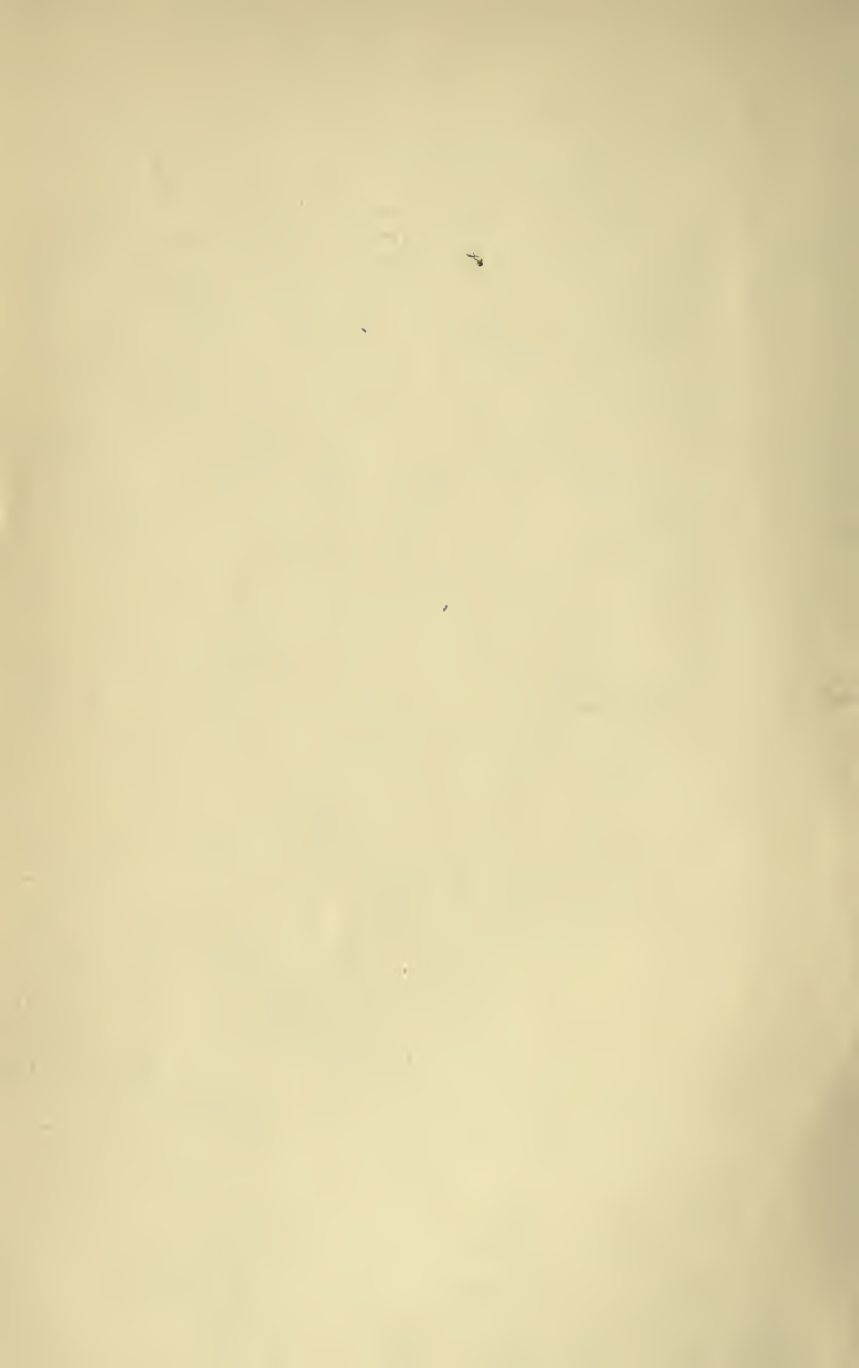


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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XVIII

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A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XVIII

April - September, 1921

Edited by
Harriet Monroe



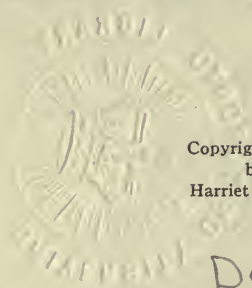
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Two annual prizes will be awarded as usual in November for good work of the current year. To the donors of these prizes, as well as to the above list of guarantors, the editor wishes to express the appreciation of the staff and the poets:

To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the eighth time; and to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the seventh time, a prize of one hundred dollars.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.

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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XVIII

XII

XVII

DEAR POETRY: I always feel that I ought to renew my thanks for your enterprise and faith, which are so ceaselessly at work on the task of renewing me.

Ferdinand Schevill

Vol. XVIII

No. I

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XIV

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A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XVIII
NO. I

APRIL 1921

THE BOX OF GOD

I: BROKEN BIRD

O broken bird,
Whose whistling silver wings have known the lift
Of high mysterious hands, and the wild sweet music
Of big winds among the ultimate stars!—
The black-robed curés put your pagan Indian
Soul in their white man's House of God, to lay
Upon your pagan lips new songs, to swell
The chorus of amens and hallelujahs.
In simple faith and holy zeal, they flung
Aside the altar-tapestries, that you
Might know the splendor of God's handiwork,
The shining glory of His face. O eagle,
They brought you to a four-square box of God,
Crippled of pinion, clipped of soaring wing;
And they left you there to flutter against the bars

[1]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

In futile flying, to beat against the gates,
To droop, to dream a little, and to die.

Ah, Joe Shing-ób—by the sagamores revered
As Spruce the Conjuror, by the black-priests dubbed
The Pagan Joe—how clearly I recall
Your conversion in the long-blade's House of God,
Your wonder when you faced its golden glories.
Don't you remember?—when first you sledged from out
The frozen Valley of the Sleepy-eye,
And hammered on the gates of Fort Brazeau—
To sing farewell to Ah-nah-quód, the Cloud,
Sleeping, banked high with flowers, clothed in the pomp
Of white man's borrowed garments in the church?
Oh, how your heart, as a child's heart beating before
High wonder-workings, thrilled at the burial splendor!—
The coffin, shimmering-black as moonlit ice,
And gleaming in a ring of waxen tapers;
After the chant of death, the long black robes,
Blown by the wind and winding over the hills
With slow black songs to the marked-out-place-of-death;
The solemn feet that moved along the road
Behind the wagon-with-windows, the wagon-of-death,
With its jingling nickel harness, its dancing plumes.
Oh, the shining splendor of that burial march,
The round-eyed wonder of the village throng!
And oh, the fierce-hot hunger, the burning envy
That seared your soul when you beheld your friend
Achieve such high distinction from the black-robés!

And later, when the cavalcade of priests
Wound down from the fenced-in-ground, like a slow black
worm

Crawling upon the snow—don't you recall?—
The meeting in the mission?—that night, your first,
In the white man's lodge of holy-medicine?
How clearly I can see your hesitant step
On the threshold of the church; within the door
Your gasp of quick surprise, your breathless mouth;
Your eyes round-white before the glimmering taper,
The golden-filigreed censer, the altar hung
With red rosettes and velvet soft as an otter's
Pelt in the frost of autumn, with tinsel sparkling
Like cold blue stars above the frozen snows.
Oh, the blinding beauty of that House of God!—
Even the glittering bar at Jock McKay's,
Tinkling with goblets of fiery devil's-spit,
With dazzling vials and many-looking mirrors,
Seemed lead against the silver of the mission.

I hear again the chanting holy-men,
The agents of the white man's Mighty Spirit,
Making their talks with strong, smooth-moving tongues:

“Hear! Hear ye, men of a pagan faith!
Forsake the idols of the heathen fathers,
The too-many ghosts that walk upon the earth.
For there lie pain and sorrow, yea, and death!

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

“Hear! Hear ye, men of a pagan faith!
And grasp the friendly hands we offer you
In kindly fellowship, warm hands and tender,
Yea, hands that ever give and never take.
Forswear the demon-charms of medicine-men;
Shatter the drums of conjuring Chée-sah-kée—
Yea, beyond these walls lie bitterness and death!

“Pagans!—ye men of a bastard birth!—bend,
Bow ye, proud heads, before this hallowed shrine!
Break!—break ye the knee beneath this roof,
For within this house lives God! Abide ye here!
Here shall your eyes behold His wizardry;
Here shall ye find an everlasting peace.”

Ah, Joe the pagan, son of a bastard people,
Child of a race of vanquished, outlawed children,
Small wonder that you drooped your weary head,
Blinding your eyes to the suns of elder days;
For hungry bellies look for new fat gods,
And heavy heads seek newer, softer pillows.
With you again I hear the eerie chants
Floating from out the primal yesterdays—
The low sweet song of the doctor's flute, the slow
Resonant boom of the basswood water-drum,
The far voice of the fathers, calling, calling.
I see again the struggle in your eyes—
The hunted soul of a wild young grouse, afraid,
Trembling beneath maternal wings, yet lured

By the shrill whistle of the wheeling hawk.
I see your shuffling limbs, hesitant, faltering
Along the aisle—the drag of old bronzed hands
Upon your moccasined feet, the forward tug
Of others, soft and white and very tender.
One forward step . . . another . . . a quick look back!—
Another step . . . another . . . and lo! the eyes
Flutter and droop before a flaming symbol,
The strong knees break before a blazoned altar
Glimmering its tapestries in the candle-light,
The high head beaten down and bending before
New wonder-working images of gold.

And thus the black-ropes brought you into the house
Wherein they kept their God, a house of logs,
Square-hewn, and thirty feet by forty. They strove
To put before you food, and purple trappings—
Oh, how they walked you up and down in the vestry,
Proudly resplendent in your white man's raiment,
Glittering and gorgeous, the envy of your tribe:
Your stiff silk hat, your scarlet sash, your shoes
Shining and squeaking gloriously with newness!
Yet even unto the end—those blood-stained nights
Of the sickness-on-the-lung; that bitter day
On the Barking Rock, when I packed you down from camp
At Split-hand Falls to the fort at Sleepy-eye;
While, drop by drop, your life went trickling out,
As sugar-sap that drips on the birch-bark bucket

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And finally chills in the withered maple heart
At frozen dusk: even unto the end—
When the mission doctor, framed by guttering candles,
Hollowly tapped his hooked-horn finger here
And there upon your bony breast, like a wood-bird
Pecking and drumming on a rotten trunk—
Even unto this end I never knew
Which part of you was offering the holy prayers—
The chanting mouth, or the eyes that gazed beyond
The walls to a far land of windy valleys.
And sometimes, when your dry slow lips were moving
To perfumed psalms, I could almost, almost see
Your pagan soul aleap in the fire-light, naked,
Shuffling along to booming medicine-drums,
Shaking the flat black earth with moccasined feet,
Dancing again—back among the jangling
Bells and the stamping legs of gnarled old men—
Back to the fathers calling, calling across
Dead winds from the dim gray years.

O high-flying eagle,
Whose soul, wheeling among the sinuous winds,
Has known the molten glory of the sun,
The utter calm of dusk, and in the evening
The lullabies of moonlit mountain waters!—
The black-priests locked you in their House of God,
Behind great gates swung tight against the frightened
Quivering aspens, whispering perturbed in council,

And muttering as they tapped with timid fists
Upon the doors and strove to follow you
And hold you; tight against the uneasy winds
Wailing among the balsams, fumbling upon
The latch with fretful fingers; tight against
The crowding stars who pressed their troubled faces
Against the windows. In honest faith and zeal,
The black-ropes put you in a box of God,
To swell the broken chorus of amens
And hallelujahs; to flutter against the door,
Crippled of pinion, bruised of head; to beat
With futile flying against the gilded bars;
To droop, to dream a little, and to die.

II: WHISTLING WINGS

Shing-ób, companion of my old wild years
In the land of K'tchéé-gah-mée, my good right arm
When we battled bloody-fisted in the storms
And snows with rotting scurvy, with hunger raw
And ravenous as the lusting tongues of wolves—
My Joe, no longer will the ghostly mountains
Echo your red-lunged laughters in the night;
The gone lone days when we communed with God
In the language of the waterfall and wind
Have vanished with your basswood water-drum.

Do you recall our cruise to Flute-reed Falls?
Our first together—oh, many moons ago—

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Before the curés built the village mission?
How, banked against our camp-fire in the bush
Of sugar-maples, we smoked kin-ník-kin-ník,
And startled the sombre buttes with round raw songs,
With wails that mocked the lynx who cried all night
As if her splitting limbs were torn with pain
Of a terrible new litter? How we talked
Till dawn of the Indian's Kéetch-ie Má-ni-dó,
The Mighty Spirit, and of the white man's God?
Don't you remember dusk at Cold-spring Hollow?—
The beaver-pond at our feet, its ebony pool
Wrinkled with silver, placid, calm as death,
Save for the fitful chug of the frog that flopped
His yellow jowls upon the lily-pad,
And the quick wet slap of the tails of beaver hurrying
Homeward across the furrowing waters, laden
With cuttings of tender poplar . . . down in the swale
The hermit-thrush who spilled his rivulet
Of golden tones into the purple seas
Of gloam among the swamps . . . and in the East,
Serene against the sky—do you remember?—
Slumbering Mont du Père, shouldering its crags
Through the crumpled clouds, rose-flushed with after-
glow . . .
And dew-lidded dusk that slipped among the valleys
Soft as a blue wolf walking in thick wet moss.
How we changed our ribald song for simple talk! . . .

*"My frien', Ah-déek, you ask-um plenty hard question:
Ugh! W'ere Kéetch-ie Má-ni-dó he live?*

W'ere all dose Eenzhun spirits walk and talk?

*Me—I dunno! . . . Mebbe . . . mebbe over here,
In beaver-pond, in t'rush, in gromping bullfrog;
Mebbe over dere, he's sleeping in dose mountain . . .*

*"Sh-sh-sh! . . . Look! . . . Over dere . . . look, my
frien'!*

*On Mont du Père . . . he's moving little! . . .
ain't? . . .*

*Under dose soft blue blanket she's falling down
On hill and valley! Somebody—somebody's dere! . . .
In dose hill of Mont du Père, sleeping . . . sleep-
ing. . . "*

And when the fingers of the sun, lingering,
Slipped gently from the marble brow of the glacier
Pillowed among the clouds, blue-veined and cool,
How, one by one, like lamps that flicker up
In a snow-bound hamlet in the valley, the stars
Lighted their candles mirrored in the waters . . .
And floating from the hills of Sleepy-eye,
Soft as the wings of dusty-millers flying,
The fitful syllables of the Baptism River
Mumbling among its caverns hollowly,
Shouldering its emerald sweep through cragged cascades
In a flood of wafted foam, fragile, flimsy
As luna-moths fluttering on a pool . . .

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*"Caribou, you hear dat? . . . somebody's dere! . . .
Ain't? . . . in dose hills of Mont du Père . . . sleep-
ing.*

*Sh-sh-sh! . . . You hear-um? . . . dose far 'way
Flute-reed Fall? . . .*

Somebody's dere in Mont du Père, sleeping . . .

Somebody he's in dere de whole night long . . .

*And w'ile he's sleep, he's talking little . . . talk-
ing. . . ."*

Hush!—don't you hear K'tchée-gah-mée at midnight?—
That stretched far out from the banks of Otter-slide
To the dim wet rim of the world—North, East, West?—
The Big-water, calm, thick-flecked with the light of stars
As the wind-riffled fur of silver fox in winter . . .
The shuffle of the sands in the lapsing tide . . .
The slow soft wash of waters on the pebbles . . .

*"Sh-sh-sh! . . . Look, Ah-déek! . . . on K'tchée-gah-
mée! . . .*

Somebody—some'ing he's in dere . . . ain't? . . .

He's sleep w'ere black Big-water she's deep . . .

Ho! . . .

In morning he's jump up from hees bed and race

*Wit' de wind; but tonight he's sleeping . . . rolling
little . . .*

*Dreaming about hees woman . . . rolling . . . sleep-
ing. . . ."*

And later—you recall?—beyond the peaks
That tusked the sky like fangs of a coyote snarling,
The full-blown mellow moon that floated up
Like a liquid-silver bubble from the waters,
Serenely, till she pricked her delicate film
On the slender splinter of a cloud, melted,
And trickled from the silver-dripping edges.
Oh, the splendor of that night! . . . The Twin-fox stars
That loped across the pine-ridge . . . Red Ah-núng,
Blazing from out the cavern of the gloom
Like the smoldering coal in the eye of carcajou . . .
The star-dust in the valley of the sky,
Flittering like glow-worms in a reedy meadow!

*“Somebody’s dere . . . He’s walk-um in dose cloud . . .
Look! . . . You see-um? . . . He’s mak’-um for hees
woman*

*De w’ile she sleep, dose t’ing she want-um most—
Blue dress for dancing! . . . You see, my frien’? . . .
ain’t? . . .*

*He’s t’rowing on de blanket of dose sky
Dose plenty-plenty handfuls of w’ite stars;
He’s sewing on dose plenty teet’ of elk,
Dose shiny looking-glass and plenty beads.
Somebody’s dere . . . somet’ing he’s in dere. . . .”*

The green moons went—and many many winters.
Yet we held together, Joe, until our day
Of falling leaves, like two split sticks of willow

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Lashed tight with buckskin buried in the bark.
Do you recollect our last long cruise together,
To Hollow-bear, on our line of marten traps?—
When cold Pee-bóan, the Winter-maker, hurdling
The rim-rock ridge, shook out his snowy hair
Before him on the wind and heaped up the hollows?—
Flanked by the drifts, our lean-to of toboggans,
Our bed of pungent balsam, soft as down
From the bosom of a whistling swan in autumn . . .
Our steaming sledge-dogs buried in the snow-bank,
Nuzzling their snouts beneath their tented tails,
And dreaming of the paradise of dogs . . .
Our fire of pine-boughs licking up the snow,
And tilting at the shadows in the coulee . . .
And you, rolled warm among the beaver-pelts,
Forgetful of your sickness-on-the-lung,
Of the fever-pains and coughs that wracked your bones—
You, beating a war song on your drum,
And laughing as the scarlet-moccasined flames
Danced on the coals and bellowed up the sky.

Don't you remember? . . . the snowflakes drifting down
Thick as the falling petals of wild plums . . .
The clinker-ice and the scudding fluff of the whirlpool
Muffling the summer-mumblings of the brook . . .
The turbulent waterfall protesting against
Such early winter-sleep, like a little boy
Who struggles with the calamity of slumber,

Knuckling his leaden lids and his tingling nose
With a pudgy fist, and fretfully flinging back
His snowy cover with his petulant fingers.
Out on the windy barrens restless bands
Of caribou, rumped up against the gale,
Suddenly breaking before the rabid blast,
Scampering off like tumbleweeds in a cyclone . . .
The low of bulls from the hills where worried moose,
Nibbling the willows, the wintergreens, the birches,
Were yarding up in the sheltering alder-thicket . . .
From the cedar wind-break, the bleat of calves wedged warm
Against the bellies of their drowsy cows . . .
And then the utter calm . . . the wide white drift
That lay upon the world as still and ghastly
As the winding-sheet of death . . . the sudden snap
Of a dry twig . . . the groan of sheeted rivers
Beating with naked hands upon the ice . . .
The brooding night . . . the crackle of cold skies . . .

*"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Look, my frien', . . . somebody's
dere! . . .*

*Ain't? . . . over dere? . . . He's come from dose Land-
of-Winter! . . .*

Wit' quilt he's cover-um up dose baby mink,

Dose cub, dose wild arbutus, dose jump-up-Johnny . . .

He's keep hees chil'ens warm for long, long winter . . .

*Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somebody's dere on de w'ite sa-
vanne! . . .*

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*Somebody's dere! . . . He's walk-um in de timber . . .
He's cover-um up hees chil'ens, soft . . . soft . . ."*

And later, when your bird-claw fingers rippled
Over the holes of your cedar Bée-bee-gwún
Mellowly in a tender tune, how the stars,
Like little children trooping from their teepees,
Danced with their nimble feet across the sky
To the running-water music of your flute . . .
And how, with twinkling heels they scurried off
Before the Northern Light swaying, twisting,
Spiralling like a slender silver smoke
On the thin blue winds, and feeling out among
The frightened starry children of the sky . . .

