discussed included growing sugar in the colonies; transportation and convict colonies; railways in India; Ceylon and British Guiana; coffee in Ceylon; Indian marriage laws; steam to Australia; and colonial appointments.²²

Wedding and honeymoon

In 1848, Kingston published his first nautical book, *The Albatross*, which was mainly a collection of sea tales. His first book for boys, *Peter the Whaler*, was published in 1851, was a great success, and was rapidly followed by two others in the same year. Their success apparently encouraged him to cease working and concentrate on writing.²³ In 1853, he married Agnes Kinloch in Greenwich. Less than three weeks later his sister, Harriet, married Charles, the brother of Agnes. His wife was a talented linguist. While Kingston is

²¹ This seems to be the only one of the four manuals available online. See: http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au/view/action/singleViewer.do?dvs=1610909387294~62&locale=en_GB&metadata_object_ratio=10&how_metadata=true&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/singleViewer.do?&preferred_usage_type=VIEW_MAIN&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=10&frameId=1&usePid1=true&usePid2=true

²² Issues can be found at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1424886159>

²³ Lit2Go. <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/authors/102/whg-kingston/>

often credited with translating *The Swiss Family Robinson* from the German and stories by Jules Verne from the French, it seems likely that these translations were done by Agnes. Kingsford suggests that she did not want to claim credit because at that time a woman's place was seen as being in the home. The Kingstons were to have eight children: strangely, none married.

Their honeymoon was spent in Canada and the United States. This was described by Kingston in *Western Wanderings: Or, a Pleasure Tour in the Canadas*, published in 1856. When Kingsford was publishing his biography in 1947, he lamented the fact that this book was almost impossible to find. Fortunately, it was republished five years ago and is available for purchase online. Arriving in New York on September 2nd, the couple stayed only a short time before heading up the Hudson to Albany, crossing Lakes George and Champlain to reach the St. Lawrence by rail before making their way to Montreal. This was followed by a quick detour to Quebec, to seek information of use to their onward journey, before they made their way to Toronto. From there they went, mainly by lake steamer, to Sault Ste. Marie, the most easterly point of Lake Superior, arriving just three weeks after their arrival in New York.

With brief stops in Detroit and Buffalo, the return journey took them to Niagara, where they stayed five days, longer than they had stayed in New York. The reason for the emphasis of the trip being on Canada can perhaps be seen from a comment made by Kingston when describing their return trip to Toronto via Hamilton and Guelph, that the population was in a happy and thriving condition and that there was "an abundance of remaining space offering a home to millions of the energetic Anglo-Saxon race". He also lost no opportunity to visit booksellers, being particularly concerned to learn about copyright matters. Inevitably the trip also provided lots of material for his future children's stories. Returning to Quebec, a journey made by sleigh, the couple met up with Kingston's brother who was at the time Principal of the Nautical College. As perhaps could be expected from an Englishman of that time, William Kingston regarded the French-Canadians as an "inferior race". The couple's journey was concluded in Boston, where they had many introductions to distinguished people and where Kingston was again keen to explore the issue of copyright. They sailed for England on January 18th, four and a half months after arriving in New York.

Missions to seamen

On their return to England, the couple moved into a house in Blackheath, convenient for Greenwich and a popular retirement area for naval officers, who no doubt provided Kingston with yet more material for his novels. He occupied himself with writing for the next two years. Two new books, *A Chip off the Old Block* and *Blue Jackets* were published in 1854, while *Western Wanderings*, some 650 pages long, was published in 1855. His final book on emigration, *The Emigrants' Home*, appeared in 1856. In 1859, the family moved to Wimborne in Dorset. They were to move again, finally setting in Willesden, Essex in 1878.

In 1835, an Anglican clergyman holidaying near the Bristol Channel, the Revd John Ashley, realised that the sailors who manned the ships there had no one to minister to them. At the time, there were some 400 ships held up in the outer anchorages, waiting for the weather to change. Ashley decided to change his plans to join a parish, and instead become a chaplain for crews who sailed the merchant fleet.²⁴ By 1850 he had boarded some 14,000 vessels, sold 5,000 Bibles and Prayer Books, and organised a large library. Unfortunately, poor health and near bankruptcy put an end to his activities in that year.²⁵ In 1855, the Revd T.C. Childs, who had been known to Kingston for his work ministering to emigrants on board ships awaiting departure in Plymouth harbour, attempted to resuscitate the work of Ashley in the Severn estuary. However, lack of funds continued to be a problem.

²⁴ <https://www.missiontoseafarers.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Flying-Angel-Story.pdf>

²⁵ Kingsford, page 129

Rev. Childs saw a need for a national organization and persuaded Kingston to take on the role of organising it. In 1856, Kingston set up the National Society that would promote and manage missions, persuading the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of London, Carlisle and Jamaica to be Vice Patrons and Lord Shaftesbury to be the President. The inclusion of the Bishop of Jamaica gave a clear indication that the Mission was to be international in focus. At that stage the Society had no patron, it presumably being hoped that Queen Victoria would become the patron. Queen Elizabeth II is the present patron.

