

the race. Let no one suppose when we speak thus of this particular poem that we imagine it is going suddenly to become a household word in England, Scotland, and Ireland, or that the world will immediately grasp its meaning. That is given to few poems. But without doing this, the poem, we believe, will have its effect on public opinion. Before it becomes popular in the ordinary sense, it will work its way into the minds, first, of the more imaginative politicians and journalists and men of letters. Then through them and by various channels it will filter down and affect the mass of the people. What will happen will be not unlike that which happened in regard to the feeling of the nation towards the privates of British Army. Mr. Kipling, in his capacity of interpreter, and by means of his "Barrack-room Ballads," made the nation appreciate and understand its soldiers infinitely better than they had ever done before. Indeed, it is not too much to say that by means of this process of interpretation he changed the attitude of the nation. But though many thousands of people read how—

It's Tommy this an' Tommy that, an'
"chuck him out, the brute;"
But it's "saviour of his country" when
the guns begin to shoot,

the change was for the most part wrought indirectly. When you let fly into a whole heap of balls, all are moved and affected, though only one or two feel the impact direct. It is enough if the poet touches those who can influence the rest.

Another example of Mr. Kipling's power of interpretation as a poet is to be seen in his sea-poems. "The Bolivar," "The Clampherdown," and "The Flag of England" are of incalculable value in making Englishmen realise that they have been and are still the lords of the sea, and what that priceless heritage means. You may talk to Robinson, the bill broker,

till you are black in the face about the command of the sea, and its political, commercial, and moral importance. He agrees no doubt, and seems quite intelligent, but in reality marks you not. If, however, you can get him to listen to what the four winds made answer when they were asked what and where is the flag of England, who knows but you may have lighted a flame of inspiration which will remain with him and make him realise the grandeur and high destiny of this realm of England. Take, again, the way in which Mr. Kipling has interpreted the native East for Englishmen and made them understand, as but few of them understood before, the gulf that stretches between the East and West, and realise that East and West, though each has its destiny, can never be one. Yet another example of Mr. Kipling's power of interpretation is to be found in the marvellous poem which he wrote on the American spirit, taking the Chicago riots as his "peg." The poet, as we pointed out at the time, was not as careful as he ought to have been to avoid wounding the feelings of our American kinsfolk, but for insight and exposition it was a work of rare genius. It interpreted a certain side of the American character to perfection. And to do this at that moment was a most useful work, for over here men were bewildered and distracted by what was happening in the West. We have spoken above only of Mr. Kipling, but it must not be supposed that we regard him as the only poet who acts as interpreter to the nation. We chose him because he does so to such practical effect, and because his last poem is just now in men's minds. All true poets are, as we have said, interpreters, each in his own sphere. If they are not, they are mere embroiderers of melodious words. Mr. Watson, for example, has shown true