*"Look! . . . in de Land-of-Winter . . . somet'ing's
dere! . . .
Somebody—he's reaching out hees hand! . . . for
me! . . .
Ain't? . . . For me he's waiting . . . Somebody's
dere! . . .
Somebody he's in dere, waiting . . . waiting . . ."*

Don't you remember?—the ghostly silence, splintered
At last by a fist that cracked the hoary birch,
By a swift black fist that shattered the brittle air,
Splitting it into a million frosty fragments . . .
And dreary Northwind, coughing in the snow,
Spitting among the glistening sheeted pines,

And moaning on the barrens among the bones
Of gaunt white tamaracks mournful and forlorn . . .

*“Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . My Caribou! . . . Somebody’s
dere! . . .
He’s crying . . . little bit crazy in dose wind . . .
Ain’t? . . . You hear-um? . . . far ’way . . . crying
Lak my old woman w’en she’s lose de baby
And no can find-um—w’en she’s running everyw’ere,
Falling in snow, talking little bit crazy,
Calling and crying for shees little boy . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somet’ing’s dere . . . you hear-um?
. . . ain’t? . . .
Somebody—somebody’s dere, crying . . . crying . . .”*

Then from the swale, where shadows pranced grotesquely
Solemn, like phantom puppets on a string,
A cry—pointed, brittle, perpendicular—
As startling as a thin stiff blade of ice
Laid swift and sharp on fever-burning flesh:
The tremulous wail of a lonely shivering wolf,
Piercing the world’s great heart like an icy sword . . .

*“Look! . . . Quick! . . . Ah-déek! . . . Somebody’s
dere! . . .
Ain’t? . . . He’s come—he’s come for me—for me!
Me—me, I go! My Caribou . . .
Dose fire—dose fire she’s going out—she’s cold . . .*

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*T'row—t'row on dose knots of pine . . . Mee-
gwétch! . . .*

*And pull 'way from dose flame—dose pan of sour-dough,
If you want eat—in de morning—damn-good flap-
jack . . .*

*"Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Somet'ing's dere! . . . You hear-
um? . . . ain't? . . .*

*Somebody—somebody's dere, calling . . . calling . . .
I go . . . I go—me! . . . me . . . I go . . ."*

III: TALKING WATERS

O eagle whose whistling wings have known the lift
Of high mysterious hands, and the wild sweet music
Of big winds among the ultimate stars,
The black-robos put you in a box of God,
Seeking in honest faith and holy zeal
To lay upon your lips new songs, to swell
The chorus of amens and hallelujahs.
O bundle of copper bones tossed in a hole,
Here in the place-of-death—God's fenced-in ground!—
Beneath these put-in pines and waxen lilies,
They placed you in a crimson gash in the hillside,
Here on a bluff above the Sleepy-eye,
Where the Baptism River, mumbling among the canyons,
Shoulders its flood through crooning waterfalls
In a mist of wafted foam fragile as petals

Lew Sarett

Of windflowers blowing across the green of April;
Where ghosts of wistful leaves go floating up
In the rustling blaze of autumn, like silver smokes
Slenderly twisting among the thin blue winds;
Here in the great gray arms of Mont du Père,
Where the shy arbutus, the mink, and the Johnny-jump-up
Huddle and whisper of a long, long winter;
Where stars, with soundless feet, come trooping up
To dance to the water-drums of white cascades—
Where stars, like little children, go singing down
The sky to the flute of the wind in the willow-tree—
Somebody—somebody's there . . . O pagan Joe . . .
Can't you see Him as He moves among the mountains—
Where dusk, dew-lidded, slips among the valleys
Soft as a blue wolf walking in thick wet moss?
Look! . . . my friend! . . . at the breast of Mont du
Père! . . .
Sh-sh-sh-sh! . . . Don't you hear His talking waters . . .
Soft in the gloam as broken butterflies
Hovering above a somber pool? . . . Sh-sh-sh-sh!
Somebody's there . . . in the heart of Mont du Père . . .
Somebody—somebody's there, sleeping . . . sleeping . . .

Lew Sarett

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STILL COLORS

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

“FIRE AND SLEET AND CANDLE-LIGHT”

For this you've striven,
Daring, to fail:
Your sky is riven
Like a tearing veil.

For this, you've wasted
Wings of your youth;
Divined, and tasted
Bitter springs of truth.

From sand unslakèd
Twisted strong cords,
And wandered naked
Among trysted swords.

There's a word unspoken,
A knot untied.
Whatever is broken
The earth may hide.

The road was jagged
Over sharp stones:
Your body's too ragged
To cover your bones.

The wind scatters
Tears upon dust;

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Your soul's in tatters
Where the spears thrust.

Your race is ended—
See, it is run:
Nothing is mended
Under the sun.

Straight as an arrow
You fall to a sleep
Not too narrow
And not too deep.

SILVER FILAGREE

The icicles wreathing
On trees in festoon
Swing, swayed to our breathing:
They're made of the moon.

She's a pale, waxen taper;
And these seem to drip
Transparent as paper
From the flame of her tip.

Molten, smoking a little,
Into crystal they pass;
Falling, freezing, to brittle
And delicate glass.

Elinor Wylie

Each a sharp-pointed flower,
Each a brief stalactite
Which hangs for an hour
In the blue cave of night.

ATAVISM

I always was afraid of Somes's Pond:
Not the little pond, by which the willow stands;
Where laughing boys catch alewives in their hands
In brown, bright shallows; but the one beyond.
There, when the frost makes all the birches burn
Yellow as cow-lilies, and the pale sky shines
Like a polished shell between black spruce and pines,
Some strange thing tracks us, turning where we turn.

You'll say I dream it, being the true daughter
Of those who in old times endured this dread.
Look! Where the lily-stems are showing red
A silent paddle moves below the water,
A sliding shape has stirred them like a breath;
Tall plumes surmount a painted mask of death.

Elinor Wylie

AGE AND YOUTH

How little wisdom in how many years—
How little wisdom and how much of pain!
And now the slack knees tremble, the eye blears,
And mist-wreaths blur the mirror of the brain.
And Memory, in her niche, with fumbling fingers
Plucks at old dreams mislaid which crumble soon;
And there is naught she touches now that lingers;
And her lamp smokes and dims, a clouded moon.
And Youth, a long way off, looks sidewise over
Into the place of shadow, and stops singing
The immemorial lay of Love's true lover;
While, for a space, Hope's hand grows tired of clinging
To his limp hand, and droops careless and cold
Along the grass—and even Youth seems old.

And even Youth seems old? . . . But Youth *is* old,
Old as the springtide, as the April flowers.
Youth's infinite history is a tale thrice told—
Aeons but mask them in Youth's counted hours.
That rosebud, and the dew upon that rose,
Lack but the memory of all ages past;
The wavering snowflake knows not—but God knows
The winters it has lasted and shall last!
Yes, Youth is old . . . and Age is ever young—
A new thing in its season, a new thing;
New, and more terrible than ever tongue

Lee Wilson Dodd

Of fool or poet has dared to say or sing!
Yet not more terrible than Youth, that seems
A dreamer's dream of some dead dreamer's dreams.

RIDDLE

You would be free!
Would you be free
If you were free?
Is the wind free,
Or the wind-worn sea?
Or sun-tied earth,
Or the earth-tied moon?
Is Ariel?
Is Caliban?
Is Satan in Hell?
Or God in Heaven?

Riddle my rune,
Little man!

Lee Wilson Dodd

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"E BE THAN"

They come weeping,
They raise their voices,
Women meet them
As they ride from the plain.
The band is home,
But none rejoices—
For many men
Return not again.

The chief leads them;
Yet, heavy-hearted,
He slowly rides
From the wide, shining plain.
Warriors mourn
The friends departed—
For many men
Return not again.

Women follow;
The children, weeping,
Straggle along
Through the dust of the plain,
Many mourning
Friends or fathers—
For many men
Return not again.

Carroll Lane Fenton

Priests, chanting
The sacred death-song,
Raise dull grave-poles
High above the wide plain;
Men mourn
Sons and cousins—
For dead men's souls
Return not again.

Carroll Lane Fenton

SONG

Hills are all aflower,
Skies are all afire—
Fool was I to sorrow
For a dead desire!

Lo, the April marvel
Stirs the earth again:
Break, my heart, of beauty,
That would not break of pain!

H. Thompson Rich

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TO A NEW ENGLAND GIRL

Ah, you have taken my hot delight
In France and stripped it of its wings;
Broken the swift Icarian flight
Of untoward imaginings
That sought a sun hardly my own.
And you have winged and brought me down
Through sudden ecstasy to rest
Upon your white New England breast,
Where love is fragrantly austere
As those deep-bosomed hillsides are
That slope down to Franconia,
Full-blossoming in early year.

TO AN AUTHENTIC PRIEST

He weighs me down, this Christ of yours.
He weighs me down—his arm is on
My elbow in the streakèd dawn;
Oppresses he my evening hours;
Still he outshines the manifold
Bright rays that centre in my heart.
Much loveliness I knew grows cold
The while his threatening fires start
To gnaw at this old edifice
Of sturdy lusts. Outsavors he

Edward Townsend Booth

The savor of my ancient bliss.
He tempts me to apostasy.

Edward Townsend Booth

THE INTRUDER

Across my book your hand augustly reaches—
Thrusts it away.
I turn impatient to the window, watching
The tossed trees' play,
March sunshine glinting on a chilly rain-pool
That snow-banks frame.
A lusty wind comes gusting on its errand
And names your name.

Captive, defeated, having striven I yield me
To thought awhile;
Letting the sunlight on the roughened waters
Bear me your smile;
Hearing the mischief-making wind that named you
Question afresh
If spirit find in spirit full contentment
Only through flesh.

Grace Stone Coates

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THREE SONNETS

PERSPECTIVE OF CO-ORDINATION

The circles never fully round, but change
In spiral gropings—not, as on a wall,
Flat-patterned, but back into space they fall,
In depth on depth of indeterminate range.
Where they begin may be here at my hand
Or there far lost beyond the search of eye;
And though I sit, desperately rapt, and try
To trace round-round the line, and understand
The sequence, the relation, the black-art
Of their continuance, hoping to find good
At least some logic of part-joined-to-part,
I judge the task one of too mad a mood:
And prophecy throws its shadow on my heart,
And Time's last sunset flames along my blood.

WORLD BEYOND WORLD

Two mirrors, face to face, is all I need
To build a mazy universe for my mind
Where world grows out of world. I dizzily find
Solace in endless planes that there recede.
The fifth plane-world, soft-shimmering through the glass—
Surely it has a light more bland than ours.

Arthur Davison Ficke

And in the far ninth hides a whirl of powers
Unknown to our dull senses. I would pass
Down the long vista, pausing now and then
To taste the flavor of each separate sphere,
And with each vast perspective cool my eye.
Whom should I meet there? Never living men!
What should I love there? Nothing I hold dear!
What would the end be? Endless as am I!

LEAF-MOVEMENT

From its thin branch high in the autumn wind
The yellow leaf now sails in upward flight;
Hovers at top-slope; then, a whirling bright
Eddy of motion, sinks. The storm behind
With gusts and veering tyrannies would uphold
Even as it downward beats this gorgeous thing
Which like an angel's lost and shattered wing
Against the grey sky sweeps its broken gold.
Another eddy, desperate or in mirth,
Brings it to rest here on the crackled earth
Where men can see it better than on the bough.
What quite preposterous irony of wind's-will
Touches it where it lies, golden and still,
And once more lifts it vainly heavenward now!

Arthur Davison Ficke

COMMENT

DRINKWATER ON ABERCROMBIE

MR. JOHN DRINKWATER, during his recent visit to Chicago, threw out a challenge to the advocates of the "new movement" by saying, during one of his club lectures, "Lascelles Abercrombie is the most important poet under forty-five now writing." To be sure, he expressed the opinion tentatively, remarking on the futility of any attempt at finality in contemporary criticism—on the impossibility of ranking an artist while he is still in active career. And it must be admitted that to many of his hearers the eminence decreed to Mr. Abercrombie was a convincing example of this futility.

We all express opinions, but, unless blind egotists, we do it with Mr. Drinkwater's modest reserve; offering them as a passing and perishing comment, a stick thrown on the current rather than a tree planted to outlast its violence. And so, while agreeing heartily with Mr. Drinkwater as to the unfinality—if one may coin a word—of contemporary opinion, let us take up what we consider his over-praise of Mr. Abercrombie, and try to justify a contrary point of view.

Mr. Abercrombie is distinctly, even slavishly, in the Victorian tradition. Tennyson and Swinburne are his immediate progenitors, with such traces of remoter ancestry as they have handed down. He loves to wander in the old protected gardens, amid a lush overgrowth of verbal foliage,

Drinkwater on Abercrombie

a heavy atmosphere of rank rhetorical perfumes. He represents the extreme of all those qualities of aesthetic motive and style which the more progressive modern poets, from Yeats and Robinson to Ezra Pound and Carl Sandburg, have been leading us away from—qualities which express, not the strength of "the tradition," but its feebleness and excess, not its growth but its decay. Let us illustrate by quoting a rather long passage from *Emblems of Love*. It is Sappho who speaks, the brief and magic Sappho, who, though remembered for only thirty lyric lines, has tempted more poets to platitudes than even Helen of Troy herself. We quote three sentences—the first two-thirds of her monologue:

This bright earth
Maketh my heart to falter; yea, my spirit
Bends and bows down in the delight of vision,
Caught by the force of beauty, swayed about
Like seaweed moved by the deep winds of water:
For it is all the news of love to me.
Through paths pine-fragrant, where the shaded ground
Is strewn with fruits of scarlet husk, I come,
As if through maidenhood's uncertainty,
Its darkness colored with strange untried thoughts;
Hither I come, here to the flowery peak
Of this white cliff, high up in golden air,
Where glowing earth and sea and divine light
Are in mine eyes like ardor, and like love
Are in my soul: love's glowing gentleness,
The sunny grass of meadows and the trees,
Towers of dark green flame, and that white town .
Where from the hearths a fragrance of burnt wood,
Blue-purple smoke creeps like a stain of wine
Along the paved blue sea: yea, all this kindness
Lies amid salt immeasurable flowing,
The power of the sea, passion of love.
I, Sappho, have made love the mastery

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Most sacred over man; but I have made it
A safety of things gloriously known,
To house his spirit from the darkness blowing
Out of the vast unknown: from me he hath
The wilful mind to make his fortune fair.

We hear a number of old favorites discoursing thus eloquently in *Emblems of Love*—Helen, Vashti, Judith and Holofernes, a pair of warrior cave-men, and finally the typical He and She of an achieved millennial world. In this last of the dialogues, before the *Marriage Song* and *Epilogue*, "She" clothes her passion in the following lofty lines:

What hast thou done to me!—I would have soul,
Before I knew thee, Love, a captive held
By flesh. Now, only delighted with desire,
My body knows itself to be nought else
But thy heart's worship of me; and my soul
Therein is sunlight held by warm gold air.
Nay, all my body is become a song
Upon the breath of spirit, a love-song.

To match this nobly rotund declaration of love, one must go back to Tennyson's lover in *The Princess*, whose passion so overwhelmed him that he cried:

Nay, but thee—

From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman through the crust of iron moods
That masked thee from men's reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood; now
Given back to life, to life indeed, through thee,
Indeed I love.

It took twenty more lines to clinch the affair with Tennyson's princess, and Mr. Abercrombie's He and She are even more expansive.

Mr. Untermeyer calls Mr. Abercrombie's type of product "metaphysical poetry." Without inquiring whether this phrase is a contradiction in terms, one might insist that *Emblems of Love* contains very little of either poetry or metaphysics, that it is merely a turgid, long-winded artificializing of certain grand old tales which only genius of a high order can touch to new beauty. To me the dullness of it is not atoned for by magic of sound or phrase, or by that swift breathless rightness of imagery with which the true poet surprises us. Mr. Abercrombie offers plenty of images—carefully thought out, elaborately wrought similes and metaphors set forth in his heavy, slow-pacing iambics according to the most approved classic rules; images which we follow at a respectful distance and without a thrill. Here is one, from the speech of a "tramp" in the dialogue *Blind*, in *Interludes and Poems*, published in 1908:

Fool, I have been

One of the mutiny that attempts God
And to take landing on the side of Heaven,
For foothold on the slippery peril of wall
Reaching and tearing at God's sheer resentment,
Still to be thrown down by the towering glass
A litter of upturned faces, gesturing
Against the calm front of his Sabbath's wall,
The desperate height of shining builded scorn.

Interludes and Poems, issued when the poet was only twenty-four, might be excused as one of the solemn follies of youth—youth over-educated and reeking with "metaphysical" wisdom. The five dramatic *Interludes* have each a large, profound, and usually tragic subject-motive, under

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which the pompous verse staggers, heavily overburdened. One is hardly convinced when God himself utters a speech of nearly fifty lines, beginning—

Simple this prayer is, smelling sweet to me,
Therefore I take it and begin my power:
Yea, I will largely let thee out of here,
Of being beautiful, otherwise tiring thee.

Nor does *The Seeker* persuade us when he says:

I have achieved. That which the lonely man
Spoke of, core of the world, that Self, I know.

with seventy lines more to explain the achievement.

At twenty-eight the poet should have matured somewhat, but *Emblems of Love* shows him still more deeply involved in the tangled meshes of an intellectually theorized and heavily artificialized art. He might have persisted in that manner to the end if the "new movement" hadn't begun about that time; for even in England the new movement, as expressed in Harold Monro's *Poetry and Drama* and the Georgian anthologies, meant something simpler than Mr. Abercrombie's style had as yet achieved. In the first *Georgian Poetry* we find his dialogue—between a sea captain, a doubting Thomas and a mysterious Stranger—a little more tolerable, though it moralizes tediously; and in the second his play, *The End of the World*, shows the beginning of an effort at modern diction and a less involved style—a necessary change, since the people are ordinary publicans and sinners. The play is stiffly talky, however, and its motive is too slight for all the pother of reflective or didactic speeches.

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Deborah, published in 1913, is another evidence of a change of heart. Even though still clogged and rhetorical, the style seems almost bare in comparison with the works above quoted, as the following passage shows:

That was not wind!

That was a hound's tongue! Deborah, you heard?
The beagles out of hell are loose in the wind,
The Gabriel hounds are running wild tonight!
Oh now, God rest the little one's soul—he died
Unchristened, and the Gabriel hounds are out!
Here we two sit and warm us at the fire,
And yonder in the darkness and the wind
The little soul of Miriam's still-born child
Runs crying from the mouths of the Gabriel hounds!

Deborah is a good example of the tragedy deliberate, descriptive and static, so to speak; tragedy which is willed by the author rather than decreed by fate, in which the characters are pulled by strings instead of impelled by their own mysterious and unreasoning volition. The plot—or rather the three plots, for the three acts fall apart—is perfectly reasonable, indeed too reasonable. But it lacks spontaneity, the breath of life; and therefore we are not convinced when Miriam and Deborah run out into the deadly marsh.

Mr. Abercrombie seems to the writer the extreme example of the kind of thing that is the matter with much modern English poetry. His over-intellectualized motives, and his lush and leaden involved style have been admired too much by the Georgians. And so we feel impelled to record our divergence from Mr. Drinkwater's publicly announced opinion.

H. M.

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REVIEWS

NECTAR AND SYRUP

Collected Poems, by Walter de la Mare (2 vols.) Henry Holt & Co.

A fit of admiration for de la Mare's works has upset the U. S. A. and her newspapers. But every newspaper article I have read is a weak jumble, done in a strange attitude of self-defense. One of the last champions of rhyme is passing—if this chance is lost, rhyme is to be an entirely lost proposition: this is what they seem to say.

This chance is not completely lost. Walter de la Mare is a good rhymers, one of the very best of today. Indeed, he is probably the sweetest rhymers of today. His *Peacock Pie* poems and his *Poems for Childhood* are clever and darling. They are not the drooling child-poems one often meets with. They are good old-fashioned child-poems and a little more: there is a naively mystical note in most of them, and bright new humor.

And so *Listeners*, *Motley* and the previous book, *Poems 1906*, contain poems that have a hauntingly sweet music, and others the mysticism of which is real, sweet and naive; also landscapes delicately drawn, like this one:

Snow at break of day,
On fields forlorn and bare.
For shadow it hath rose,
Azure and amethyst;
And every air that blows
Dies out in beauteous mist.