The Missions to Seamen, now known as the Mission to Seafarers, serves merchant crews around the world. It operates in over 50 countries through a global network of chaplains, staff and volunteers to provide practical and spiritual support through ship visits, seafarers' centres and a range of other support services. Writing in 1856 Kingston envisaged that model "Mission Stations" would have a "Sailors' Home, with a good eating house attached to it....., a library of entertaining and religious books and a reading and coffee room..... If there is no Sailors' Home, there is at all events an Institute and Library." In 1856 he travelled extensively throughout the British Isles, organising meetings to obtain local support and to organise committees to establish missions. In the same year he even managed a trip to Russia, although the reason for this is not clear. Not content for only one member of the family to be involved, his sister, Harriet Kinloch, designed the *Flying Angel*, which, in a slightly modified form, continues to be the emblem of the Mission today.



The flag designed by Harriet



... and the emblem as it is today

Continuing to write

After the success of *Peter the Whaler* in 1851, Kingston produced a successful novel every year over the next decade. Titles included *Mark Seaworth*, *Manco the Peruvian Chief*, *Fred Markham in Russia*, *Round the World*, *The Pirate of the Mediterranean*, *The early life of Old Jack*, *A Sea Tale*, and *The Ocean Queen and the Spirit of the Storm*.²⁶ Between 1860 and 1862 he also published *Kingston's Magazine for Boys: An Illustrated Monthly Miscellany*.²⁷ In the Introduction to the first issue he informed his readers that "besides voyages and travels, historical tales, descriptions of the present state of the countries of the world, chapters on games, sports, and amusements, accounts of interesting places at home and abroad" he would give sketches of the lives of persons who had gained the respect and love of their fellow men. A large part of the magazine was written by Kingston, who, it seemed, could turn his attention to almost any subject. Kingston was a very religious man. While attempts to bring too much religion into his novels might have led to resistance from his readership, the magazine gave him the opportunity to preach to the boys without distracting from his stories. As Kingsford points out, a regular piece called "A Doctor from his Desk" was an undisguised sermon.²⁸ The magazine ceased publication at the beginning of 1863. Kingston was funding

²⁶ Many of Kingston's books are now available digitally, for no charge. The best source is Project Gutenberg, at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/8659>

²⁷ See Hathi Trust Digital Library, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008699972>

²⁸ Kingsford, p. 181

it and editing it almost single-handedly and it can be supposed that the cost and energy required eventually became too much.

Kingston continued to write books for boys on a regular basis. Among some of the better-known novels at the time were *The Three Midshipmen*, *The Three Lieutenants*, *The Three Commanders*, *The Three Admirals*, *Digby Heathcote*, *On the Banks of the Amazon*, *In the Wilds of Florida*, *A True Hero*, and *Twice Lost*. Some of these were serialised before being published in book form. Kingston's *The Boys' Own Book of Boats* published in 1861 included vessels of every size, with many illustrations, while *Our Soldiers* was a textbook that went through many editions and was updated and republished after his death. Towards the end of his life Kingston published an increasing number of books with a religious theme, which according to Kingsford "were apt to become tedious".²⁹ He rewrote Richard Johnson's 1596 book, *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, to bring the language into more contemporary English.³⁰ *Exiled for the Faith: A Tale of the Huguenot Persecution* seems to have been published posthumously.

A study of 2000 schoolchildren in 1884 found that Kingston was the second most popular author after Charles Dickens. However, it seems that this popularity owed more to the volume of his output than to any particular novel. *The Three Midshipmen* came 14th on the list of most popular books among boys, with just eight of the boys rating it as their favourite book, compared with the 43 who put *Robinson Crusoe* top.

While the two boys' magazines that Kingston founded were short-lived, the *Boy's Own Paper*, first published by the *Religious Tract Society Press* in 1879, managed to keep running until 1967. Kingston provided an article for the first issue, entitled *From Powder Monkey to Admiral*, and another in 1880. In 1880, the year of his death, he had started a new magazine, *The Union Jack*. But within four months he had, because of ill health, handed it over to G.A. Henty, who kept it running until 1883. Henty also became a popular writer. Kingston died on 25 August. In 1883, funds collected by *The Union Jack* were handed over to the Lifeboat Association, to fund a lifeboat named *W.H.G. Kingston*.

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Postscript

I only learnt about Kingston during my researches about Joseph James Forrester for an earlier article for the Society, during which I discovered the excellent publication of the Robinson Foundation entitled *British families and the Portuguese Economy*. This contains the article by Maria da Conceição Emiliano Castel - Branco, which covers the period in which Kingston was living in and visiting Porto and provides useful background regarding Porto during that period. I'd also recommend the Master's thesis by Helena dos Santos, in which she explores Kingston's novel, *The Prime Minister*.

There is only one biography of Kingston, that by Maurice Kingsford, and most other sources rely on his book. It was published in Toronto in 1947 and I managed to obtain a copy from a bookseller in California. Quite a few copies are available online, although for rather more than I was lucky enough to pay. However, for those interested in learning more about Kingston, I have donated my copy to the Society's library. Moreover, as cited in the text above, a large number of Kingston's books and issues of the magazines with which he was involved can now be consulted online.

A.S.

²⁹ Kingsford, p.190

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Champions_of_Christendom