

TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Kipling and Maugham

Not only have many “novels and stories” by Rudyard Kipling been adapted to visual media, as David Alan Richards points out (Letters, October 4), but so also has a Kipling poem, *The Vampire* (1897), which was the basis for at least nine American film adaptations between 1910 and 1923, with titles ranging from *A Fool There Was* to *The Vampire of the Desert*. Kipling’s poetical vampire and its screen successors are metaphorical, not literal bloodsuckers - adventuresses, of the type F. Scott Fitzgerald would refer to as society vampires in “Bernice Bobs her Hair” (1920). Besides an adventuress, Robert G. Vignola’s Kipling-inspired film *The Vampire* (1913) features a second, literal vampire in a five-minute scene set in a vaudeville theatre, where a seductive female played by Alice Eis bites a male in the neck, rolls his corpse downstage and dances around it in celebration. Shouldn’t this be considered the world’s first vampire film?

■ **James Aubrey**

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