But too many other poems strike us as Maxfield Parrish's pictures do; they are at first sight lovely; but then, to more scrupulous eyes, this loveliness becomes falsity. They are embellishments rather than works of beauty. The naiveté of them is studied, and they are childish where they should be simple. The truthfulness of the image is sacrificed for the sake of vividness, with the effect that a short-lived vividness is attained which dies under scrupulous eyes. Thus the famous moonlight poem, where everything is silver even to the paws of the sleeping dog and the snout of the running rat, is essentially a falsified picture. Stripped of truthfulness, all that remains of it is a sometimes pleasing jingle.

As for his much discussed use of hackneyed words, symbols, colors, music—inasmuch as this is the age-old vice of poets and scribblers, there is nothing to say in de la Mare's defense. And inasmuch as our times have witnessed a quite wonderful movement towards complete newness in poetry, Mr. de la Mare, for this serious fault of his, may be called unoriginal. It is extenuating that the quaint delightful music of some of his poems gains in quaintness by the use of words which, if hackneyed, have a certain traditional flavor. But the worst of it is that this use of hackneyed language and forms springs from a lack of faith in today; and moreover it is made possible by the fact that nothing very actual concerns Mr. de la Mare, for were he concerned in things that require to be expressed in a modern language he would use it. Here we find fairies and witches of the old type, we find knights and damsels instead of guys and janes. Why not give us

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today's witches? There are some. And why not give us, if not guys and janes, today's knights and damsels? There are some.

However, the critic should not say, "Why not?" He is concerned in the work of art as it is and not as it should be. Well, let us admit then that we have seen these witches, these damsels, these knights before, in a hundred books of the past. De la Mare is a repeater. Not a bad one, but for that reason he is just so much less a poet. He is a poet of abstract sentiment chiefly. And in this abstraction we detect a lack of roots, a lack of force. Even most of his landscapes are, as we have said, embellishments of old models; and the only human beings in these books are some characters from Shakespeare.

Like many poets, Walter de la Mare belongs in the class of sentimental rejecters of reality and today. His mysticism, what there is of it, is therefore a weak thing, a negation rather than an exuberance. His music has the melodious sweetness of a luxury, rather than of everyday song.

Among his best child poems we find this:

Ann! Ann!
Come quick as you can!
There's a fish that talks
In the frying pan.

He put up his mouth
And moaned "Alas!"
Oh, most mournful—
"Alas, alack!"
Then turned to his sizzling,
And sank him back.

We must say it again, some of these child poems are as delightful as Mother Goose's. *E. Carnevali*

ONE POET

Advice, by Maxwell Bodenheim, Alfred A. Knopf.

The Forerunner: His Parables and Poems, by Kahlil Gibran, Alfred A. Knopf.

Neighbors, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Macmillan Co.

The Birds and Other Poems, by J. C. Squire. George H. Doran Co.

Songs While Wandering, by A. Newberry Choyce. John Lane Co.

There are three Englishmen, one Syrian and one American in this list; and patriots may stand up and cheer, since the single American has written the only book among them that is worth any serious consideration. I shall postpone my comment upon it to the end.

Mr. Choyce sings some old songs while wandering. His chief distinction seems to be that he was wounded in action, and has just completed a lecture tour through our West, South and Middle-west. The publishers themselves think so, for they let these important matters take first place in their wrapper description and add a few perfunctory words about charm, lyric qualities, etc. To these casualties were added a small gift for rhyming, and a grateful heart. So we have variations on the theme of God's own country, rocky mountains, peaceful valleys, descriptions of soulful meetings

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with a Mormon maid and an Indian princess, and other tender damsels, varied with nice longings for Home (England, in the sheltering sea, etc.) and Mother. It is quite as if the English Captain in Shaw's *Great Catherine* had traveled here, and appreciatively burst into poetry. The only comfort one can get is that Mr. Choyce is evidently quite young and has years of self-awareness before him.

In language that is simple and apt, that even rises to a quiet poignancy, a pervading suspense that is truly stirring, Mr. Gibson's *Neighbors* is a gathering of those intimate biographies that catch a life-time on one pivotal perception. This, the larger part of the book, gives it some distinction. If read too consecutively, impressions are dulled by a monotony of theme and treatment. Mr. Gibson is skilful in weaving his spell, but he cannot escape it himself; one finds the same emotions underlying, the same moods pervading all the poems. In the end one rises from the book, having fed upon fare touched with a faint savour of the bread of Elysium; and been made hungrier thereby. The other poems are mainly occasional pieces of little importance.

We have had conductor-music, and now we have editor-poetry. J. C. Squire presents charming, well worked, intelligent poems which show discrimination and taste. I have the impression, in reading his book, of skilful parodies upon some unknown and invisible poet. There is disproportionate intellectuality, but it entertains and stimulates even if it tends merely to wear a path around old emotions. It is, after all, something to get the careful expression of a highly

cultured, versatile man, whose words have restraint and authority if not the compulsion of genius. The first impression is of admiration for work well done, for the faultless architecture of his metaphors, and the unobtrusive efficiency of his rhythms.

Parables and prose poems like those in *The Forerunner*, by Kahlil Gibran, will have all the unpopularity of sermons outside the pulpit. The form itself, that of free, self-responsible utterance, gives an irritating finality to the content, which a world grown skeptical is tempted to snub. There is in this book neither the stark authenticity of prophecy, nor the beautiful crystallizations of a creative imagination. What we have here is pompous dramatizations of only half-individualized platitudes; sounding sufficiently sad-true, through a mist of fine language, to catch the attention with mirages. The accompanying drawings, in dim shadow-shape and vague lines, give a fine touch of completeness to the book, supplying a somewhat needed justification for the text. Incidentally, this volume should be praised as a specimen of bookmaking. Mr. Knopf has been conscientious in making out his list; and he has been careful, as other progressive publishers have not, to give each book an appropriate format.

Mr. Bodenheim's book is a garland of persistently new flowers, so different that a myth might be made of the strange sap in these short stems, of the new designs made by the cluster of the petals, the new color, new flesh; and of the truly terrifying fact that there are no roots—or at least none that are visible or palpable or explicable.

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We know that Bodenheim's faith is an exaltation of form "—out of his own mouth" if we were inclined to a polemic. What philosophy has not been enunciated a thousand times, what beauty has not been celebrated over and over, what sunrise, sunset, moon, sea, or mountain has not been published into notoriety by a timeless following of rhapsodists! Nothing that a man can touch but is mottled over with fingerprints. The business of the poet then, if he is not to add merely a new and more or less unrecognizable parody, is to mold his material into a new shape, to give creative individuality a play in fashioning an ultimate appearance.

Actually Bodenheim has done more. He has found new themes, going to neglected or forbidden realms to find them. And he has come to them with a new attitude, enabling him to equip his foundry with new molds.

In doing this, in not making his poems a personal synthesis of instinctively selective preferences, in seeming to have written suddenly and on impulse, without drawing matter and manner from confessed admirations or self-fertilizing memories, Bodenheim has actually proved himself an original poet. He has broken through where so many others have wandered in circles, have taken vague new paths and come dishearteningly back to their starting-places; where so many others, less self-sufficient, have fallen into impotent night-radiances of disintegration.

A new attitude is a rare achievement, and originality an enviable state of blessedness. One may well believe that new words and new meanings are needed for its expression,

and forgive the inversions, ellipses, forced embraces, exaggerations and diminutions, of his vocabulary. But it has its penalty. To what conflagration Mr. Bodenheim's fire may lead to is impossible to say, but its flame is small and illuminates a little space only. One misses in his work exactly that contact with a literary evolution which enables lesser poets over cleared fields to cover wider areas.

It is impossible to miss or fail to enjoy the exhilaration of this verse. Like the composers who have transformed music, who have swelled the orchestra with new instruments, who have added to each section whole new gamuts, and in daring new combinations have made the orchestra more articulate: so Bodenheim is widening the scope of words; his verbs are quivering with new gestures; his adjectives are suffused with new and subtle colors; his nouns cry out new names; his pronouns enter strange new relationships; and the juxtapositions of phenomenal contrasts and harmonies have added new sounds, deeper and more sonorous, or shriller and more piercing.

But just as the new composers as yet are finding it hard enough work to utter the new sounds, and have hardly begun to sing songs with them; so Bodenheim has, in my opinion, found it hard enough work to fashion the new meanings of words, without attempting to say much with them. His poems, be they about grass-blades or men, have a final common appearance; because their subjects are not inspirations, but serve, like the string in the chemical precipitate, merely to focus crystallization. Any string would do as

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well; and to provide himself a store of strings we find the poet tending to make catalogues; he gives advice impartially to a large list of things and it occurs to me that he would give the same advice to any fortuitous association of subjects; that Bodenheim had to give advice, and it didn't matter to whom. So we find him drawing a series of portraits. So we find him wearily stretching out to the stock figures—to prostitutes, Pierrots, etc.

There is no quarrel with this. It seems to be Mr. Bodenheim's destiny to break the molecules of words into atoms of meanings, and to indicate crudely the possible new associations. No doubt other poets will use them for greater speech.

Isidor Schneider

TEACHER-POETS

The Roamer and Other Poems, by George Edward Woodberry. Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

Sonnets from a Prison Camp, by Archibald Allen Bowman. John Lane Co.

When one reads Dr. Woodberry's poems, the question arises, why does this man's work occupy so high a place in the minds of many supposedly discriminating people? There is even a Woodberry Society—the only society dedicated to a living American writer. Yet Dr. Woodberry's poetry is merely the careful, well-wrought work of a cultivated gentleman, trained in literary traditions and familiar with the world of books.

I wonder if the explanation is not to be found in the prevalent American theory that because a man is successful in one field he is necessarily to be treated with reverence in every other field. The average citizen believes that because Henry Ford has made millions of dollars building automobiles he is an authority on the single tax, the Jews, the theory of relativity, the internal problems of Santo Domingo, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. The relatively learned gentlemen who comprise the Woodberry Society may not swallow such bunk as that, but they share mildly in the popular hallucination. Dr. Woodberry was a great, even a delightful, university teacher. A census of the Woodberry Society would probably show a comfortable majority impressed originally with their hero's pedagogical ability and personal charm. He was a great teacher; ergo he is a great poet.

Dr. Woodberry's latest volume contains a long spiritual narrative, *The Roamer*, in blank verse; a sonnet sequence, *Ideal Passion*; and a number of other sonnets and lyrics. Technical excellence a-plenty is found in all the poems; so is conventional but sincere idealism. What is lacking is intensity. There is about the emotions an unearthly pallor. Austerity, the quality which the poems most nearly approach, is just missed—and missed because they are lit not by the consuming white flame of experience, but by the clear, cold, steady light of intellectual reflection.

Sonnets from a Prison Camp is also the work of a teacher. Dr. Bowman, now professor of philosophy in Princeton

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University, was an officer in the British army and was taken prisoner by the Germans. The hundred or more sonnets dealing with his experiences are too numerous unless exceedingly good, which these are not. They are interesting, but they give an impression mainly of craftsmanship. There is too much emphasis on ethical and esthetic theory—not surprising in a professor of philosophy. Moreover, the sonnets tend to form an explicit rather than an implicit narrative, whereas the sonnet sequence, being a succession of lyrics, is best adapted to the opposite.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

TWO BOOKS OF REFUGE

Black Marigolds, translated by E. Powys Mathers.

The Dark Mother, by Waldo Frank. Boni & Liveright.

There be two deluges, everlasting. One is the deluge of new poetry, which one may witness at the POETRY office; the other is the deluge of new novels from England, aggravated by the indigenous rain.

This month we, the lovers of poetry, stand on a rock out of the one deluge; and on a raft over the second deluge. The rock is a little yellow pamphlet, decorated with strange black scrawls, *Black Marigolds*; the raft is a novel, *The Dark Mother*, by the author of *Our America*.

Whoever thought of Sanskrit? Whoever heard of Chauras? And who is E. Powys Mathers?

Here is one of the most beautiful poems I ever read. It

Two Books of Refuge

is the love poem of Chauras, a young man of nineteen hundred years ago, dying for having loved the king's daughter.

If I see her body beaten about with flame,
Wounded by the flaring spear of love. . . .
Then is my heart buried alive in snow.

Seeing the stupendous wealth of expression in this ancient poem, so beautifully rendered by Mr. Mathers, we dreamed that in those days there were only poets living in a beautiful world, only poetic words to be spoken. But the pitiful struggle of the beautiful is eternal; and here too we have a glimpse of it, where eternal love and death are sung:

They chatter her weakness through the two bazaars,
Who was so strong to love me. And small men,
That buy and sell for silver, being slaves,
Crinkle the fat about their eyes; and yet
No Prince of the Cities of the Sea has taken her,
Leading to his grim bed. Little lonely one,
You clung to me as a garment clings, my girl.

A delightfully quaint flavor is given to the poem by the slightly ungrammatical expressions and punctuation. In the translator's own words: "I have tried, by not letting my verse become a coherent lyric poem in the English sense, to keep its disjointed air."

This is one of those cases in which we cannot do better than quote:

I see her—far face blond like gold,
Rich with small lights, and tinted shadows
Over and over all of her. . . .

Her scented arms
Lay like cool bindweed over against my neck.

When slow rose-yellow moons looked out at night,

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To guard the sheaves of harvest and mark down
The peach's fall, how calm she was and love-worthy!

The salt of the whispers of my girl,
Murmurs of confused colors as we lay near sleep;
Little wise words and little witty words,
Wanton as water, honied with eagerness.

We may recall, here, another beautiful love-death, that of Wagner's Tristan and Yseult. The experience that became song for Chauras cost him his young life.

A brief notice only of the other book. The reason why we so much as mention *The Dark Mother* here is that we have found in this book what is very seldom to be found in a novel—poetry.

It is a book of sensitive health. The symbol for the first fifty pages might be a tall-stemmed flower quivering in a sweet even breeze. There is such delicacy, mixed with such extreme health, that we are reminded of the antennæ of insects:

The air moved toward the mountain; the waves and the trees and the earth moved toward the mountain. All the world moved gently upward toward the mountain like a tide. The mountain moved downward toward earth, spilled water and spread trees in it.

This David is a man of perfect senses, perfect eyes:

And David saw the breathing of the woods, the warm comfort of trees that had grown up together and knew their silences. They were clothed in a sweet sanctity of resolve and repose. They took the rain with faint bowed heads.

Lovers of poetry owe at least an acknowledgment to this book of honest prose, which is full of beautiful words—a real gardenful.

E. Carnevali

CELTIC FAIRIES

Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland (2 vols.), collected and arranged by Lady Gregory, with two essays and notes by W. B. Yeats. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Irish Fairy Tales, by James Stephens, illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Macmillan Co.

The Boy Apprenticed to an Enchanter, by Padraic Colum, illustrated by Dugald Stewart Walker. Macmillan Co.

Although the books here listed are not strictly in POETRY'S province, their highly imaginative content places them so near it that we must recommend them briefly to our readers.

Lady Gregory's beautiful and scholarly work presents the raw material out of which the modern Irish poets, headed by Synge and Yeats, have shaped masterpieces, and from which their successors will continue to draw so long as there are Irish poets. In setting forth thus the "Celtic consciousness of an imminent supernaturalism," the distinguished editor uses the names and the exact language of the individuals who tell the tales, giving thus to her book the value of direct testimony, as well as the vigor and beauty of that folk-diction which Synge has immortalized. The scope of the work is indicated by such sectional sub-titles as *Sea Stories, Seers and Healers, The Evil Eye, Banshees and Warnings, Friars and Priest Cures*. Mr. Yeats' essays and notes are of course not only competent but sympathetic.

Mr. Stephens' beautiful book is a poet's retelling of some of the old Celtic folk-tales, tales handed down from long ago in the manner Lady Gregory's collection makes us under-

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stand. It goes without saying that the tales are shaped into compact form by this close stylist without loss of simplicity and charm. And Mr. Rackham's illustrations are a return to his best manner and most imaginative mood.

This book and Mr. Colum's are for children in the sense only that some of the world's best literature has been so intended; but no grown-up who loves imaginative and poetic folk stories should deny himself the pleasure of such work by poets at play. One is "apprenticed to an enchanter" in reading Mr. Colum's book; and his paraphrases of the classic epics—Homer, the Norse sagas, etc.—may also be recommended to any child, young or old, as examples of vivid and beautiful imaginative prose. H. M.

A LITTLE SCHOOL FOR THE ELECT

The Little School, by T. Sturge Moore. Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

The little school for which Mr. Moore writes his lovely book is obviously the sort of school that an artist like Mr. Moore would plan. Its teacher would be a painter or engraver or poet, while the pupils would be girls and boys with the vision and the appreciation of the developing artist.

Naturally this is not the kind of school or book that children nourished on the red and yellow humor of Rudolph Dirks or even the monotonous wholesomeness of *The Youth's Companion* will greatly care for. It is too quiet, too reflective, too full of beauty. But this fact is not against it. The child with parent or teacher of sense and apprecia-

Homespun

tion will find in the volume—perhaps not “realms of gold”, but at least places where blow the many winds, always things of mystery to children and not to children alone; where, as Mr. Moore himself says,

None comes, none goes,
But the wind knows.

And the man or woman will find in the poems as much as the boy or girl; indeed, to almost any child, without guidance, the book is likely to be a bit recondite. *N. A. C.*

HOMESPUN

Rhymes of a Homesteader, by Elliott C. Lincoln. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This is a book of western verse, much of it of the homely familiar kind in dialect which passes current as good newspaper verse. It is hard to establish a line by which one can say of verse of this sort: This is a counterfeit of the genuine homespun, and this, on the other hand, is the real stuff. Several of the poems in this book rise above the counterfeit and approach the real thing, but the majority are written down with that careful colloquial carelessness which fails of its effect just because of its too apparent condescension. The naiveté of genuine folk homespun is not assumed. An author may achieve the folk quality because he is naive really; or he may achieve it through conscious simplicity; but not merely through rhyming dialect or colloquial non-chalance.

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One may be severe on this score, because Mr. Elliott's best poems are so far beyond the rest. *Wheel Tracks, The Homesteader, The Sheepherder, Forty Below, The Chinook,* and *The Third Year* give promise of a much finer development of the author's talent. A. C. H.

MR. BYNNER'S SKIT

Pins for Wings, by Emanuel Morgan. The Sunwise Turn, New York.

Mr. Bynner must have had a beautiful time with himself working out these thumb-nail caricatures. There are too many for them all to be clever, of course; but a few have the delicate tang of wit.

"A hamadryad in the tree of knowledge" is not bad for Miss Millay, or "Overalls rhyming" for Walt Mason. "A cardinal on a merry-go-round" is still better, perhaps, for Mr. Chesterton. "A graphophone in the morgue" is only a half-success for Edgar Lee Masters, and "A colored postcard as Hamlet" does not quite hit off adequately the cruelly battered egoism of Cale Young Rice.

But the masterpiece of wit which would excuse a volume of failures, the portrait complete and satisfying which leaves nothing more to be said, is this of George Edward Woodberry:

Grape-juice
In the Holy Grail.

A word of praise also for Mr. Saphier's line-drawings, and for one or two of Mr. Opffer's sketches. H. M.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

BOND OR FREE?

They are still talking about free verse—both pro and con; although the champions of both sides insist that the discussion is closed, and the poets continue to do as they please and get their poems printed. We commend to Mr. Tom Daly and other fulminators the following contribution to the controversy from a recent number of the *Mercure de France*. It is part of the theatrical review of Dec. 15, 1920, by Maurice Boissard:

To say that rhyme is poetry, that there is no poetry where there isn't rhyme, is to express the worst poetic routine. Let's take an example—José-Maria de Hérédia, if you will. You know the sonnets of *Trophées*. God knows that those lines rhyme, but is it poetry, in the true sense of the word? Not in the least. It is versification—extremely brilliant, we admit, but still mere versification. It is made for the eye, for the ear, not for the spirit or the soul. It is a sequence of *tours de force*, a show of patience, suggestively like certain complicated trinkets manufactured with tiny shells by meticulous maniacs. Do you want a more general argument? You certainly have read poems by foreign poets translated into French line by line and without any rhyme because the translator had in mind only the thought of being faithful to the significance of the poem itself. Have you felt the penetrating charm of these translations?—a charm due solely to the feeling expressed, to the landscape described; charm that the lack of rhyme left untouched, or even increased, by means of those essentially poetic elements: vagueness, imprecision, indecision, all that which is poetry itself. Rhyme, with its dryness, its regularity, its monotony, its mechanical quality and exterior brilliance, would have left nothing of that beauty; or at any rate would have decidedly impaired it. Rhyme is nothing but a poetic make-up, a way to look like poets for people who know no better than to make verses; and it is high time to follow the advice Verlaine gave, to *tordre enfin le cou à ce bijou d'un sou*.

