(October 18th, 1907.)

The Problems of Empire.

By Mr. Rudyard Kipling.

THE Canadian Club held an evening meeting on Friday, October 18th, to greet Rudyard Kipling. Mr. Kipling's address was preceded by the singing of "The Recessional" by Mr. Frank Bemrose. Mr. Kipling, on rising, to speak, was greeted with an ovation. He said:

Mr. President and Members of the Canadian Club,—Is this quite fair? It seems to me very unjust, most wrong, that the thousands of men who have fought and toiled and died for the Empire have passed for the most part without human acknowledgment, while a man who can catch the popular ear by trying to describe some of their thoughts and ideas should receive such a welcome as this. Well, the reward is not to the man himself. You have done him a great—a very great—honor, and one I make bold to hope is not so much to the author whose name I bear, as to the ideas that I have been fortunate enough to reflect.

The idea of our Empire as a community of men of allied race and identical aims, united in comradeship, comprehension and sympathy, is not a new thing. It grew up in the hearts of all our people with their national growth, as the peoples in the Empire grow to the stature of distinct nations. None can say where it was born, but we all know the one man who in our time gave present life to that grand conception.

Our children will tell their sons of the statesman who, in the evening of his days, crowned with years and honor, beheld what our Empire might be made—a man who stepped aside from the sheep-tracks of little politicians, who put from him ease, comfort, friendship, aye, and even health itself, that he might inspire and lead a younger generation to follow him along the new path. We ourselves are too near the man and his work to understand the full significance of Joseph Chamberlain.

It is the high tradition of life in our land that in moments of need a man shall not be wanting to do and to dare, and, if need be, to die for his people. It is the custom of our land to accept such sacrifice as a matter of course, always without thanks; sometimes, it may be, with ungenerous criticism.

But the custom has not weakened the tradition, for in all walks of life in every quarter of the Empire you will find to-day, men content—aye, more than content—eager to endure any hardship, any misunderstanding, for aims that are not even remotely theirs, for objects in which they have no specific interest except the honor and integrity and advancement of their village, their town, their State, their Province and their country.

The history of Canada, of all our young nations, as I read it, is the record of just that spirit, the story of just such men, the pioneers who rode out in advance of the community, and who broke the trails for their brothers' use. And we are so new even now that in every quarter of the Empire to-day you can see those pioneers putting forth on their great quests. Behind them lie little towns, collections of shacks or tin-roofed houses, where they buy their trading outfit and their trading goods, just such little towns as your superb Toronto once was.

The men—you know the type—the men who live in them will tell you seriously that in a few years they will be second Torontos, second Johannesburgs, second Wellingtons, second Melbournes, as the case may be. And we laugh. Knowing how miracles are wrought on our own behalf, we cannot conceive how they will be wrought for others.

But we do not laugh a few years later, when one of those lonely pioneers rides up to us, the mayor of his city—no mean city—and well on his way to be a millionaire. We laugh still less when his city writes our dearest hated rival and wishes to know how soon he can deliver a million and three-quarters city water mains, with inlets, pipes and sewers, as per specification appended. Then we mourn; then we grieve; then we say to ourselves, if we had only known, had only guessed, that our dear little jumping-off place to nowhere was going to be what it is, we would have paid it some attention, we would have had more faith in it—and then we should have been sharing the contract. But we have only to meet another man, and we go straight away and make the same mistake, laughing at this new man on another pony, hailing from another collection of houses, which will be another city.

Is it possible that any of us as individuals have made that mistake?

The question then is, are we not, in time of peace, a little too prone as nations to repeat the blunder in our relations to our fellow nations throughout the Empire? Put it in this way: Are we each not a little too occupied with our immediate present to take an interest in the potentialities of our neighbors'

future? I say in time of peace, because all the world remembers when one of our community was in distress Canada went to her aid, as Australia went, as New Zealand went, as the Crown colonies went, without a thought of her present interests, or her politics, or her pocket.

Out of that great gathering of our men on the plains of South Africa there was born, I think, a treaty of mutual preference between the various members of that Empire which (I am no diplomatist myself) I think regular diplomatists will find it difficult to annul.

