

enthusiastic response of the people made quite clear that the basis of the Anglo-Saxon character is essentially religious. Perhaps this, however, needed no proof—that the Anglo-Saxon character is firmly rooted in religion; but the revelation of Kipling as a religious genius was startling. Surprisingly early in his career he was acknowledged to be a great artist—a master of literary technique. Whoever read carefully even a few of his shorter stories, without knowing anything of the author or his methods, recognised at once a writer who studied words just as men study a science—one who was bent on wringing out of language all its secrets and latent possibilities. But no thought of his religion entered into our estimate. Stupid folk, indeed, who know of no religion but the conventional religion of creeds and churches and liturgies, accused this precocious genius of being irreligious. Many good people watched with fear his marvelously rapid strides to popular favor, because they felt that his influence would not, on the whole, be conducive to that reverence which our age so sorely needs. They had been shocked by the paganism, as they regarded it, of his jungle stories. Then came the "Recessional." It was a complete surprise to all except those who had been patiently waiting for the new poet to present his credentials; but its effect was to lead men to read his books over again with an eye for the religious. There was no possibility of mistaking the puritan sternness, directness, simplicity of the Recessional's appeal to the nation's heart; and men were compelled to ask—Is it possible that the unconventionality of the new poet has hitherto blinded us to the religious aspect of his work? Hence the discovery that the note of piety which Kipling struck in his national hymn is the ground-note, too, of all his earlier work. Kipling has never been anything but in downright earnest. Most artful, he never subscribed the debasing creed: "Art for Art's sake." Highly rhetorical, he never abandoned himself to mere word-spinning. His words were selected with painstaking care; and each word was chosen for no other purpose than to hit some nail on the head. The man who applies himself in this spirit to his day's work—however humble that