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Not only rhyme is not poetry, but moreover it is an encumbrance, an obstacle to poetry; for its sake the poet falsifies his inspiration.

Probably Mr. Daly's favorite magazine is *Scribner's*, for we read in one of its recent advertisements:

The four or more poems contained in a representative number of *Scribner's* are joyous, lyrical, and well-conceived. Such themes as the bird on the bough, summer in Arcady, the little silver strip of road, are preferred over grave or mournful subjects. Yet all poems must conform to a high standard of dignity and distinctiveness.

CORRESPONDENCE

CONCERNING "KORA IN HELL"

Dear POETRY:—Writers, quite as much in the countries of older art tradition as in America, may be divided into two classes: one the professionals, whose concern is style, technique, finished achievement; the other, those who attempt at least to explore and develop new experience. The former class restrict themselves generally to quite conventional themes; or, if they are very daring, develop for themselves new themes—about which they write "verses"—ultimately hardening into a manner, inherited or their own, and softening in so far as ability to penetrate deeply goes. Limiting ourselves strictly to America, we may mention such poets of the first class as Masters, Sandburg, Aiken—the list need stop short of only a very few names. Particularly with Sandburg may one be sure that he will take an image, and consciously sustain and develop it, long after he has lost poignant feeling for the validity of the image. He is a

Concerning "Kora in Hell"

professional writer. He has learned, in his own manner to be sure, how to use the image, the metaphor, the brutal truth, and the sentimental humanitarianism. So, starting out with the statement that the moon is a pot of gold mud, he must have that gold mud spread over worldly possessions, and of course at last a love-woman. He, and many others, seem to feel that it is necessary to write—if not an authentic poem, to write anyway. Unless from an impulse to say something keenly felt, writing is without justification.

Of this first group few pass from their adolescent rebellions and miseries into a more spiritual type of searching. Their discovery of experience is limited to material environment—the corn-fields, the marching men, small-town viciousness, the hog-butchers of industrialism. Outside, and perhaps controlling the forces back of these externalities, are more fundamental forces which they do not sense, forces which have a universal application, while retaining also a strictly local significance. The experience of the locality is after all that of the universe. The history of any individual relates itself with startling similarity to that of the age.

Today is a time of the breakdown of faiths amongst the so-called "sensitized" and "intellectuals." With the coming of the theory of evolution the more sublime metaphysical theories were gradually abandoned; pragmatism, with its doctrines concerning the usable realities, followed on to lubricate the joints of a mechanistic universe. However, where a few began to doubt the value of these "practical" answers before the war, literally thousands now doubt. Why

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should we believe in evolution which does not explain evolution, or the quite evident lack of progress? Have we anything to prove that physically and spiritually the human species is not on the retrograde? What is morality?—is non-morality a possibility? Dogmatized, it becomes at last a degenerate morality—must all ethics be individualized then? Many questionings, cynicisms, scoffings and doubtings attack all former judgments, and demand that their defenders prove their basis, and indicate clearly that it is something other than blind faith, or inward hunger rhapsodized into a proclamatory religion made out of dream-stuff. Ecstatic faith and prophetic exaltation are too primitive to be explainable in the religious instinct—for, say Whitman—to satisfy the diagnostic mind, and the psychologist.

Whatever certain groups or individuals may think or feel, the civilized peoples of the world are groping for some basis of faith: a faith in the mere value of living out their lives rather than a religious explanation of existence. But there is a new difficulty in their groping: they no longer trust logic, sequence, order—the intelligible, rational, deducible.

It is writers who are sensitive to this baseless way of accepting life, or rather tolerating it because life is what we have, who are developing the so-called “modern forms.” Both *modern* and *form* are words that signify too much traditionally, and too little actually. To qualify, let me say I mean by modern that which is of the quality of today, displaying sensitive consciousness of the age’s attitudes and

Concerning "*Kora in Hell*"

philosophies. By form I mean method of expression and conveyance, and I have no concern with any structural form—metrical, rhythmic, or geometric.

James Joyce with his prose first indicated the modern form. Possibly his style could be traced back to the oftentimes incoherent Rimbaud; the likeness here is purely a mode—the texture, quality of perception, attitude, and substance are quite different: the one has the mature detached mind; the other tossed himself with the seething of adolescence into the field of sophisticated discovery, and perhaps when adolescence and its ragings were over he would have relapsed into quite conventional or mediocre writing.

In America William Carlos Williams, and he beginning only with his improvisations entitled *Kora in Hell*, is conscious of the new form in relation to the dubiety of the day. Not agnosticism, for the agnostic will say "I can't know" decisively; we are simply doubting, and doubting whether we are right in doubting. There is in this book the spasmodic quality of the active, imaginative, alternately frightened and reckless, consciousness. One will search in vain for sequential outline; it is incoherent and unintelligible to—may I say the ordinary mind, though I dislike the superior implication of self which the phrase carries with it? (Since minds are so elusive, none is actually ordinary.) It is incoherent and unintelligible to those people with lethargy of their sensing organs. They look for the order and neatness of precise, developed thought. It is not there. *Kora in Hell* is accepted as a portrait of Williams' consciousness—a sort

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of retouched photograph. He is not distinctly located to himself—it's a "Should I, or shouldn't I, and what if I don't?" It's a conscientious sensitive mind, or life organism; trained in childhood to staid and tried acceptances and moralities, trying to be open, and to think, sense, or leap to a footing which more acceptably justifies the life-process than any of the traditional footings seem to.

To me *Kora in Hell* is immeasurably the most important book of poetry that America has produced. I find in Whitman a hardened exaltation, which proclaims rhapsodic dogmatism—the result of physical well-being, of the freedom of open air, space, and green fields. Admirable in its day, but the day is by for those of us who live in cities such as New York and Chicago, and who perhaps have never seen a real prairie or the mountains of the Great Divide, and who sleep in tenement-house bedrooms several stories up from the soil which flavors Indian imagism and produces sweep-of-the-corn-sap-flowing rhythms. And we will not accept the statement that "it is regrettable we have never had these things." Our situation is our situation, and by the artist can be utilized as substance for art. There can be no turning back to the soil, to the Indians—literature is not thus consciously developed. We are here, in the cities of smoke, subways, tired faces, industrialism; here with the movies and their over-gorgeousness, and the revues and follies which gradually inject their ultra-coloration into vaudeville; here where it is deemed necessary to applaud "art things"—Mozart and Schumann music, established classics which fall

Concerning "Kora in Hell"

dully upon our hyper-neurotic senses. Be the conditions hectic, heated, artificial (are economic, political and social forces then "not natural"?) they are the conditions of a great portion of the country.

For those who wish poetry to create some sublime beauty, which to others grows irksome since it is necessary to turn from its sublimity to the reality of existence, William Carlos Williams' *Kora in Hell* will mean little. To those however who rather like to have the record of somebody else's conscious states by which to check their own, with which to respond and commune, it will mean a great deal. The writer, not caring for literature as literature; not knowing what function it performs in life other than that of a mental decoration if it does not get into, reveal, and sensitize people to, new experience; believes, however, that no book previously produced in this country has been so keenly, vividly aware of age conceptions, qualities, colors, noises, and philosophies as *Kora in Hell*. It is a break-away from poetry written by poets who set out to be poets. It is adventurous exploration.

Robert McAlmon

NOTES

Mr. Lew Sarett, whose interpretations of Chippewa life are familiar to our readers, is now a resident of Evanston, Ill., being in the faculty of Northwestern University. His book, *Many Many Moons*, was published last year by Henry Holt & Co.

Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke, of Davenport, Iowa, has recently returned from his eight-months' sojourn in China and Japan. His latest book of verse is *An April Elegy*, published by Mitchell Kennerley in 1917.

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Mr. Lee Wilson Dodd, who lives near New Haven, Conn., is the author of a number of plays and two books of verse. Of these the later is *The Middle Miles and Other Poems* (Yale University Press, 1915).

Mr. H. Thompson Rich, of Rutherford, N. J., has contributed to various magazines.

The other poets of this number appear for the first time in POETRY, and none of them has printed a volume as yet, so far as the editor is aware.

Elinor Wylie (Mrs. Horace Wylie), who lives in Washington, D. C., has contributed to other periodicals.

Mr. Edward Townsend Booth, of New York, served with the A. E. F., and later went to Ukrainia to do relief work.

Mr. Carroll Lane Fenton, whose specialty is paleontology, is now working at the Walker Museum, University of Chicago. He is a member of the U. of C. Poetry Club.

Grace Stone Coates (Mrs. Henderson Coates) lives in Martinsdale, Mont.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Punch: the Immortal Liar*, by Conrad Aiken. Alfred A. Knopf.
Verses, by William Grant McCooley, Jr. Privately printed, Milwaukee, Wis.
Pools of Glass and Other Poems, by Cyrus Caswell Johnson. Privately printed, Los Angeles, Cal.
Cactus Center, by Arthur Chapman. Houghton Mifflin Co.
The Broads—1919, by Hugh Money-Coutts. John Lane Co.
Forgotten Shrines, by John Chipman Farrar. (Yale Series of Younger Poets.) Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn.
Star-dust and Gardens, by Virginia Taylor McCormick. Plimpton Press, Norwood, Mass.
Borderlands, Kitchener of Khartoum and Other Poems, by Benj. C. Moomaw. Privately printed, Barber, Va.
The Choice of Paris and Other Poems, by D. C. Chase. Privately printed, Cedar Rapids, Ia.
The Attic of the Past and Other Lyrics, by Louis Ginsberg. Small, Maynard & Co.
Outlaws, by Nancy Cunard. Elkin Mathews, London.
Breakers and Granite, by John Gould Fletcher. Macmillan Co.
Poems, by Mary Allen Keller. Privately printed, Yorba Linda, Cal.

DEAR POETRY: I always feel that I ought to renew my thanks for your enterprise and faith, which are so ceaselessly at work on the task of renewing me.

Ferdinand Schevill

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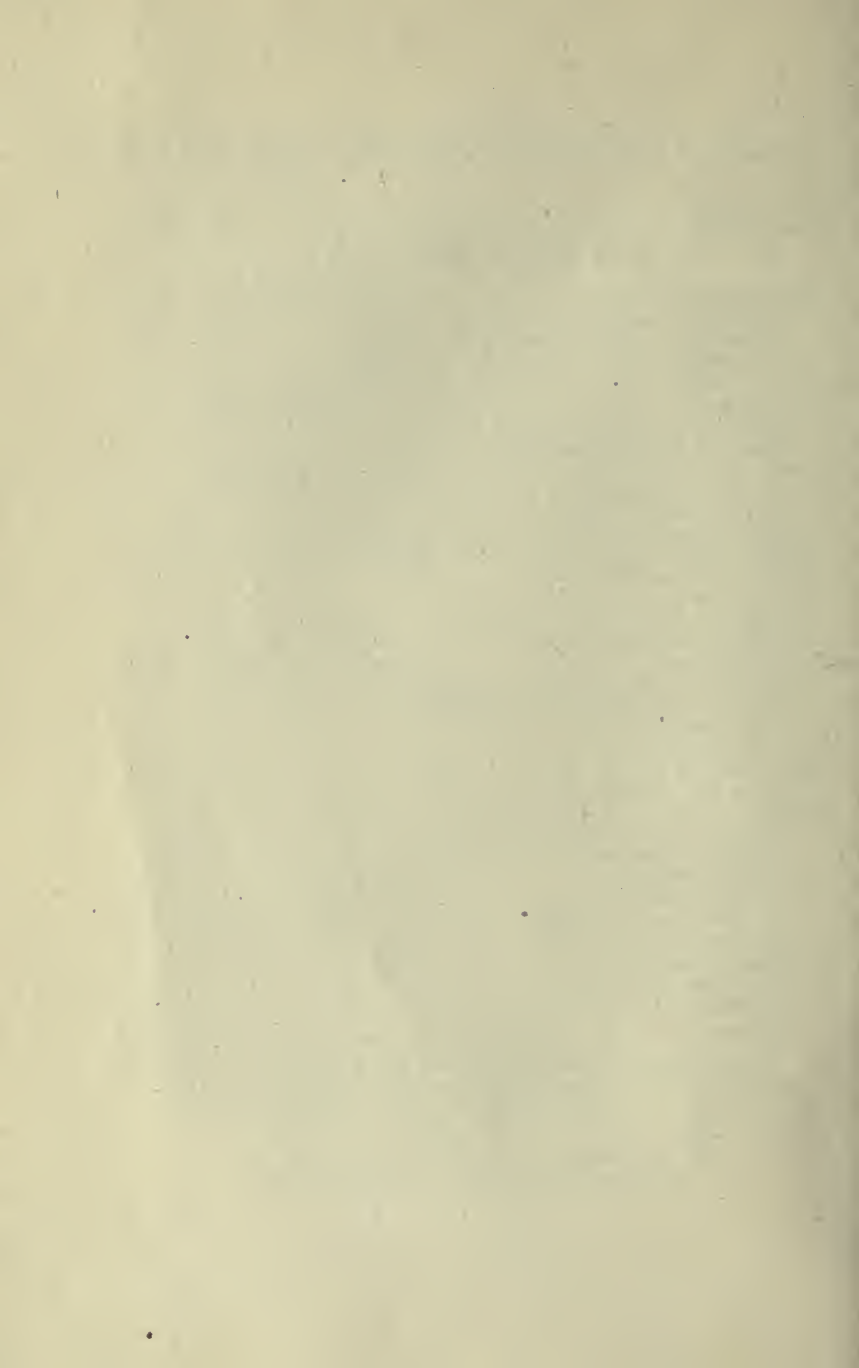
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 **oetry**
A Magazine of Verse

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SAPPHO ANSWERS ARISTOTLE

IMPULSIVE DIALOGUE

POET. Will you, like other men,
Offer me indigo indignities?

Undertaker. Indigo indignities!

The words are like a mermaid and a saint
Doubting each other's existence with a kiss.

Poet. The words of most men kiss
With satiated familiarity.

Indigo is dark and vehement,
But one word in place of two
Angers barmaids and critics.

Undertaker. Straining after originality,
You argue with its ghost!
A simple beauty, like morning

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Harnessed by a wide sparkle
And plodding into the hearts of men,
Cannot reach your frantic juggling.

Poet. I can appreciate
The spontaneous redundancy of nature
Without the aid of an echo
From men who lack her impersonal size.

Undertaker. The sweeping purchase of an evening
By an army of stars;
The bold incoherence of love;
The peaceful mountain-roads of friendship—
These things evade your dexterous epigrams!

Poet. A statue, polished and large,
Dominates when it stands alone.
Placed in a huge profusion of statues,
Its outlines become humiliated.
Simplicity demands one gesture
And men give it endless thousands.
Complexity wanders through a forest,
Glimpsing details in the gloom.

Undertaker. I do not crave the dainty pleasure
Of chasing ghosts in a forest!
Nor do I care to pluck
Exaggerated mushrooms in the gloom.
I have lost myself on roads
Crossed by tossing hosts of men.
Pain and anger have scorched our slow feet:
Peace has washed our foreheads.

Poet. Futility, massive and endless,
Captures a stumbling grandeur
Embalmed in history.
In my forest you could see this
From a distance, and lose
Your limited intolerance.
Simplicity and subtlety
At different times are backgrounds for each other,
Changing with the position of our eyes. . . .
Death will burn your eyes
With his taciturn complexity.

Undertaker. Death will strike your eyes
With his wild simplicity!

Poet. Words are soldiers of fortune
Hired by different ideas
To provide an importance for life.
But within the glens of silence
They meet in secret peace. . . .
Undertaker, do you make of death
A puffing wretch forever pursued
By duplicates of vanquished forms?
Or do you make him a sneering king
Brushing flies from his bloodless cheeks?
Do you see him as an unappeased brooding
Walking over the dust of men?
Do you make him an eager giant
Discovering and blending into his consciousness
The tiny parts of his limitless mind?

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Undertaker. Death and I do not know each other.

I am the stolid janitor
Who cleans the litter he has left
And claims a fancied payment.

Poet. Come to my fantastic forest
And you will not need to rise
From simple labors, asking death
For final wages.

EMOTIONAL MONOLOGUE

A man is sitting within the enigmatic turmoil of a railroad station. His face is narrow and young, and his nose, lips, and eyes, carved to a Semitic sharpness, have been sundered by a bloodless catastrophe. A traveling-bag stands at his feet. Around him people are clutching farewells and shouting greetings. Within him a monologue addresses an empty theatre.

I am strangling emotions
And casting them into the seats
Of an empty theatre.
When my lifeless audience is complete,
The ghosts of former emotions
Will entertain their dead masters.
After each short act
A humorous ghost will fly through the audience,
Striking the limp hands into applause,

And between the acts
Sepulchral indifference will mingle
With the dust upon the backs of seats.
Upon the stage a melodrama
And a travesty will romp
Against a back-drop of fugitive resignation.
Climax and anti-climax
Will jilt each other and drift
Into a cheated insincerity.
Sometimes the lights will retire
While a shriek and laugh
Make a martyr of the darkness.
When the lights reappear
An actor-ghost will assure the audience
That nothing has happened save
The efforts of a fellow ghost
To capture life again.
In his role of usher
Another ghost will arrange
The lifeless limbs of the audience
Into postures of relief.
Sometimes a comedy will trip
The feet of an assassin,
Declaring that if ghosts were forced
To undergo a second death
Their thinness might become unbearable.
At other times indignant tragedy
Will banish an intruding farce,

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Claiming that life should not retain
The luxury of another laugh.
The first act of the play will show
The owner of the theatre
Conversing with the ghost of a woman.
As unresponsive as stone
Solidly repelling a spectral world,
His words will keenly betray
The bloodless control of his features.
He will say: "With slightly lowered shoulders,
Because of a knife sticking in my back,
I shall trifle with crowded highways,
Buying decorations
For an interrupted bridal-party.
This process will be unimportant
To the workshop of my mind
Where love and death are only
Colorless problems upon a chart."
The ghost of the woman will say:
"Your mind is but the rebellious servant
Of sensitive emotions
And brings them clearer dominance."
And what shall I mournfully answer?
I am strangling emotions
And casting them into the seats
Of an empty theatre.

FEMININE TALK

First Woman. Do you share the present dread
Of being sentimental?

The world has flung its boutonnière
Into the mud, and steps upon it
With elaborate gestures!
Certain people do this neatly,
Using solemn words for consolation:
Others angrily stamp their feet,
Striving to prove their strength.

Second Woman. Sentimentality
Is the servant-girl of certain men
And the wife of others.
She scarcely ever flirts
With creative minds,
Striving also to become
Graceful and indiscreet.

First Woman. Sappho and Aristotle
Have wandered through the centuries,
Dressed in an occasional novelty—
A little twist of outward form.
They have always been ashamed
To be caught in a friendly talk.

Second Woman. When emotion and the mind
Engage in deliberate conversation,
One hundred nightingales
And intellectuals find a common ground,

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And curse the meeting of their slaves!

First Woman. The mind must only play
With polished relics of emotion,
And the heart must never lighten
Burdens of the mind.

Second Woman. I desire to be
Irrelevant and voluble,
Leaving my terse disgust for a moment.
I have met an erudite poet.
With a northern hardness
Motionless beneath his youthful robes.
He shuns the quivering fluencies
Of emotion, and shifts his dominoes
Within a room of tortured angles.
But away from this creative room
He sells himself to the whims
Of his wife, a young virago
With a calculating nose.
Beneath the flagrant pose
Of his double life
Emotion and the mind
Look disconsolately at each other.

First Woman. Lyrical abandon
And mental cautiousness
Must not mingle to a magic
Glowing, yet deliberate!

Second Woman. Never spill your wine
Upon a page of mathematics.