It may be for reasons of our own that for the time being Canada will judge it expedient to make her count with older civilizations, to deal for the time being with nations of a more amazing present than that which belongs to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, but I am sure, gentlemen, that if you as business men send out or investigate for yourselves you will find in those countries that I have named the promise of markets worthy of your serious attention.

Were I a business man I could show you that as regards our mutual trade we are no more than children playing store on the threshold of our real markets. I can put my hand on the map and point to certain countries that I know, and I can show you all how the natural resources of such and such areas must create vast and stable industries, rearing up a power on a larger scale than the world has yet witnessed. And the plant for all that power has to be imported from somewhere. I could prove to you how the junction of certain railways and the conditions of certain portions must result in huge commercial centres, clamorous for the luxuries of all the world, how the inevitable growth of population must make a sub-continent of peasant and luxurious homes in all their varied nature. I can show you the site of a chain of cities in the future, fed by thousands and thousands of mills, and the plant for the whole development has to be imported from somewhere. But I can show you, moreover, in those countries that I have named, the same superb faith in the future, the same audacious handling of time, space and material, the same humorous, fearless outlook on problems that would make older communities turn gray with hysterics; the same joyful acceptance of the apparently impossible, the same light-hearted victory over it, and, above all, the same deep delight in life and work that Canada has revealed to the world.

How could it be otherwise? The men of these lands have worked out their salvation under skies as bright and with hearts as large as yours. They have developed and settled,

they are developing and settling, vast areas with much the same machinery, moral and physical, as you use. They face the five great problems—I call them points of fellowship—education, immigration, transportation, irrigation and administration. They face them on the same lines as you. Who, then, in the long run, can better or more understandingly supply their wants than you? Who in the long run can better or more understandingly supply your needs than they? Am I looking too far forward? I think not.

A young country must take long views, the same as young men take very long views. Our four young nations—the Big Four—have a long, uphill and triumphant road to tread. Hie you out and make sure for yourselves that our roads lie together.

As the prolonged applause which followed the conclusion of Mr. Kipling's address subsided, Mr. J. S. WILLISON, LL.D., rose to move a vote of thanks to the guest of the evening. Mr. Willison said:

Only one fault can be found with our distinguished guest. He has spoken too briefly.

More than once I have been asked to second a vote of thanks to some distinguished guest of the Canadian Club, and naturally I cherished the hope that, if I continued to grow in grace and in the Club's favor, I would be promoted and some time would be permitted to move a vote of thanks. At last my ambition has been realized. But to say even a word in tribute to the guest of to-night is a privilege and a distinction. Generally, when one is asked to meet an eminent author, of whom one has not heard up to that moment, one is obliged to find out what books he has written, to get biographical details, and to undergo laborious preparation in order to show that one is entirely familiar with his work and his career. In the case of Mr. Kipling this cramming is not necessary, and that, in itself, is cause for gratitude.

When Mark Twain was making his voyage to Australia a few years ago he made a careful examination of the books in the ship's library and declared that the absence of any of Jane Austen's books constituted a good library in itself. I do not pretend to endorse that judgment, but it gives me a point of contrast from which to say that Mr. Kipling's books in themselves constitute a good library, and a library I venture to think which many of us possess.

There are many imitations and many echoes, but there is only one Kipling, and the man is robust and the voice confident

and the message inspiring to Britons the world over. He has spoken the Imperial language of an Imperial race as no other man has spoken it in our time, with a rough vigor that compels attention and occasionally with a freedom that is comforting to all of us who feel that there are moments and incidents in life which can only be described with a certain force and picturesqueness, and which demand a certain emphasis that cannot be supplied by any strictly orthodox vocabulary. And yet this guest of ours, whom we are proud to honor, can be gentle as well as strong, and persuasive as well as compelling. Like nature, as described in the finest poem which any American has written, he has

> "A various language. For our gayer hours
> He has a voice of gladness and a smile
> And eloquence of beauty. And he glides
> Into our darker musings with a mild
> And healing sympathy, that steals away
> Their sharpness ere we are aware."

