

**KIPLING'S
ATTITUDE.**

Less than ten years ago a young man named Rudyard Kipling came into public notice as a writer of amusing and rather boisterous stories of British life in India. He also wrote poetry, which few people took seriously, though he himself seemed very much in earnest about it. It is not easy poetry to read; the many rhymes bewilder one, and it is full of condensed expressions, each with the substance of a chapter compressed into it; it comes out with a sputter, indicating, as you might say, an enormous muzzle-energy; you have to listen closely, and then you feel as if you were being cuffed on both sides of the head.

There is a wide-spread impression that Mr. Kipling's later stories are not as entertaining as the first ones were; on the other hand, he has recently put out two short poems, which have caused, and are still causing, more thought and discussion, it is safe to say, than any literary material for a great many years. Statesmen give interviews upon them, editors of the first rank devote leaders to them, divines make sermons on them, in all English-speaking countries; and the reason is that they deal with the great questions, affecting the future of all mankind, with which our wide-spread race is now wrestling. These poems are his "Recessional," written last year, and "The Truce of the Bear," which is only a few weeks old.

To judge from the opinions that we see quoted, many people find these two utterances of Mr. Kipling's contradictory, and think that they imply a radical change in his standpoint, which seems very puzzling to them, and especially to the clergy, who so warmly welcomed the "Recessional." This is certainly, however, a mistaken view; the two fit together, and into our inherited character, like hand and glove; the idea of a contradiction can only arise from a misconception of the tendency of the "Recessional." In the first place, while this is a deeply religious composition, it is not sentimental. It would not by any means make so good a church-hymn as those of Dr. Isaac Watts. The author's attitude is that thoughtful frame of mind into which one who has accomplished wonderful things may fall, in which he wonders whether these things that he has done will endure forever; or has he already reached the summit of his mountain, from which his way will decline into the valley of destruction, whither so many have gone before him; and he turns his mind, by a most solemn impulse, to his Creator, the giver of all gifts. It is because it was so understood that it was so widely taken up, by a people not so very susceptible to merely pious rhapsodies. And it is to be noted that the deity who is invoked is not the God of Mercy and of Grace, but "Lord God of Hosts." This, as is well known, is the stereotyped paraphrase of

the name applied by the Hebrews to their deity during their rise as a nation, in their successful wars of conquest. "Jehovah, god of armies," is a better translation, and this throws another light on Kipling's use of it. It is the language, not of a man renouncing the world, but of one girding himself anew for battle, with a soberer consciousness of what he is about.

"The Truce of the Bear" admits of no misconception. In it he says plainly that Russia is a dangerous and treacherous wild beast, seeking to betray England into a false peace; and he recommends that the spear be kept sharp and ready, and used at the first opportunity. Without touching on the merits of this proposition, it may be pointed out that it contains nothing inconsistent with the previous poem. The author, while engaged in pious meditation, becomes aware that a particularly obnoxious miscreant is coming at him from behind; and he breaks off his devotions, picks up his gun and attends to him, *jehannum ke marfik*. This may not be in accordance with the ideals of Eastern philosophy, but it is very, very natural for an Englishman. John Bunyan would have thought it so. Suppose Mr. Greatheart, while ruminating on his sins, or little Joseph's last dialog with Mercy, had learned that the Giant Slaygood was not dead; would he not have deferred the remainder of his exercises until such time as he had finished the giant?

Or figure Oliver Cromwell, while conducting the devotions of a company of the godly, receiving notice of a body of Cavaliers around the hill; he might not have said, as the man in the Three Musketeers did, who was reading poetry to some ladies, "Just excuse me while I kill this gentleman, and I'll finish the piece;" but buff-coat and steel cap would have displaced the hymn-book then and there. Both were business, both were pleasure. But Oliver would have felt that one was urgent, while the other could wait.

In the play of "Joshua Whitcomb," Uncle Josh is interrupted, while praying with a dying child, by the child's father, who comes in drunk. The old man rises from his knees, projects the father through the window, and returns in silence to kneel again by his chair and resume his supplication; and the audience always applaud with enthusiasm. And is there not a story, generally told with approval, of a Yankee minister coming down from his pulpit to march off to the fight at Lexington?

If we were to prophesy, we would say that this last poem had settled the hash of Mr. Kipling's poet-laureateship (supposing that poets laureate have hash) for so long as Queen Victoria lives; but that if the long-looked-for battle of the giants should come about under some successor of hers, it might have a different working.

**KANSAS HUMANS AND THE KANSAS
HEN.**

Now that the election is over and the snowfall of ballots in Kansas has drifted and piled up over the ambition of Peffer and temporarily hidden from view the unsocked feet of the Honorable Jerry Simpson, the poets of that politically paroxysmal state are again warbling. Peans to pigs abound in a recent report of Mr. F. E. Cortis, secretary of the state board of agriculture, and commingle with ballads to bulls and exhortations on the horse. But in the midst of this great out-gush of genius scintillates the following on The Kansas Hen:

We have read of Maud on a summer day,
Who raked, barefooted, the new mown hay;
We have read of the maid in the early morn,
Who milked the cow with the crumpled horn,
And we've read the lays that the poets sing
Of the rustling corn and the flowers of spring;
But of all the lays of tongue or pen
There's naught like the lay of the Kansas hen.
Long, long before Maud rakes her hay,
The Kansas hen has begun to lay,
And, ere the milkmaid stirs a peg,
The hen is up and has dropped her egg;
The corn must rustle and flowers spring
If they hold their own with the barnyard ring.
If Maud is needing a hat and gown
She doesn't hustle her hay to town,
But goes to the store and obtains her suit
With a basketful of her fresh hen fruit;
If the milkmaid's beau makes a Sunday call
She doesn't feed him on milk at all,
But works up eggs in a custard pie
And stuffs him full of a chicken fry.
And when the old man wants a horn,
Does he take the druggist a load of corn?
Not much! He simply robs a nest,
And to town he goes—you know the rest.
He hangs around with the cliques and rings,
And talks of politics and things,
While his poor wife stays at home and scowls,
But is saved from want by those self-same
fowls;
For, while her husband lingers there,
She watches the cackling hens with care,
And gathers eggs, and the eggs she'll hide
Till she saves enough to stem the tide.
Then hail, all hail, to the Kansas hen,
The greatest blessing of all to men!
Throw up your hats and emit a howl
For the persevering barnyard fowl!
Corn may be king, but its plainly seen
The Kansas hen is the Kansas queen.

Whether the husband of Mary Yellin' Lease will admit the hen sovereignty above claimed, is an unsettled question. But that hens have done more for Kansas than her recent statesmen can not be denied without great injustice to the hen!

Improved methods of production have impressed themselves upon every manufacturing establishment in the United States. Utensils, implements and instruments made of iron and steel are put upon the market at constantly lessening prices.

And soon, upon all farms—not upon a small number—intelligent men will with system and discreet economy demonstrate the value and increasing profits of improved methods of agricultural production. Farmers will keep books. Farmers will plant, harvest, garner and sell understandingly.