Drink it decently
Within the usual tavern.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE

First Man. We gaze upon a negro shoveling coal.
His muscles fuse into a poem
Stifled and sinister,
Censuring the happy rhetoric of morning air.
Some day he may pitch his tent
Upon the ruins of a civilization,
Playing with documents and bottles of perfume
Found in deserted corridors.

Second Man. Listen to this song
Dipped in the Negro South of America.

*She brought me collars and shoes.
She brought me whiskey and tea.
She brought me everything that I could use
But the jail-house key!*

Time inserts the jail-house key
Into a succession of rusty locks,
Straining until they open.
Do you hear, beneath the rattling strut
Of this city, an imperceptible groan?
Time is turning the jail-house key.
They build larger jails for Time:

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He makes larger keys of blood and iron,
But often the labor is delayed
By pausing squeals of freedom.

First Man. An insignificant jest
In the wider life of Time.
He has dropped to this earth
To play a barbarous comedy.
Philosophers loudly explain the scenes;
But poets, with greater restraint,
Tender them a masquerade.

Second Man. Once I sat and watched
A scientific philosopher
Place white lines on a black-board,
Diagraming his mighty system of logic.
While he worked, the wind outside
Squandered its derision
And offered him a cup he dared not drink.
Afterwards, in the open air,
The slash of rain on my face
Mockingly baptised his words.

First Man. To him the wind and rain
Were trivialities against a brick wall.

Second Man. To me they were tormented wanderers
Quarreling above a doll's house
Whose intricate patterns
Waited to be kicked aside.
I changed myself to a height
That made them whimpering pygmies,

Maxwell Bodenheim

And gave them grotesque costumes,
Enjoying the insolence of imagination.

First Man. The scientific philosopher
Raised his umbrella against the rain,
And communed with venerable argument.

Second Man. He was interested in improving
The lustre of a doll's house
In which I had left my small body.
Walls are enticing black-boards to some
And neglected prisons to others.
I prefer the second
Of tenuous bravado
That turns the prison into a threshold
And jests with the wind and rain that survive it.

Maxwell Bodenheim

THREE SONNETS

OLD WIVES' TALE

I saw my grandmother's shadow on the wall
In firelight; it danced with queer grimaces
As if her serious soul were making faces
At me or life or God or at us all.
And I, an urchin lying at her feet,
Then caught my first glimpse of the secret powers
That stir beneath this universe of ours,
Making a witches' carnival when they meet.
Across the firelit dusk my sensitive mood
Dreamed out to mingle with the waifs of Time
Whose unsolved stories haunt the poets' rhyme
And in dark streets of ancient cities brood—
Like sudden ghosts rising above the grime
With beauty and with terror that chills the blood.

HOLY WRIT

It does not seem so many years ago—
Those nights when I lay shivering in my bed
And saw the candle-light round my aunt's head
Casting its hazy sanctifying glow;
And heard her read strange story after story
Of Jonah, Adam, Moses, Esau, Ruth,

Arthur Davison Ficke

Of Solomon's old age and David's youth—
Things haunting, tender, terrible or gory.
Still can I see the Queen of Sheba's hair;
And all real lions are but mockery
To him who once knew Daniel's; there's no tree
That can with Eve's great Paradise Tree compare:
A golden light gleamed through that ancient air
That leaves me homesick in modernity.

THE BOOK OF LU T'ANG CHU

In the reign of the great Emperor Lu T'ang Chu
Wise men were ordered to inscribe in a book
All the great body of wisdom that men knew.
Today I turn the pages, and as I look
I cannot see anything very new or old,
And I wonder why it was worth the trouble, then,
Of days and nights and a thousand labors untold
Which the volume must have exacted from those wise men.
But still we write—and the Emperor now is blown
As grey dust over the limitless Asian plains.
Still we inscribe all that is humanly known,
Although no ruler honors us for our pains—
Recording a thousand wisdoms, all our own,
To celebrate our good and glorious reigns.

Arthur Davison Ficke

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THREE POEMS

CHARMIAN'S SONG

I'm glad I have but a little heart—
For my heart is very small:
It makes it free to come and go,
And no one cares at all.

I give my heart for a tender look,
For a gentle word or touch;
And the one who has it never knows,
And it does not hurt me much.

If my heart were great and I gave it away,
Then all the world would see;
But my heart is only a little thing
And it does not trouble me.

I may give my little heart unseen,
It is so small and light;
And only very wakeful things
Can hear it cry at night.

FOR ALL LADIES OF SHALOTT

The web flew out and floated wide:
Poor lady!—I was with her then.
She gathered up her piteous pride,
But she could never weave again.

Aline Kilmer

The mirror cracked from side to side;
I saw its silver shadows go:
"The curse has come on me!" she cried.
Poor lady!—I had told her so.

She was so proud, she would not hide;
She only laughed and tried to sing.
But singing in her song she died;
She did not profit anything.

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

The heart knoweth? If this be true indeed,
Then the thing that I bear in my bosom is not a heart,
For it knows no more than a hollow, whispering reed
That answers to every wind.
I am sick of the thing. I think we had better part.

My heart would come to any piper's calling—
A fool in motley that dances for any king;
But my body knows, and its tears unbidden falling
Say that my heart has sinned.
You would have my heart? You may. I am sick of
the thing.

Aline Kilmer

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BACKWATER

A CHILDISH TALE

Listen to my childish tale:
My heart was sad today;
My heart was so sad I could not find
Anything to say.

I walked out to the city's edge
Where the streets all disappear,
And I thought the fields were sad with me—
Songless fields and drear.

I sat down under a maple tree
That rose up lone and bare;
Its dying-colored leaves were strewn
About me everywhere.

I sat and pondered aimlessly
Under the silent tree,
I pondered sadly under the boughs
That I thought were sad with me.

Then in a flash I felt a cool
And steely serenity
Descending from those silent boughs—
They were not sad with me.

And I felt the steely calm of their strength
Slip in my heart like a breath,
And I was like a wakened man
That had drowsed away in death.

I saw that steel was the maple-tree,
It had never been sad with me;
I saw that the blue of the sky was steel
In its cool serenity.

We were all steel out there in the field,
We three beyond the town—
We three that were strong over the leaves
Dying in red and brown.

Now you have heard my childish tale:
My heart was sad today
And it lost its sadness under a tree.
That is all I wanted to say.

THE OLD TOWN

Oh, let me not enter the old town,
The stragglng street!
Oh, I fear, I fear the going down
On stumbling feet!

Oh, let me not grope down the dim way
To the pitchy sea,

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Unlit of a moon or a dim ray
Through a cavernous tree.

All, all they will take from me
By the black shore;
The ancients will steal me silently
The purple I wore.

They will steal my love, they will steal my hate,
I shall tremble bare;
They will make my body cold and straight
And lay me there

Where my childhood sleeps forever and ever.
Oh, I fear,
I fear the town that ever and ever
I'm coming near.

OVERLOOKED

I was nothing, though I had a kind of pain or feeling—
I knew her hair—
I think it might be said I knew too well, but I was nothing
To her but air.

That other one, he knew her eyes with only half a knowing—
I knew her eyes—
I think it might be said I knew too well whom he was loving.
Yes, he was wise.

Edward Sapir

Oh well, and they are wed—I might indulge in grieving or
in smiling—

I hardly dare.

You see, it wasn't very much I was to her—nothing,
Nothing but air.

SHE SITS VACANT-EYED

Surely, surely, there is something for me,
There is something to fill my spirit's measure.

Winds tell, rains tell—

Somewhere, somewhere is my treasure.

They promised it me when a raven spoke
Back in the reaches of maidenhood.

He spoke for God, he spoke well—

I am groping for what I then understood.

Ten thousand pathways ran to treasure—

The raven spoke, I saw the vision.

Suns burn, moons burn—

God, God! I am sitting in prison!

Surely, surely, there is something for me—

There is something to fill my spirit whole.

Sun, burn! sun, burn!

Pity me, make a blaze of my soul!

Edward Sapir

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TONIGHT

SNOW

This night my body is an offering—
I am carried to you.
Years I was near you
And you were far.
But tonight of all nights
Was not the night
To be parted.

I would fain go forth
And seek you,
And sink down by you,
As the flakes falling outside
Sink into the cushioned ground.

And that which is me
Is also a field
Glowing and boundless.

PRESENCE

You. Your presence. Why can I not dip into your presence
as I dip into sleep, clasp it and bask in it? How hold
it? How savour it? It is more than I wanted. And
less.

Muriel Ciolkowska

Now you have left—you, in whose presence I would steep,
around whose presence I hover like a gull over the
lake. And, ere I have tasted it, your presence is no
more your presence.

You have left. You have returned to me. Your presence
no longer disturbs me from you.

Muriel Ciolkowska

OFF THE HIGHWAY

Lilacs lift leaves of cool satin
And blossoms of mother-of-pearl
Against the tarnished silver of the deserted house.
Tall, exquisite grasses fill the door-yard with spray.
Through the sun-drenched fragrance drifts the hazy mono-
tone of bees.
Tints of opal and jade; the hush of emerald shadows,
And a sense of the past as a living presence
Distil a haunting wistful peace.

Julia Weld Huntington

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PAGEANTRY

REVELATIONS

Crystals of light,
Like raindrops,
Beat down about my head;
And I kneel low to receive them
Reverently.

POISE

I must step
From star to star
Amid the shadowed planets
That hang in the profound deepness
Of bottomless space,
With thin clouded draperies
Filming about my feet
In eddies of motion.
My path is as wide
As the pageantry of worlds
That fling themselves out
In the dance of fettered motion;
And I shall stride
As though all were still.

Amy Bonner

CHARLOTTE BRONTE

On reading her letters to M. Héger

O proud! O passionate! what desperate pain
Subdued that haughty soul, that iron will—
Bowed that stiff neck, wore that wild spirit, till
It bit the dust, and, broken, rose again!

What feverish, trembling fingers held the pen
Which traced those delicate characters—the cry
Of one too hungry-hearted, plain and shy,
Baffled and stung by the strange moods of men.

Discarded fragments, eloquent and rare,
Carelessly torn by man without regret;
Roughly sewn up, with some parts missing yet,
How many a woman's heart lies bleeding there!

Blanche Dismorr

TRAILING ARBUTUS

Why do you hide beneath the pines, and cling to earth,
Infrequent, foolish flower of fragrant breath?
Your blossoms fresh and pink, like babies at their birth;
Your twigs as brown and brittle as old women at their
death.

Ruth Mason Rice

LONG DAYS

I have watched long days of dawning,
And long, long nights of dread;
And I am a little weary
Of traveling toward the dead:
When I looked out last evening
I thought the wan moonlight
Seemed tired and pale with shining,
A lantern in the night.

I heard them whisper this morning
As I heard them yesterday,
"Do you think she will last much longer,
Dragging along this way?
Her hands are like withered flowers,
Her face is a strange dried leaf;
She has stayed too long in her body,
She is wheat turned dust in the sheaf."

HEAPHY HERSELF

When Heaphy, the old woman,
Is not looking,
Herself trips lightly off to Donegal
And there dances in the shadow of Slieve.

When Heaphy, the old woman,
Is looking,

Dorothy McVickar

Herself has never a chance at the dancing,
But stays in the kitchen
Mopping the floor.

Dorothy McVickar

YOUTH AND AGE

Youth has music on his lips
And in his hurrying feet,
Rhythm in his finger-tips
And in his laughter sweet.

Age has silence on his tongue—
Never a note or sound;
But his heart is often wrung
By music all around.

Youth has tongue, but lacks an ear—
He whistles, pipes and sings.
Age is still, but he can hear
Silence and growing things.

Elizabeth Hart Pennell

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REPETITIONS

*I plunge at the rearing hours—
Life is a steed of pride,
Who so high above me towers
I cannot mount and ride.*

TWO SEWING

The wind is sewing with needles of rain;
With shining needles of rain
It stitches into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in.
(Oh, the wind has often sewed with me!—
One, two, three.)

Spring must have fine things
To wear, like other springs.
Of silken green the grass must be
Embroidered. (One and two and three.)
Then every crocus must be made
So subtly as to seem afraid
Of lifting color from the ground.
And after crocuses the round
Heads of tulips, and all the fair
Intricate garb that Spring will wear
The wind must sew with needles of rain,
With shining needles of rain

Stitching into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in—
For all the springs of futurity.
(One, two, three.)

INSTRUCTION

My hands that guide a needle
In their turn are led
Relentlessly and deftly,
As a needle leads a thread.

Other hands are teaching
My needle; when I sew
I feel the cool, thin fingers
Of hands I do not know.

They urge my needle onward,
They smooth my seams, until
The worry of my stitches
Smothers in their skill.

All the tired women,
Who sewed their lives away,
Speak in my deft fingers
As I sew today.

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THREE SONGS FOR SEWING

I

A fibre of rain on a window-pane
Talked to a stitching thread:
*In the heaviest weather I hold together
The weight of a cloud!*

To the fibre of rain on a window-pane
The talkative stitches said:
*I hold together with the weight of a feather
The heaviest shroud!*

II

My needle says: Don't be young,
Holding visions in your eyes,
Tasting laughter on your tongue!—
Be very old and very wise,
And sew a good seam up and down
In white cloth, red cloth, blue and brown.

My needle says: What is youth
But eyes drunken with the sun,
Seeing farther than the truth;
Lips that call, hands that shun
The many seams they have to do
In white cloth, red cloth, brown and blue!

III

One by one, one by one,
Stitches of the hours run
Through the fine seams of the day;
Till like a garment it is done
And laid away.

One by one the days go by,
And suns climb up and down the sky;
One by one their seams are run—
As Time's untiring fingers ply
And life is done.

COWARDICE

Discomfort sweeps my quiet, as a wind
Leaps at trees and leaves them cold and thinned.
Not that I fear again the mastery
Of winds, for holding my indifference dear
I do not feel illusions stripped from me.
And yet this is a fear—
A fear of old discarded fears, of days
That cried out at irrevocable ways.
I cower for my own old cowardice—
For hours that beat upon the wind's broad breast
With hands as impotent as leaves are: this
Robs my new hour of rest.

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I thought my pride had covered long ago
All the old scars, like broken twigs in snow;
I thought to luxuriate in rich decay,
As some far-seeing tree upon a hill;
But, startled into shame for an old day,
I find that I am but a coward still.

FLASH

I am less of myself and more of the sun;
The beat of life is wearing me
To an incomplete oblivion,
Yet not to the certain dignity
Of death. (They cannot even die
Who have not lived.)

The hungry jaws
Of space snap at my unlearned eye,
And time tears in my flesh like claws.

If I am not life's, if I am not death's,
Out of chaos I must re-reap
The burden of untasted breaths.
(Who has not waked may not yet sleep.)

Hazel Hall

COMMENT

SOUTHERN SHRINES

EVERY traveler may be his own Columbus; for every journey is a voyage of discovery, leading, mayhap, to the promised land. The editor, setting out for a few talks about poetry in the warm and mellow South, discovered rich quarries in the blossoming landscape and ships of magic ready to set sail from the shores—all guarded by local loyalties jealously excited and aware.

In other words, she seemed to find a stirring of new beauty in the hearts of the people as well as in the spring-garlanded fields and hills; and an enthusiasm of preparation—a feeling of expectancy, as if efflorescence must be as simple and inevitable in art as in nature. Sow the seed, till the soil, and the harvest will surely follow—such would seem to be the faith of the new South, the South which loves its traditions but refuses to be enslaved by them, which is not satisfied to sit in colonial houses and contemplate its historic and romantic past.

To be sure, there are spinsters in Charleston and Savannah who still live on tea and toast in the midst of faded splendor rather than sell ancestral portraits by Sully and Romney, or even a single mahogany hautboy or old Lowestoft plate; *grandes dames* of the old régime who stay indoors rather than replace the carriage-and-pair with an automobile. And there are college professors to whom Sidney Lanier uttered the last audible word of poetry; who even, in extreme cases, re-

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sent the present neglect of Timrod. But the nephews and nieces and grandchildren of these ultra-loyalists are forming poetry and art societies and little-theatre enterprises, and inviting up-to-date people like Carl Sandburg and Daniel A. Reed to help give them a good start. And they are aiming at a frank expression of the locale in their exhibitions and poems and play-productions—a special stress which is much to be desired, because the beauty of that moss-hung landscape, and the dramatic contrasts of feeling in the spirit of the bi-racial people, are a sufficient basic motive for putting those south-eastern Atlantic states more adequately on the modern artistic map.

Columbia, South Carolina, was the first full-stop of the editor's pilgrimage. In its little Town Theatre, the adroit reformation of a quaint old house, Mr. Reed, trained in the Chicago Little Theatre and seconded by a group of enthusiasts, is offering a generous hospitality to all the arts. Plays, exhibitions, lectures, readings, musicals, all find audience-room here and a congenial atmosphere of challenging sympathy. Even the quiet old University of South Carolina, a few steps away up the hill, seems to welcome this modern interloper into the old state capital, and to cooperate in the stirring-up process which its presence implies. And it is not easy to be stirred up under the languid southern sun, in towns whose every old mossy brick and stone is sacred but whose occasional sky-scraper seems an anachronism.

Proud Charleston was the second stage—Charleston, as

indomitable as ever, as unchangeably a beautiful great lady of heroic spirit and aspect. What Charleston wills she does: not in the bravoura Chicago manner, by a bubbling-up of helter-skelter democratic forces; but by a haughty wave of her queenly hand, the grand gesture of the assured aristocrat who never dreams of denial. Today she wills the arts: she is restoring her old houses, summoning her painters to local exhibitions, and creating the Poetry Society of South Carolina, with its two hundred members professional and amateur, and its critical committees to pass on poems and award numerous prizes. Du Bose Heyward, Beatrice Ravenel and others are leaders in this effort to turn the local ambition toward the arts; also one or two painters who recognize the pictorial charm of the colonial houses with their grilled gateways, and of the moss-draped, semi-tropical landscape.

The wealth of historic tradition and association in Charleston may well be a hope and an agony in the heart of any poet who loves her, for no art has yet expressed it adequately. The old houses bring something of it home to us—houses spaciouly planned for patriarchal slave-holding families, stately enough for eighteenth-century banquets, and of an elegance befitting the crinoline of Victorian emotions; houses therefore inconsiderate of modern needs, imprisoning many a pathetic comedy of servantless impecuniosity, and perhaps now and then a tragedy of some free spirit beating its wings against ancient barriers. One wonders at neither excess of loyalty, so beautiful is the curve of old mansions along the Battery against the wide blue water of the harbor,

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so full of charm are the fading memories, the lavender-scented relics, of more leisurely, better-mannered days.

If Charleston is a great lady, Savannah is a fine one. Charleston commands, and Savannah persuades. She is tempted to sit dreaming over her past, to linger in the two old moss-hung graveyards whose mournful beauty is a wonder-story all over the world. Children were romping in the Colonial Cemetery while I scanned its eloquent monuments, but they avoided the most eloquent of all—that bitter memorial of a suicide, with four coiled serpents carved in the four-square stone, under the inverted marble urn, as the only record of a nameless agonist. But Savannah does not forget that she is one of the great ports of the world, with all Spanish America to the south of her; and now and then she salutes the future with a sky-scraper. Or even with a poetry society—a little one, The Prosodists she calls it, to show that its five members are students of technique.

Jacksonville is frankly modern, with more sky-scrapers than colonial houses. And the cause of modern poetry, of modern art, is eagerly sponsored by the Round Table Club, whose membership is both professional and amateur. Marx G. Sabel, whose second POETRY group will appear in June, is one of its officers.

From young Jacksonville it is only an hour or two by motor to old St. Augustine. But even in St. Augustine the invading tourist demands a compromise between old and new; and gets a swept and garnished, guide-regulated museum-fort, a quaint little gate-guarded ancient street for his

modern trinket-shops, and numerous ultra-modern hotels disguised in pseudo-Spanish architecture. St. Augustine is on the high-road; in full-season it seems less atmospheric than San Antonio, and far less intact than drowsy old Santa Fe, still lisping Spanish to her aboriginal pueblos. But it has corners to which one may retire with the past—a little old graveyard, an ancient church or two, certain mossy walls. And perhaps the most wonderful corner of all is that barrel-vaulted guardroom of the old fort whose damp masonry is fringed to the top with delicate maidenhair.