It is hard to believe that we owe to one single mind the wonderful mystery and beauty of the *Jungle Books*, the robust fancy and the bold truth, and the quickening power of the *Tales From the Hills*, the naked humanity and the brave gallantry of the *Ballads*, the marvellous insight of the *Sketches*, the profound comprehension of *Many Inventions*, and the mighty call to all English hearts which speaks in the *Hymn Before Action* and *The Recessional*.

But Mr. Kipling stands to us not so much as a poet, or a writer of fiction, or a great descriptive artist, but as the protagonist of Imperial Britain and an inspiring leader and counsellor of Empire. In the fervor of one of our election campaigns it suited a section of our people to describe a certain party leader as "bold enough to be honest and honest enough to be bold." Without removing a garland from any other brow, surely we may so describe Mr. Kipling. He saw his vision and has proclaimed it with the zeal of a Crusader and the courage of a prophet. The vision is a united empire, founded in the common interest and the common affection of a group of free nations, mighty to keep the world's peace, strong to withstand aggression, faithful to the traditions of valor, and devoted to the principles of civil and religious freedom which constitute the proud heritage of the British peoples. No man tells that story with more power than he commands,

and he more than any other man living has created and nourished the Imperial spirit which is the new birth of the race to which we belong.

May we not, then, tell Mr. Kipling that we understand his conception of Empire, and that we find its best expression in one of his own verses:

> "Now this is the law of the Jungle as old and as true as the sky,
> And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall break it must die.
> As the creeper that girdles the tree trunk, the law runneth forward and back.
> For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack."

With a peculiar pleasure and an enthusiasm I seldom bring to a task of this kind, I move a vote of thanks to our guest.

The resolution was seconded by Rev. J. A. MACDONALD. Mr. Macdonald said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I am on the fair way to fame. I am seconding the vote of thanks. We have had an inspiration this evening in the stirring words of our guest. You, Mr. President, called him a star. There is one glory of the sun, one of the moon, one of the stars. Sometimes we feel that Mr. Kipling has the light, heat and power of the sun; sometimes he has become the soft, mild, shining moon; at others he is the steady, silent, eternal-speaking star.

Sun, moon or star, he has been an inspiration in the days that are gone, and few words have been more compelling than those of to-night, spoken in the way and the spirit of an Englishman, straight-flung words and true.

The one thing he has told us is that we are Sons of the Blood, and that the Empire is ours, and that we have opportunity and obligations. We thank him, because he has made us see the picture of the pioneers that "broke from the herd where they grazed" and blazed trails that were never wholly lost.

We thank him for the courage he has reawakened in us, that we have inherited from the men who went before, we sons of the sons of the sons of the "legion that never was tested." Though we may not believe all the things he says, we do believe the Thing for which he stands. However we may express it, however the idea may be formulated, we, too, every

man of us, whatever our creed, we, too, are in the Empire. Whatever our views as to how things are held together, we stand for it, and will stand to the end.

We thank him for making us believe that we could make sewer pipes for somewhere, and we hope he will endorse the note of Somewhere when the sewer pipe is delivered according to specifications.

We thank him for making us believe there are things greater than the things of the Empire, of more value than many sewer pipes.

To us has come the vision and the whisper, and some day will come the pioneer with the need.

So, if England should "forget," Canada may become her saviour. Not only in the days of Armageddon will Canada be there, but in the greater, worst struggle of all, the Armageddon—not of our enemies from without, but of the corroding and corrupting enemies from within, when Britain, if she is ever beset by selfishness, if she ever declines the straight way, the hard task, and forgets the calling to which she has been called, we shall be ready, not with battleships, but with brains and souls, to go to the heart of the Empire and stir again the old spirit, set up the old ideal, and call the nation back to that love of freedom and that faith in God and that service of the world for which Britain ever stood and must ever stand, or utterly fall. Whether somewhere or here, we are Sons of the Blood and love the Mother still.

Very heartily, sir, I second the resolution.

The resolution was carried on a standing vote, amid much enthusiasm.