A contrasting episode though ultra-modern seemed blessed with timelessness, like all other simple and elemental experiences. This was a flight in a passenger aeroplane over the white sands and blue water of Atlantic Beach. The sensation?—oh, merely a feeling of being joyously at ease, like a bird, as we sailed slowly through the warm, blue sky, and looked down at the fishes in the rippling sea and the automobiles crawling over the long white strip of sand, and at the cottage roofs and the stretch of marsh with its ribbon-twist of river. It seemed strange that men had waited these thousands of years to do a thing so natural, so inevitable.

From Jacksonville I followed the northward trail of the blossoming spring, stopping at Atlanta's suburb, Decatur, for a day in the Agnes Scott College, which has a course in modern poetry; and at Bowling Green, Kentucky, where new oil-wells are piercing the century-old farms, and new ideas the patriarchal before-the-war traditions; and finally at Louisville, where Cale Young Rice, Hortense Flexner

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King and others keep the muse's fires alight, and where Otto A. Rothert, convinced that Madison Cawein was one of the immortals, is devoting years to the preparation of a monumental *Life and Letters* complete enough to satisfy the demands of the poet's vociferous future fame.

The journey was another reminder of the variety and potential richness of culture, of imaginative and spiritual life, in these far-flung United States. The problem is, of course, to make the local loyalties generously productive and creative instead of narrowly exclusive and prejudicial, to sweep away hindrances between the imaginative energy of elect souls and the adequate expression of that energy in the arts and in life. The energy is there—of that I was once more convinced during this southern journey; but against its vital force rise always the dead walls of conservative repression.

The people, there as elsewhere, must learn that beauty is created from within—it cannot be inherited from the past or imported from over-seas, or manufactured for passive minds by theatrical and movie syndicates and subserviently popular writers and artists. It is an achievement of the individual soul; and if the individual soul fails to achieve it, to create its own beauty in some one of the innumerable art-impulses or spiritual impulses of life, something within that soul turns to dust and ashes. And what is true of the individual is true of the group: hand-me-down art and literature, hand-me-down ethics, morals, politics—the ready-made everywhere, the self-created crowded out, speeded away—this is the dusty-ashen threat against our modern civilization.

H. M.

The Death of "B. L. T."

THE DEATH OF "B. L. T."

"The Line" came to a full stop with the passing of Bert Leston Taylor on the nineteenth of March. Who now will carry on "the column that made Chicago famous," the column of wit and wisdom founded in the old *Record* by Eugene Field of happy memory, and built up in the *Tribune* as a finely whimsical all-American monument by the genial genius who has gone?

It would be difficult to set bounds to the influence of this witty wise man, who so modestly, so humanely, so urbanely, disguised in kindly humor his good judgment and good taste. The warmth of his sympathy mellowed the penetrating keenness of his satire—he never expected too much of "the so-called human race," and always felt himself a fellow-offender in its inexplicable derelictions and vagaries.

In music, art, literature he was a sane and penetrating critic; a word in "The Line" went further than many long reviews to set some clamorous best-seller in its place or promote some shy work of beauty. His column was an open book of the amenities; Henry Kitchell Webster, in his memorial address, called it a daily letter to his friends, classing him with Gray and Fitzgerald among the great letter-writers of the world.

But he ranks also, with Frederick Locker and Austin Dobson, with Oliver Wendell Holmes and Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Eugene Field among the best of the ever-to-be-gratefully-remembered lyrists of the drawing-room and—no, we don't have drawing-rooms now-a-days—of the living-

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room and library. One might quote an hundred poems to prove it; we choose *Canopus* because it is, not better than many others, but possibly a keener self-revelation:

When quacks with pills political would dope us,
When politics absorbs the livelong day,
I like to think about the star Canopus,
So far, so far away.

Greatest of visioned suns, they say who list 'em;
To weigh it science always must despair.
Its shell would hold our whole dinged solar system,
Nor ever know 'twas there.

When temporary chairmen utter speeches,
And frenzied henchmen howl their battle hymns,
My thoughts float out across the cosmic reaches
To where Canopus swims.

When men are calling names and making faces,
And all the world's ajangle and ajar,
I meditate on interstellar spaces
And smoke a mild seegar.

For after one has had about a week of
The arguments of friends as well as foes,
A star that has no parallax to speak of
Conduces to repose.

Thus one felt heights and depths in this man, against which he measured sublunary affairs. His gayest word was always in scale, always had perspective. So it is not surprising that he was thoroughly at home in the woods and all wild places of nature, as some of the finest of his more serious poems—*The Road to Anywhere*, for example—prove.

He died in the spring-time, as he wished. Let us hope that the white-throat, whose music "is sweet as April's sun," will sing over his grave.

H. M.

The Poet and Modern Life

THE POET AND MODERN LIFE

The problems confronting the modern poet are exceedingly complex. How can poetry, which is essentially order, affirmation, achievement, be created in an age, a *milieu*, of profound doubt and discouragement? How is it possible to build up a "spiritual monument" when the most necessary elements are lacking—in a period of social disorder, mental anarchy, when so very few are at all concerned with intellectual progress and so many are utterly bounded by material progress? How, again, is the poet to obtain the ideas and knowledge which are the matter he works with, when he is simply confused by an immeasurable discord, a vast unsynthesized knowledge? And does not this situation, undeniable, I think, and so much more acute than it was fifty years ago, lend strength to Matthew Arnold's pessimism, and force us to conclude that now, if ever, must be an age of criticism, an age of pure conservation, if any intellectual life is to survive the dying of the Renaissance? The narrow ideas of comfort and utilitarianism, which are the motive force of the contemporary revolution, must of necessity be unfruitful in the larger sphere of the mind. In our progress we have become curiously abased; from the Hellenic dream of god-like man in harmony with nature, from the mediaeval dream of man transcending nature through religion, from the Renaissance dream which infused a new life into Hellenism, from those centuries when the life of the senses and the intelligence struggled with the life of the spirit and sentiment, we have fallen into an apathy of discouragement

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where we hope for no more than that each individual should conform to "modern standards of living." Man exists spiritually as he conceives of himself; and the modern world conceives of man, through a vague deceptive mist of "social reform," as an animal which eats, drinks, is clothed, travels and needs to be amused; add to this a little confused "education," a little tepid "religion," and a fair amount of ancient superstition revived as "new thought," and you get a not too incorrect picture of the modern world and its motives. Deep spiritual enthusiasm and energy, disinterested thought, unfettered intelligence, profound culture, where will you find a combination of these essentials of poetry?

Meanwhile we go on writing, many just echoing the words of their predecessors, some trying to strike out rough new images of vitality, a few trying to add to mere vitality the mellowness of culture, the permanence of intelligence. Certain writers, impatient with that mere aping of a vanished order which is unhappily the mark of modern poetry in England, have thrown violently aside the reflective, the intellectual aspects of their art to create something which is essentially only vital. This is preferable to stagnation, but it is not nearly enough. I should like to see that vitality more mellow, saturated with fertile ideas, enlightened; for so far it has done little but interpret a violent material activity. How indeed could it do more? The essential elements are lacking, for without an intelligent, enlightened, cultivated *milieu* each poet speaks into pandemonium, loses himself in confusion or in egotism, in provincialism. R. A.

REVIEWS

PASTELS

Poems, by Haniel Long. Moffat, Yard & Co.

In this slim volume Haniel Long presents his rhymed lyrics in their various colors—pastel transparents, romantic and oriental opaques. We miss the free-verse student sketches, which Alfred Kreymborg includes in his *Others for 1919*. As usual the free-verse medium seems to make the poet relax and be natural; in it Mr. Long sees and feels with clean honest lines, washing in his emotions with their own colors. In the best of his rhymed lyrics, he works through a group of imperfect songs played on pipes rather than on a lute or a lyre. In this group—*Madness, Midnight Sun, With Compliments, Song of Young Burbage, The Winter Sprite, I Gather Treasures of the Dark*—each has a promise which unfolds to an art achievement in a pagan pastoral idyl of real beauty, *The Herd Boy*:

The night I brought the cows home
Blue mist was in the air;
And in my heart was heaven,
And on my lips a prayer.

I raised my arms above me,
I stretched them wide apart,
And all the world was pressing
In beauty on my heart.

The lane led by a river
Along an ancient wood,
And ancient thoughts came softly,
As with the leaves they should.

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I hung the cows with garlands,
And proud they walked before;
While mother-naked after,
A laurel branch I bore.

The other poems in this vein go scurrying through surfaces painted in transparents over nothing, rhyming insignificantly. The poet's attempt at wilder pagan freedom is weakened by a natural love for pastoral restraint—or is it an academic inhibition?

Mr. Long's more colorful dipping into the romantic is rather limp, and in the panoramic his sweep is tight. *The Death of Alexander the Great* lacks the freedom and flare of pageantry, which we find quite glorious in his free-verse *Student* group, when he would have his girl enter his

class-room window
On the elephant's trunk.

In his rhymed pageantry it is as if he were trying to blow a fanfare of trumpets on his pipes. However in *Dead Men and the Moon*, *Dead Men Tell No Tales*, and *His Deaths*, there is the swagger and color of truth romantically expressed, perhaps romance truthfully expressed.

The Cuban in the States lacks Spanish feeling and interest. The pitch is too high in his remote tropical effects, the tone too thin, the touch too cool, not enough of the green-eyed serpent subtleties. *There Was a City Where Serpents Writhed* comes nearer finding the remote than *Gifts*. And the war poems are too personal—they look puny against the conflict. War is a stride in the ages, an impressionistic record from a gigantic panorama.

Laura Sherry

SILENCE AWAKENING

Terra Italica, by Edward Storer. The Egoist, London.

Mr. Edward Storer is not typical of the English poets of today; he may have some of their virtues and weaknesses, but he has others which are peculiar to himself. He is English in his clinging to decoration, to suavity; he is English in a kind of inarticulateness which prevents his saying all the fine things that are in him; but he is un-English in his profound and unaffected love of beauty, he is un-English inasmuch as he hates quaintness. The rough strength of the "vital" poet is not his; when he tries to interpret modern life he fails because this life is so alien, so hostile to his subtler conceptions. He makes me think of some pupil of Heine, intoxicated by Heine's adoration of Hellenic beauty, but most un-German in that the ideas he works with are very few and simple. Moreover that English love of decoration leads him away from Heine's fine simplicity; though one feels how Mr. Storer struggles against this national vice, how he has lived with the classics to purge and lighten his mind of all the sluggish barbarity still adhering to the English character. His earlier work, fragile and imaginative, lacked strength but never sweetness; his new book retains this Ovid-like sweetness and has gained strength, the strength of brevity and thought, and therefore it is his best. Intentionally or unintentionally he had criticised his own poetry in these words:

It is so near to silence as to seem
Silence awakening,

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A listening rather sweet;
A mood evaporating
That has entered in
To all your spirit
Numbing it with peace,
Oozed to the very core of you
With ethereal sweet;
A vaporous light,
Luminance rarified,
Yet dewy with the sap of earth;
Bitter a little
From the great salt sea.

But let me not be misunderstood; in pointing to a "weakness" in this fine highly-wrought poetry I do not mean to imply any inferiority to the poetry of vitality. The weakness in Mr. Storer's poetry is the weakness of much thought, much emotion, much living; of a cultivated mind turning in disappointment and discouragement from the present to linger in imagination over the happier past, with a charm, a lightness, an elegance wholly delightful. The melancholy, the skepticism, the discouragement of these poems, their sad devotion to a lost ideal of beauty, their haunting insistence on the Horatian theme of

the dream called life,
Rosy with a little love,
Quick with sharp sorrows—

are certainly delightful to react to in certain moods, yet typical of that unavowed but deep despair which holds so many sensitive minds in a distracted Europe. *R. A.*

COUNTRY SENTIMENT

Fairies and Fusiliers, and *Country Sentiment*, by Robert Graves. Alfred A. Knopf.

The poetry of Robert Graves compares with the mass of good modern poetry, especially in the United States, as the trim, well-ordered English farm compares with the vast cattle ranch of Wyoming or the great wheat farm of North Dakota. Mr. Graves has chosen a small field, withal one chosen by many English poets before him. He tills it well, and it brings forth lovely blossoms if not always luscious, satisfying fruit.

Melody, everyday humanness, fancy, quiet whimsy, chivalry—these are words that come to mind as one reads Mr. Graves' verse. They represent qualities found in Skelton, in Surrey, or in Herrick, poets in whose tradition Mr. Graves would probably class himself. One gets the impression that the author studies rather than observes, as when the boy stays away from church and goes walking—

To ponder there in quiet
God's Universal Plan.

These are the boy's own words! Such boys exist only in eighteenth-century English paintings.

Generally, however, Mr. Graves presents clear, vivid pictures, as in *Finland*:

The skies are jewelled all around,
The ploughshare snaps in the iron ground.
The Finn, with face like paper
And eyes like a lighted taper,
Hurls his rough rune

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At the wintry moon,
And stamps to mark the tune.

Country Sentiment shows an advance over the author's first book in story-telling and dramatic power, in hardness and cleanness of expression:

Here they lie who once learned here
All that is taught of hurt or fear.
Dead, but by free will they died:
They were true men, they had pride.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

RECENT ANTHOLOGIES

The Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany: June, 1920. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, England.

A Queen's College Miscellany. Queen's College, Oxford.

A Treasury of War Poetry. Second Series, edited by George Herbert Clarke. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Dreams and Voices, compiled by Grace Hyde Trine. The Woman's Press, New York.

Joyful Sorrow, compiled by L. H. B. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Lillygay: an Anthology of Anonymous Poems. The Vine Press, Steyning, England.

American and British Verse from The Yale Review. Yale University Press.

Modern British Poetry, edited by Louis Untermeyer. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

Contemporary Verse Anthology, edited by Charles Wharton Stork. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The above list is a slight indication of the present rush

of anthologies; and incidentally it is proof of a public for modern poetry: a public, however, too eager for pre-digested food, too eager to lean upon the opinions of editors and publishers. Perhaps this is inevitable—in these crowded days no one can read everything, even in one specialty. But the public should choose its anthologies carefully, avoiding those whose motives are frankly commercial.

Our list may be divided into four groups: The first includes those anthologies intended to introduce a group of young poets connected by similar ideals, or perhaps merely by acquaintance or propinquity; second, subject anthologies; third, résumés of a period or a locale; fourth, reprints from special magazines.

Under the first heading there is no suspicion of a commercial motive. The poems included in such collections may be well or ill chosen: the new claimants for the laurel may be raw or crude, affected or supersophisticated; or they may be young geniuses trying their wings; but at least the publisher is making room for the unknown and taking a gambler's chance with the public. The first two titles listed above are of this kind; and although neither pamphlet contains any very exciting evidences of genius, a variety of talent—fictional, critical, limnal and musical, as well as poetic—is displayed in an admirable typographic setting. The two miscellanies, though of recent work, are not confined to undergraduates, the first including names like Robert Graves and Edith Sitwell. In poetry the most—I had almost said the only—interesting exhibits are in a mood of

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sarcasm verging on the grotesque—*Absinthe* by Royston D. Campbell, *The Survivor* by Godfrey Elton, and this bit of satire by E. W. Jacot:

Jabez Q., the millionaire,
Has oozy hands, dead lichen hair;
A grey rag eye—no spark is there.

He also has a garden close,
Where Jabez likes to think he grows
The most expensive kinds of rose.

Once he puffed a ring of smoke
Towards the stars; it spread, it broke,
Disintegrated past revoke.

Jabez watched it; hiccoughed "Gee!"
Then shuddered . . . what if he
Became like this—vacuity?

When his body—horrid doubt—
Suffered this atomic rout,
Would it . . .

His cigar was out

"Waal," said Jabez, "I'm doggoned!"—
And pitched it in the lily-pond.

Of the subject anthologies, the second series of Mr. Clarke's *Treasury of War Poetry* is mostly depressing reading; apparently the first series gathered the cream, leaving for this, with of course a few notable exceptions, skim milk. The book seems to represent the war-muse's too-sober second thought—neither her first fierce inspiration nor her final verdict.

Dreams and Voices, a book of parental and filial poems by modern poets of varying quality; and *Joyful Sorrow*, with entries, chiefly by British poets past and present, intended to

cheer up those who grieve—these are two curious examples of publishers' efforts to attract a special public. *Lillygay: An Anthology of Anonymous Poems*, is more intriguing, with its lively little wood-cuts by Eric and Percy West. Its cheering lyrics and ballads must be centuries old—at least some of them are, the beautiful *Lyke-wake Dirge* for example; and no reviewer would be mean-spirited enough to guess at a later origin for others.

Of our third class, Mr. Untermeyer's *Modern British Poetry* is the only example. It is a companion to his rather elementary *Modern American Poetry*, both running from 1870 to 1920, and being intended especially for young students. In the latter case one was forced to wonder at the poor showing of a rich period, but the British volume may be a little more satisfactory.

In our fourth class, of magazine anthologies, the *Yale Review* book opens with *The Passing Strange*, one of Mr. Masefield's finest meditative poems; and its other entries—by Messrs. Robinson, Frost, Fletcher, Sassoon, Mmes. Teasdale, Wharton, and other poets—show that this magazine has done generous work in this department.

As good manners would almost debar us from reviewing the anthology of our most steadfast fellow-specialist in modern poetry, we shall permit the editor of *Contemporary Verse*, Mr. Charles Wharton Stork, to speak for himself in regard to his anthology, which brings together the more notable poems from several years' issues of his magazine. In the *Introduction* he says:

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Most of the other magazines, we thought, were over-stressing the appeal of novelty. We believed that the growing power of American poetry could be shown to express itself in forms that an average person could enjoy. . . . The great universal motives of the race—love of home, delight in outdoor nature, generous human sympathy, kindly humor, and a quiet, first-hand religious sense—all of these will be found in abundance.

However,

A moderate number of free-verse ventures have been included, where genuineness of feeling and beautiful handling of its changing rhythms have seemed to justify the exceptions.

And the editor inquires:

Where, one may ask, is one likely to find more American idealism than in a volume such as this?

Perhaps one may question Mr. Stork's conclusion. He says:

The American people has a right to ask that poetry should express the thoughts and emotions of this generation in a style which can be widely understood and appreciated.

Do poets worthy of the name take orders, even from that formidable connoisseur, "the American people"?

The haphazard arrangement of the book makes appraisal difficult—the poems are quite ungrouped, whether by subjects or authorship. However, one may find, by searching, Joyce Kilmer's gay dialogue, *The Ashman*, Edwin Ford Piper's *Gee-up dar, Mules*, and a few fine lyrics—by Sara Teasdale, E. Merrill Root, Marx G. Sabel, Helen Hoyt and one or two others.

H. M.

French Poets in English

FRENCH POETS IN ENGLISH

Fleurs de Lys, translated and edited by Wilfred Thorley.
Houghton Mifflin Co.

The introduction to this anthology is so lucid and complete that the reader expects equally competent translations. It sets forth briefly, but well, a history of the poets of France from the thirteenth century to the present day, showing how their personalities were affected by their times, analyzing their methods of work and estimating their values in as fair a manner as is possible to foreign thought. And, throughout, we find those who would translate urged to keep to the spirit, rather than the word of the original. With all this in mind, it is a shock to turn to the opening poem, which reads like a Scotch ballad! Here is one stanza:

The mirk did fa' lang syne, lang syne,
When twa fond systres wi' hands that twine
Went doun to bathe whaur the waters shiie.
*Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,
They that be leel sleep saft taegither.*

Clearly, the author of this anthology has, as he says, attempted to match the French language as closely as possible with that of the same period in English literature. He has followed this plan with all his translations of old French, and it seems to me a grave mistake, even an affectation. For the flavor which should infuse its spirit into the English is altogether missed.

Mr. Thorley has done better with the more modern poems. He says in his introduction:

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The real task of a translator is that of re-creating, and unless he can bring to his original as much as he takes from it, he had far better leave it alone.

But he has sometimes fallen short of his theories, as in his renderings of Gautier. *L'Art*, the oft-attempted, has been translated better by Dobson, or Santayana. Again he says:

It is so difficult to keep rightly informed and critically aloof amid the trumpeting and disparagement of rival clans, whose activities seem only to bewilder the native doctors, that a mere foreigner may be forgiven for including frankly what happens to appeal to him.

And he has given evidence of his critical aloofness in *The Cloud*, considered one of the most delicate of the *Émaux et Camées*. Of this he has done into English only three of the original nine stanzas; omitting the whole point of the poem, which seems hardly fair to the author.

The renderings of Baudelaire are especially fine. They have the spirit of the French, and yet—truly a rare achievement—they do not read like translations. Mallarmé's *Apparition* keeps the subtle savor of the original. The author has been less happy with the ten versions of Verlaine. Maeterlinck is represented by only one poem, *The Seven Maids of Orlamonde*, a questionable choice but well translated. *Autumn* and *Cleopatra*, by Samain, are beautifully presented. Rodenbach's *In Tiny Townships* is as musical in English as in French. Of the translations of de Régnier, *The Secret* and *Experience* are excellent, while good renderings of Viélé-Griffin, Fort, Bataille, Gregh, Guérin and many other poets give distinction to this anthology.

Agnes Lee Freer

SYMBOLISTS AND DECADENTS

La Mêlée Symboliste, by Ernest Raynaud. La Renaissance du Livre, Paris.

Here is an example of the fine book-making of *La Renaissance du Livre*. Consisting of reminiscences of the author and his poet-companions, it suggests Gautier's *La Fenêtre Ouverte*, and is equally fascinating.

A chapter on *Les Zutistes*, founded by Charles Cros, describes the Café de Versailles, where every evening this leader gathered about him such men as Coppée, Richepin and Raoul Ponchon. Here Louis Marsolleau recited sentimental bagatelles or noble poems, and here Poussin was made to read over and over again his artistic achievement, *La Jument Morte*, which resounded through the breweries of the Latin Quarter for several seasons. But what assured this order, aside from the renown of Charles Cros, a place in history, was that it was the cradle of a lyric evolution, in which, perhaps, the two most prominent figures were Laurent Tailhade and Jean Moréas. From their fruitful controversies arose the new movement. Here is a portrait of Jean Moréas at that time:

He always went gloved in white, corseted tightly, his glossy hair curled in the latest fashion, wearing a multicolored cravat and a flower in his buttonhole. His timid nature was hidden under brusque mannerisms, and he fortified himself with an insolent monocle. His hatred of mediocrity was expressed in brief aphorisms. And Tailhade draped himself, like a Spaniard, in a black, scarlet-lined cape. Full of anecdote and wit, he offset the disdainful haughtiness of Moréas toward bad poets by firing at them a volley of cleverness. No one knew as he did how to use irony and unctuous epigram.

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At this time the two were merely at their début, their period of dilettantism. Later they were to descend from their ivory tower to write for the periodical *Lutèce*, wherein Verlaine had already begun to print his *Poètes Maudits*. *Lutèce*, once a banal gazette of the Latin Quarter, was becoming the official organ of advancing symbolism. To this paper we are indebted for poems by Paul Adam, Rachilde, Henri de Régnier, Jules Laforgue, Francis Viélé-Griffin, and Ernest Raynaud. According to Raynaud, *Lutèce*, which came to its end in 1886, had the glory of devoting itself entirely to the poets of the new school, who wrote for it their best and worst poems.

To me one of the most interesting things in this little volume is the discovery of the origin of the word *décadent*. Verlaine was sick in bed, his confrères gathered about him. On the bed lay a magazine in coarse gray paper. Someone took it up and read mockingly from the cover, "*Le Décadent!*"—and asked, "What imbecile invented this ridiculous title?" "I am the imbecile," challenged a crisp voice. The author turned and saw Anatole Baju, a little man with flaming eyes set in a wizened face. The history, as given by Raynaud, of this founder of *Le Décadent* is very entertaining. Verlaine, who ardently supported the magazine, defines its purpose thus:

Décadence is Sardanapalus, in the midst of his women, setting the torch to his funeral pile; it is Seneca reciting poems as he opens his veins; it is Petronius masking his agony with flowers; it is the marchioness walking to the guillotine with a smile, and with care not to disturb her coiffure. Décadence is the art of dying beautifully.

Le Décadent raised a hue and cry from the symbolists; yet their aims against the literature then in vogue were alike. Both wanted to be freed from form which had outlived itself.

A. L. F.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

TWO NEW MAGAZINES

We welcome two new magazines which are to be devoted wholly or largely to poetry—*The Measure*, published by Frank Shay at 4 Christopher Street, New York; and *The Double-dealer*, from 204 Baronne Street, New Orleans. The former began in March, the latter in January.

The Measure: A Journal of Poetry is thus advertised:

Edited by Maxwell Anderson, Padraic Colum, Agnes Kendrick Gray, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, David Morton, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Genevieve Taggard. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board.

We are much interested in this experiment of a shifting editorial board. As fellow-editors, we wonder how it will be arranged—will each pair of acting editors accept only the exact number of poems to be used in their own three numbers and return all others? or will there be hold-overs from one quarterly editorial pair to the next—hold-overs accepted by the first pair and perhaps despised by the second and third and fourth? At any rate, so populous an editorial board, with a three-months' elective tenure of office, makes for variety, relieving the editors of the danger of satiety and the magazine of a too monotonous consistency.

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The first number, while not exciting, is competent and interesting. There is nothing revolutionary, but there are characteristic poems by Padraic Colum, Robert Frost, Conrad Aikin, Alfred Kreymborg, Hazel Hall and others we know, besides two or three less familiar entries. The longest poem, *Ice Age*, by Genevieve Taggard, asserts once more her unusual promise; and Wallace Stevens' *Cortège for Rosenbloom* is a beautiful airy fling of his magician's wand.

Maxwell Anderson, the first editor, seems not over-confident in his initial article: "This is not an age favorable to great poetry," he says; "there are not any great poets writing at this time in English, or none so far uncovered. . . . The very value of art, of life, grows dubious." And he confesses:

The Measure, then, is a hope against hope, a venture in the face of despair, a fiddling while Rome burns. . . . If *The Measure* gets hold of an undoubted masterpiece once in its career, it will be lucky. POETRY, of Chicago, has come out uninterruptedly for ten years without doing it. This is not the fault of the editors of POETRY. If there had been masterpieces to print, they would have printed them.

Not yet ten years—only eight-and-a-half; so there is still hope! But meantime may we remind this despairing young editor that it takes a master to recognize a masterpiece; and a slow procession of masters, in accord across spaces of time, to pronounce the ultimatum?

The Double-dealer is an auspicious attempt to give the South a literary organ. It ought to succeed—we hope and trust it will, for the South has a right to speak with its own voice; and those members of the staff whom we know—for

Two New Magazines

example, John McClure, the New Orleans poet, and Vincent Starrett, Chicago correspondent—are certainly competent.

The local flavor is not yet very strong in the first three numbers, but no doubt that will come. Meantime we have a gay-spirited monthly which has the air of being happily alive, and some of whose entries—of stories, plays, criticism, verse—are vivid and interesting. H. M.

NOTES

Mr. Maxwell Bodenheim, formerly of Chicago but now of New York, is the author of *Minna and Myself* (Pagan Pub. Co.); and of *Advice* (Alfred A. Knopf), which was reviewed last month.

Miss Hazel Hall lives in Portland, Oregon. Her first book of verse will soon be published by the John Lane Co.

Mr. Edward Sapir, of the Canadian Geological Survey in Ottawa, is the author of *Dreams and Gibes* (Poet Lore Co.).

Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke was listed last month.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Aline Kilmer (Mrs. Joyce Kilmer) of Larchmont, N. Y., is the author of *Candles that Burn*, published in 1919 by the George H. Doran Co.

Madame Muriel Ciolkowska is a poet and journalist resident in Bellevur, France. She has served as Paris correspondent of the London *Egoist* and other critical journals.

Julia Weld Huntington (Mrs. John P.), who has published verse and prose in various magazines, lives near Norwich, Conn. Ruth Mason Rice (Mrs. Willis B.), a resident of New York, has published a novel and written for various papers. Miss Dorothy McVickar is living at present in Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; and Miss Amy Bonner and Elizabeth Hart Pennell (Mrs. Henry B., Jr.) are residents of New York City. Miss Blanche Dismorr is an English poet, resident in or near London. So far as the editor knows, none of these six ladies has published as yet a book of verse.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- A Canopic Jar*, by Leonora Speyer. E. P. Dutton & Co.
The Last Knight and Other Poems, by Theodore Maynard. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Seen and Unseen, by Yone Noguchi. (New Ed.) Orientalia, N. Y.
Julian Hunter: Soldier Poet, and The Dales of Arcady, by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe. Erskine Macdonald, Ltd., London.
Poems, by Wilfred Owen. B. W. Huebsch, Inc.
The Wind Over the Water, by Philip Merivale. Four Seas Co.
Indian Summer, by Henry Lane Eno. Duffield & Co.
Passions, by Russell Green. Holden & Hardingham, Ltd., London.
Dawn on the Distant Hills, by Steel Grenfell Florence, Pri. ptd.
To-day and Yesterday—Sonnets and Other Verses, by William Dudley Foulke, LL.D. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, Eng.
The Little Wings—Poems and Essays, by Vivienne Dayrell. Basil Blackwell, London.
Roses and Rime, by Glenn D. Whisler. Pri. ptd., Cleveland.
Dreams at Twilight, by Ada Emery McCurdy. Pri. ptd., New Albany, Ind.
Swift Wings: Songs in Sussex, by the editor of Lillygay. The Vine Press, Sussex, England.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- Oxford Poetry: 1917-1919*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.
A Miscellany of American Poetry: 1920. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.
Star-points: Songs of Joy, Faith, and Promise from the Present-day Poets, ed. by Mrs. Waldo Richards. Houghton Mifflin Co.
The Garden of Bright Waters: One Hundred and Twenty Asiatic Love Poems, tr'd by E. Powys Mathers. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Selections from the Rubaiyat & Odes of Hafiz, tr'd by a member of the Persia Society of London. J. M. Watkins, London.

PLAYS:

- Mary Stuart*, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Two Mothers, by John G. Neihardt. Macmillan Co.

PROSE:

- The Sacred Wood*, by T. S. Eliot. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Tales of Chekhov—Vol. IX, The Schoolmistress and Other Stories, translated by Constance Garnett. Macmillan Co.
Romance of the Rabbit, by Francis Jammes, translated by Gladys Edgerton. Nicholas L. Brown.

POETRY is one of the three good magazines in America.

Geoffrey Parsons, of the New York Tribune

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 **oetry**
A Magazine of Verse

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BOYS AND GIRLS

The Sun-children:

Boys and girls, come out to play!
The sun is up, the wind's astray,
Early morning's gold is gone—
(They slumber on, they slumber on!)
I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
I will put kisses on your knees,
And we will squander as we please
This little, lazy, lovely day.

Ninety million miles away
The sun halloos: "Come out to play!"
The winds are prancing on tip-toe,

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Impatient with long waiting so;
The hills look up. Come out! and oh,
Let your bodies dart and run
While I make shadows!" says the sun.

Boys and girls, come out to play
Before the river runs away.
I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.

The Sun:

Boys and girls, come out to play
Before the river runs away.
While you are fluid, unafraid,
Beneath my light and shadow skim,
Before this folded gloom is dim
And limb no longer follows limb,
Dancing under spotted shade.

For dancing were your bodies made!
Before the roses of you fade
Find your meaning for the mouth
While I lean south; while I go west
Find your meaning for the rest.

The Sun-child:

Throw back your head and fly with me—
Love me, chase me, lie with me!
Follow, sweetheart of the sun,

Turn and follow where I run
Between blue vineyards and fruit-trees—
Fall down and kiss me on the knees!
Pant beside me while I pull
Berries for you from the full
Blue-jewelled branches! Crush them red—
Not on your mouth, on mine instead!

The Sun:

Nimble you move—you are my own,
My pliant essence. All alone
On fire in the passive sky
I burn—a stone, a liquid stone.
Together, you in double shade,
Discover why your limbs were made.

The Sun-child:

I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do!
Link your arms and loosen them,
Pluck and suck a grass's stem,
Touch my breasts with that blue aster;
Kiss me fast—I'll kiss you faster!
Link your arms and loosen them.

Now link your arms like mine together,
Toward me lightly—like a feather
Dance! Like feathers you'll be blown
Across the level field alone.

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And like a brown wing my bare feet
Will skim the meadow till we meet.

The river skips, but we are quicker:
Its little body's slender glisten
Goes down alley-ways of leaves.
Flicker, sun, and river, flicker!
Listen, lover, listen, listen
How the river laughs and grieves!

I have never done with you
Half the things I want to do.
Leap for me, sweetheart—reach and try
To catch me, sweetheart! Kiss and cry
After me, sweetheart, darting by!

After you seize me, we will lie,
I in the grass, you in the sky;
After you kiss me, we will start
To try and reach each other's heart;
And, searching frantically, find
The unseen blisses of the blind.

The Sun-children:

Before the river runs away,
Boys and girls, come out to play.
(They slumber on, they slumber on—
Morning's glint is almost gone!)
With yellow bubbles fill your veins

Genevieve Taggard

Before the lusty day-star wanes.
(They slumber on, they slumber on—
Silken leopard noon is' gone!)
Die you may, die you must—
Fill your mouths with pollen dust;
Calyxes and honey thighs
Both will wither. Beauty dies!
Find out why mouths are berry-red
Before you stiffen in your drab bed.
Over you humming summer will glide,
You'll never lie languid on your side
And listen then as you listen now
To half-heard melodies—oh, how
The river runs and runs and runs,
Fluid with splendor, and the sun's
Circuit is singing. Fragile day!
Boys and girls, come out to play!

Genevieve Taggard

TWENTY-FOUR HOKKU ON A MODERN THEME

I

Again the larkspur,
Heavenly blue in my garden.
They, at least, unchanged.

II

How have I hurt you?
You look at me with pale eyes,
But these are my tears.

III

Morning and evening—
Yet for us once long ago
Was no division.

IV

I hear many words.
Set an hour when I may come
Or remain silent.

V

In the ghostly dawn
I write new words for your ears—
Even now you sleep.

VI

This then is morning.
Have you no comfort for me
Cold-colored flowers?

VII

My eyes are weary
Following you everywhere.
Short, oh short, the days!

VIII

When the flower falls
The leaf is no more cherished.
Every day I fear.

IX

Even when you smile,
Sorrow is behind your eyes.
Pity me, therefore.

X

Laugh—it is nothing.
To others you may seem gay,
I watch with grieved eyes.

XI

Take it, this white rose.
Stems of roses do not bleed;
Your fingers are safe.

XII

As a river-wind
Hurling clouds at a bright moon,
So am I to you.

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XIII

Watching the iris,
The faint and fragile petals—
How am I worthy?

XIV

Down a red river
I drift in a broken skiff.
Are you then so brave?

XV

Night lies beside me
Chaste and cold as a sharp sword.
It and I alone.

XVI

Last night it rained.
Now, in the desolate dawn,
Crying of blue jays.

XVII

Foolish so to grieve,
Autumn has its colored leaves—
But before they turn?

XVIII

Afterwards I think:
Poppies bloom when it thunders.
Is this not enough?

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XIX

Love is a game—yes?
I think it is a drowning:
Black willows and stars.

XX

When the aster fades
The creeper flaunts in crimson.
Always another!

XXI

Turning from the page,
Blind with a night of labor,
I hear morning crows.

XXII

A cloud of lilies,
Or else you walk before me.
Who could see clearly?

XXIII

Sweet smell of wet flowers
Over an evening garden.
Your portrait, perhaps?

XXIV

Staying in my room,
I thought of the new spring leaves.
That day was happy.

Amy Lowell

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TANKA

TO ELIZABETH

Against the door dead leaves are falling;
On your window the cobwebs are black.
Today, I linger alone.

The foot-step?
A passer-by.

SPRING

Down the slope white with flowers,
Toward the hills hazy blue,
A butterfly
Floats away.

MAY MOON

Milky night;
Through the resting trees
A petal—
Falling.

STORM

Against the gulls that play in the gale
The black waves dart
White fangs
In vain.

Jun Fujita

NOVEMBER

On a pale sandhill
A bare tree stands;
The death-wind
Has snatched the last few leaves.

A LEAF

The November sky without a star
Droops low over the midnight street;
On the pale pavement, cautiously
A leaf moves.

DECEMBER MOON

Among the frozen grasses
Frosting in the moon glare,
Tombstones
Are whiter tonight.

ECHO

I know it is not she,
Yet I listen
To distant laughter
Fleeting away.

Jun Fujita

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GOODFELLOWSHIP

A Fragment by Li Po

Hast thou not beheld the Yellow River
Which flows from Heaven?
It runs rapidly down and empties into the sea,
Nevermore to return.

Hast thou beheld the mirror in the hall
That reflects the grief of white hair?
In the morning it is like black silk,
In the evening it will be covered with snow.

While we are in the mood of joy,
Let us drink!
Let not the golden bottle be lonely,
Let us waste not the moon!

LONELY

By Wang Wei, Eighth Century, A. D.

When the moon begins to grow
And the autumn dews to fall,
My silken jacket is lightly thin,
But I have not changed:
Wistfully I play my lute
Long and deep into the night,
For my heart is shy
Of the empty chamber.

Translated from the Chinese by Moon Kwan

THE HUNCHBACK

I saw a hunchback climb over a hill,
Carrying slops for the pigs to swill.

The snow was hard, the air was froze,
And he cast a bluish shadow before.

Over the frozen hill he came,
Like one who is neither strong nor lame;

And I saw his face as he passed me by,
And the hateful look of his dead-fish eye:

His face, like the face of a wrinkled child
Who has never laughed or played or smiled.

I watched him till his work was done;
And suddenly God went out of the sun,

Went out of the sun without a sound
But the great pigs trampling the frozen ground.

The hunchback turned and retracked the snows;
But where God's gone, there's no man knows.

John Peale Bishop

THE VILLAGER

YOUR HORSES

Often, in clear winter afternoons or crisp fall mornings,
Walking long stretches of sand where waves charge in
proudly,
Or standing on curving walls, looking out over empty
water,
I am aware of the memory of you and your horses—
Prancing bays, proud roans, and wild white horses;
Your laughter syncopating the hoof-beats of horses,
Pounding on clay turf-land or drumming on long white
roads.

Standing at the forks of the river at Orleans Street,
Watching the ice dip up and down in the oily water—
Big gray and white lake birds circling slowly slantwise
over the water,
A tug with smoke-stack down for bridges,
And two engines coughing out of time with each other—
I ride again with the memory of you and your horses,
Of you mounting a flight of steps on a glossy black,
Riding down a railroad track to meet me on a deep-chested
bay.

And the sound of your laughter comes to me over the backs
of horses,
The memory of your hair streaming with the manes of
horses,

Clifford Franklin Gessler

Your firm brown hand flung out in the crowding of horses,
Greeting me over the necks of wild white horses, galloping
home.

NEVERTHELESS

Inasmuch as I love you
And shall know no peace more unless I am near you,
Though you are a flame of will
Proud and variable as you are beautiful and dear—
Nevertheless I will go your way,
Since you will not go mine.

Therefore, although the cool roads of my village
Are more pleasant to me than the pavements of your city;
Although its dim streets are more kindly than your glaring
 ing arcs;
Though the unhurried voices of my townspeople
Are more friendly music in my ears than the screamings
And glib chatter of your city-dwellers:
Nevertheless I will go down with you into the city
And bruise my heart upon its bricks;
Become brother to its shrieking "elevated"
And learn to hurry away my days in this brief world
Among the grimy roofs that soil the clean young sunshine;
Thinking only at long whiles, in summer dusks,
Of hushed paths where hurrying feet have never trodden,
Of cool lanes white in the splendor of the rising moon.

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CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

Cracks in broken windows
Thread out like spokes from the center where a pebble
or a bullet struck,
Cross and recross, and spread to the edge of the pane.
Ripples in still water or running water race out in con-
centric circles from the place where a stone or a
body is thrown in.
Ice forms on pools in long thin slivers that knit slowly
and close up the gaps till a hard, brittle floor is
formed.
Fissures in stones spread slowly, and widen and deepen
with the prying of frost.
Thoughts are like all these things.

PRAYER

O thou elemental
Rain, sun, and body of the quick warm earth:
Hear these words from the cells of thy blood,
Multitudinous, various!

Let the waters at the dim roots of the grass be sweet,
And the milk be abundant in the breasts of time—
Yet a little while, till the pearl-gray banners of smoke
Be dissolved, and the flowing of rivulets be but a distant
murmur
In the shout and the far white splendor of thy coming.

Clifford Franklin Gessler

Let thy kindness be as a wide white blanket covering all
The brave inglorious futile race of men
Who lift tired eyes ever to sad stars
More desolate
Than the wind-harrowed wastes of ocean,
Whence comes no answer.
And after our futile striving, give us
Peace.

Clifford Franklin Gessler

GOD-LOVER

Who are you?
Why do you hide behind
Your mask—the sun and stars?

The brazen day and
The moon-washed night
Are alms that you give your beggars.

I ask no mendicant's pittance—
I cry for the supreme desolation of your face.

Muriel Safford

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VOLUNTARIES

THE INTANGIBLE SYMPHONY

How shall I capture
Sound and desire?

Let candor stir upon candor
As sword upon sword,
Tempering the tenor and the timbre
Of this sweet ecstasy.
Grieved is my mind,
Harassed by music
Untouched of any sound.

Yet on trellis, on infinite arch,
On bridges of fretted iron—
Frail to thought, acrid to sight,
Thunderous with traffic of men—
Red-budding, peach-petalled
Beauty flames into view.

But how shall I capture
Sound and desire?
How shall I hear
The pointed vagaries,
The evanescent harmonies,
That float unfingered
Across the strings of the mind?

How shall I hear,
Plucked from the intangible mind-strings,
The song desire sings, and sings?

There is no create instrument.

THE POWER OF NOTHING

I only laughed,
As at a gauche mistake,
When I learned we had paid
With innocent counterfeit—
That such carnival, confetti,
Festival of flamingo fun,
We had danced for nothing spent:
So much brightness
All out of nothing!

But when I learned of my awkwardness—
Mistaking the denomination, color, design
Of a little word you gave me!—
And of the bright shapes of dreams
Germinated in my heart
All out of nothing,
I could not laugh any more;
For there was a sharp severing of slender unseen roots,
And that fruit which they bore
Fell dangling and bruised
From the tendrils and the vine.

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REPLETION

I have fed on the radiance of my beloved
Lying beneath the flowering pear-tree.
Her breasts are inverted cups of sunlight;
She is dappled over with iridescence.
Light and heat
Pierce the pear leaves,
And fall dizzily
Through a flashing of petal-flakes,
Burnishing and mellowing her.
My nostrils are prophetic
With the sweetness of pear flesh,
My eyes are dazzled with love made manifest,
And my mind is parturient and tremulous
With glistening schemes.

THE SEA STORM

I hurtled like a hound for joy
Through the storm
Of your magnificence—
Wave on crashing, dashing, crested wave,
You hurl yourself against space!
You are positive force,
You might crush me to nothingness;
Yet I revel like a golden super-carp

Mark Turbyfill

Flashing *pas de poisson*
Through flowers of foam.

And I know your ecstatic response,
Exquisite monster,
As I blossom into glittering spray
Above you!

THINGS NOT SEEN

The sea-gull poises
In the charged, expectant air.

The sea-gull poises
With delicate resistance.

Its sheer conscious being
Is cause to strike creation
Out of all this emptiness.

The sea-gull waits,
Wavering slightly
Against this mighty immanence.

So does my heart wait
For the release of a substance
Not yet seen.

Mark Turbyfill

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FROM THE NEAR EAST

CAPE HELLES

This water is all rich; and no great wave,
Rushing, can ever sweep from the old ooze
The witnesses of simple men who gave
Their lives here to the sea.

Our ship's foot goes
Warily now, for here she treads above
The globèd mortal homes of dreams all drowned.
Sometimes, as if a man smiled at his love,
A smile turns in the water. Round and round,
Sometimes, a hundred cries go swimming, while
Such common woes and hopes are ocean-freight,
That every eddy of the grey sea-mile
Is strewn with ardors inarticulate
And homing memories.

Yet this must be:
That men's ghosts ever shame old pagan Earth,
With human blood crimson grey Neptune's sea,
Snap the Fates' thread with high impetuous mirth,
Cast in the dicing game mortality,
Slip from the moorings of sweet flesh, and then
Clean past the loom of the Ultimate Islands ride,
To bring a vision down to the sea again
In ships, and keep the faith, and take the tide.

Morris Gilbert

THE BOULGHAR DAGH

Day by day the sun booms over this long valley,
And the mountains are sun-flowers
And smile fondly at him as he goes by.
For only Gunesh, the sun,
Of all the people they have seen pass,
Is steadfast.

Alexander came through this valley,
And did not return.
At its mouth a lass unparalleled
Found Antony in a market-place,
Whistling to the air: they sailed away together.
A man named Saul trudged up this road soon after:
He went on to Rome.
Godfrey de Bouillon passed this way, to drown
In Cydnus.

Some troopers from Bavaria and Pesth
Were here last year—and they fled.
Now Pathans and Sikhs
And other swarthy fighting-men camp hereabouts.
But presently they'll be gone.

Morris Gilbert

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BY HILL AND DALE

PRAYER AT TIMBER-LINE

Oh, that I could fashion words
As the wind bends the trees—
Could shape my lines as shining-bare,
As exquisite, as these
White branches of the writhen pine
Standing alone at timber-line!

Winds of life, blow stinging-free
Into my heart that's waiting, still!
Beat on my words unceasingly,
And shape them to your stern white will!

BEAUTY

I went where pines grew;
Beauty I found in these,
In stars, and in the strange
Twisted boughs of trees.

I went where houses were;
Beauty I found then
In eyes, and in the strange
Twisted lives of men.

THE ODD ONES

I like best those crotchety ones
That follow their own way
In whimsical oblivion
Of what the neighbors say.

They grow more rare as they grow old,
Their lives show in their faces—
In little slants and twisted lines;
Like trees in lonely places.

GRAMPA SCHULER

Grampa Schuler, when he was young,
Had a crest of hair, and shining eyes.
He wore red-flowered waistcoats,
Wild Byronic ties.

The whole land of Germany
Wasn't wide enough!—
He ran away one night, when winter
Seas were fierce and rough.

He has a sleek farm here
With already a settled air.
He's patriarchal, with his sons
And daughters round him everywhere,
His son's son Jim has fiery eyes—
He wants to go where the land is new!
Grampa bitterly wonders: "What are
Young fools coming to!"

Ruth Suckow

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PRIMAVERAL

You should have seen the griffin in the pine-tree
With stars for eyes!

*You are my own;
Mine, though I never found you.*

There was the hollow valley
With its river,
There was the big magnolia
Strung with moons . . .

*I look for you . . .
Love makes my feet unsteady.*

One day
The perul in the garden was on fire with tanagers . . .
I saw it burning.

I wonder where you were?

Yesterday the flower woman brought me violets . . .
Cape jasmine . . . dark roses . . .

When are you coming?

Today the yucca has finished building her tower of
ivory . . .

*It is late . . .
What excuse will you offer?*

Grace Hazard Conkling

RECOMPENSE

You are growing old, my lithe and gay,
But age with you is different and rare;
Gray—yes, but like the mist that veils an autumn moon
Stretched across the black trees' gaunt array.
Your light, now opalescent and more gently bright,
Makes beautiful the wintry night.
Why do you long for the bronze hue of youth,
Or the noisiness of its display?
Let us be comforted in this sweet quietness where
There is nothing loved before
But that our having loved so long can make more fair.

THE SWEET LADY

She is so gay—
Such easy sweetness falls away
From her! Her words are simple as a little wind
That sings all day.
Such lazy kindness she spreads about,
As thoughtless as her hands that twine
And turn their pink palms in and out.
Such loving weariness has she
Of giving sweetness forth unthinkingly,
That she is almost sad—still smiling sad,
Tired with her all-unknowing ministry.

Anne Elizabeth Wilson

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ANNOTATIONS

JEREMIAD

What avail are these days?
The days come and the days go,
Limping like old men
Over an uneven pathway.

Day follows day,
And each day
Falls over my last memory of you
Like a thin white sheet
Over a dead body.
Day after day—
Sheet upon sheet—
Until now I cannot see
The lines of the dead body underneath.

What avail are these nights?
The nights come and the nights go,
Shambling like heavy negresses
Walking down a steep path
With overflowing baskets on their heads.

Night follows night,
And each night
Falls over my last memory of you,
Like a heavy black sheet over a dead body.
Night follows night,

Sheet falls upon sheet,
Until now I cannot see
The lines of the dead body underneath.
What avail are these days
And these nights,
These halt men, and these
Cumbersome negresses burdened with baskets?
 Day after day,
 Night after night,
 Sheet upon sheet,
 Black on white,
Falling over a dead body,
Covering a dead body,
Falling upon and covering my memory of you.

NO GOOD THING

It is no good thing
Even on a dark night
To clutch a memory for guidance.
I know, because I have tried it
Confidently.
I walked on in the dark night
Remembering.
I walked on and on,
Yet no star shone,

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And there was no light nor even any ghost of light
Ever
To guide me.

I shall walk on in the dark night
Forgetting.
I shall clutch no memory for guidance.
I shall walk on and on,
Accepting the darkness
Proudly, fearlessly, without hope.
For it is no good thing
Even on a dark night
To clutch a memory for guidance.

THE STRANGE LOAD

Things have come to a fine pass!
Just now,
As I sat teasing shy thoughts,
A strange load lifted
Of its own volition!

Maybe I should make a moan,
Or gurgle in my throat a bit,
On losing suddenly
And for no apparent reason
The strange load—
The little weight of chosen sorrows,
The small warm woes of love.

Marx G. Sabel

Little lady whom my heart has nurtured,
The pressure of your petulance
Has passed;
Your eyes' chatoyancy
In the deep dark night of my heart's heart
Has faded,
And the phosphorescent glimmers of your body
In the center of my mind
Have faded.

Faded . . . lifted . . . faded . . .
Entirely done away with.

Shall I miss the strange load lifted,
Having carried it so far,
So long, with such great care?

Now I arise from a cramped posture,
Now I slowly swing my shoulders back
And take a deep breath!

Now I shatter heights of thin air,
Stretching forth rejuvenescent fingers!

Yes . . . surely . . .
Things have come to a fine pass,
A fine pass, indeed.

Marx G. Sabel.

COMMENT

A WORD ABOUT KEATS

TO remember in December a February centenary—that is plainly an editor's duty. In that plain duty the editors of POETRY plainly failed, else would they have prepared the February number with reference to Keats. No poet on our list having aspired to challenge *Adonais* with an elegy, the editor should have—indeed, would have—paid a brief prose tribute to a spirit whose flaring fame no longer needs one.

As it is, the month has gone by, but not the year—a year also sacred to Dante, who died at Ravenna September fourteenth, 1321, leaving his work achieved and complete after a rounded life of fifty-six rich years. Of all English poets since Shakespeare there may be two, Keats and Synge, who gave promise of genius as powerful and shapely as Dante's, and of mind and will as capable of fulfilling its high serene commands; and these two, by the same tragic hazard, were fatally interrupted by illness and early death.

The *Quarterly's* reception of Keats has become a by-word—it is so easy for the casual inheritor of opinions to be wise after the fact. But, after all, the youthful bard was trying out a new instrument; and even Shelley himself was not at once impressed, for he said of *Endymion*, "The author's intention seems to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it;" not to speak of Byron,

whose remarks are almost unprintable. So far as this luscious and exuberant exercise of youthful genius is concerned, I sympathize with Shelley, for I never could read it through without liberal skipping. Ditto *Hyperion*—but then, my appetite for modernized Greek myth is distinctly limited; I cannot “appreciate the intensity and complexity of symbolic and spiritual meaning” which Keats and many other poets have read into, and wrung out of, a folk-lore beautiful in its original primitive simplicity.

Isabella, or the Pot of Basil was a more Chaucerian stunt of verse-narrative—a tale drawn from Boccaccio’s rich mediaeval storehouse: a pretty thing, but slight—even the poet soon tired of it, called it “mawkish.” *Lamia* also did not quite “come off.” And the beauty of *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, exquisite as it is, is of the fragile, the dreamily artificial kind, like a Venetian goblet blown in many-colored glass.

These all were preparatory. What have we to assert triumphantly the immortality of Keats the master? We have a half-dozen lyrics of beauty incredible and supreme, beauty which admits this youth to the innermost magic circle of all the rich domain of English poetry, the circle haunted by Shakespeare’s voice, by a few strains from Marlowe and Spenser, from Coleridge and Shelley and Blake; while beyond, near but not quite within, one may hear the chanting of Milton and of old John Donne, and perfect chords from Burns, Byron and Poe, leading

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on many others, a number of moderns among them—poets ever to be remembered, who have sung a few songs, or maybe only one, too beautiful to perish.

The *Ode to a Nightingale*, and the ballad *La Belle Dame sans Merci*—any long life were richly charged with these two poems alone. And when we add to these the other great odes—the *Grecian Urn*, *Autumn*, *Melancholy*, *Bards of Passion and of Mirth*; and certain sonnets—*On Chapman's Homer*, *When I Have Fears*, and the last one of all, *Bright Star*—one must say “Wonderful—wonderful!” and feel that what Death robbed us of might have added to the mass, but hardly to the splendor, of this poet's gift.

But what a man gives, be he poet, beggar or king, is always himself; and the fascinating thing about Keats' imperishable gift is the torch-like beauty of that glorious spirit which went flaming through the cluttered world for a few brief years, leaving a cleared path for men's souls to walk in. He saw straight and true in a perplexed and distracted age—

Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

To him Byron's rebellions, Shelley's reforms, were negligible details in the rounded spiritual experience of man. To him, as to Blake, “nothing is pleasing to God except the glad invention of beautiful and exalted things.” He knew that beauty includes all perfections sublunary and subliminal; that it is the magic circle which encloses them all, giving form and symmetry to the created uni-

verse—and to that infinitesimal detail of it, the life and dreams of man.

And then the tragic poignancy of his suffering—for unfulfilled love and early death caught his spirit unready and unreconciled; and the great things he had done seemed slight to his despair in contrast with those “high-piled books” unwritten in his “teeming brain.” Of course we know now that his disease was a direct infection from the young brother whom he had nursed tenderly to the end; and that the medical malpractice of his time speeded him off as fast as possible by prescribing a starvation diet. It is small consolation to feel that today a science more enlightened might have saved him to round out Dante’s fifty-six years and rival the majestic mass of the great Italian’s completed labors. Fortunately there is a higher consolation: a few perfect poems, which, being perfect, are therefore in themselves complete, sufficient.

H. M.

THE SUB-CONSCIOUS CLICHÉ

To what extent does language, created and constantly influenced by a nation’s thinking, react upon the thinking which creates it?

Rabindranath Tagore brought this old question of the philologists to my mind afresh when he said recently in Chicago, speaking of transferring his poems from Bengali to English, “It was not like translating, it was recreating in another medium.”

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I take this to mean that the English words themselves influenced the thought back of the poems, since this thought must have been the same in both cases. So it has occurred to me that the influence of words in our mother tongue is probably so ingrained in us that we are unable to perceive it, but that in a foreign tongue we might be able to catch a glimpse of its action. And I have been amusing myself by comparing the stock poetical clichés of several languages. I do not mean the stock similes, for the influence would be too hard to trace here; but the rhyme clichés, in which it is more apparent. I know only two other languages, French and German, well enough to do anything with this, but I wish some more scholarly poet would consider it.

A tendency is so much easier to recognize in its exaggerated forms, when it reduces itself *ad absurdum*, that I shall offer as examples the worst possible clichés.

They pertain, it seems, in all languages to the tender sentiments. The word *heart* for example. In English the standard rhymes to it are *part* and *dart*. *Part* follows naturally enough perhaps. But why should we, out of the innumerable images pertaining to love, have fastened with such tenacity to that of Cupid's dart and the concrete image of a pierced heart, except that it rhymes? I can find no such persistent reference, indeed very little reference at all, in either French or German doggerel to this particular image. Has not the accidental physical sound of the words foisted it on us? In German the

standard rhymes to *Herz* are *Schmerz* (*pain*) and *Scherz* (*a gay whimsy or joke*). In French *coeur* is a syllable more easily rhymed, so the clichés are less marked, but *pleure* seems to be the most common with *meure* a close second. In all of these it appears that the melancholy side of love is uppermost in the mind of the budding poet of whatever nation. But the precise form this melancholy takes would seem to depend on the rhymes he finds to hand.

In this connection French offers an excellent example. The word *tendresse*, of which the French are very fond, has a cliché *ivresse* (literally *drunkenness* but figuratively *rapture*), which follows it everywhere. This image of being drunk on love is so seldom found in either English or German that one cannot help thinking it is suggested by the rhyme.

Sometimes of course the natural sequence of ideas happens to rhyme and so the words become wedded, as *kiss* and *bliss*, or *eyes* and *skies*; which last—curiously enough, since the words are both of northern origin—rhyme also in French, *yeux* and *cieux*. But how about our English rhymes for *love*—*above* and *dove*? Is either of these ideas inherent in the idea of love? *L'amour* on the other hand seems to suggest to the sentimental Frenchman *toujours*, though this follows more naturally and is not a perfect rhyme. In German *Liebe* is difficult to handle, and is most often either lopped off or imperfectly rhymed with *trübe* (*forlorn*).

Of the clichés on other subjects *life* in English is accom-

panied by *strife*, naturally enough perhaps, but more persistently than elsewhere. And to the French *patrie* seems to carry with it most frequently *tyrannie*. *Country* in English doesn't rhyme easily, but we are apt to distort it to rhyme with *free*. Germany, which is fond of its *Lieder*, brings in constant reference to *Flieder* (*lilacs*), for no very visible reason except the rhyme. There are others of course, but these are enough to point the question.

Perhaps the poetaster who is responsible for these clichés does not set down in them what he wants to say, but what he can say; and certainly the better poet, being more accustomed to riding the only half tractable steed of language, hesitates to use them. But is it not possible that the association of ideas started by the rhyme has driven, with these better poets, down into the subconscious, whence it emerges in other forms than those required by the rhyme? Have we not even in better English lyrics more reference to the dove—though it be carefully unrhymed—and more wounded hearts, than we should otherwise have? Do not the French think more often of rapture and the Germans of lilacs because of this?

Short of some instrument of precision, on the order of that which my doctor friend invented in a dream one night after a bout with several poets, an instrument which measured with scientific exactitude the value of a poem, and gave it a number like the Bertillon system—there will probably be no definite answer to this question. But the idea has amused me.

E. T.

REVIEWS

FROM NEW MEXICO

Red Earth: Poems of New Mexico, by Alice Corbin.

Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago.

If a book is born out of high deliberation, then the shrewdest comment on it shall come out of high deliberation.

There are books all aloof from life's tumult, like out-of-the-way corner haunts where the flair of life equals the most vivid of flowers; and the mob, the stench, the clumping feet and the poking sightseers are not of it.

Such a book is Alice Corbin's *Red Earth*—clean and aloof as the high deliberate table-lands where it was written; elusive as the grave, questioning faces of the dying nations of copper-skinned people whose last homes are there.

Here is a poem, *Trees and Horses*. It reads:

Trees stand motionless among themselves;
Some are solitary.
Horses wander over wide pastures;
At night they herd closely,
Rumps hunched to the wind.

The verbal weaving here is simple and direct as the stripes in an Indian blanket. Of course, there are touch-and-go readers who would get this as only an over-stressed statement of livery-stable fact. Still others of us get an impressionist painting of a few lines.

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Those who read a poem, hear a song, look at a picture, must have seen some semblance of the thing the artist is trying to tell, sing or paint; else it is no use at all to read, hear or look at what that artist attempts to deliver. Take *Afternoon* as Alice Corbin saw it once on the high deliberate plateau of New Mexico:

Earth tips to the west
And the hills lean backward—
Cedar-trees
Hugging the hillsides.

Smoke drifts in the valley—
The pinto sun
Nickers over the gate
Of the home corral.

Here is a woman who has read nearly all books of importance, and in the centres of so-called culture absorbed wide ranges of intellectual fact. And in the piece titled *Sunlight*, written amid the aloof heights of New Mexico, she voices the heart of a myriad of sunburnt farmers and farmers' wives who joined the ashes of their ancestors with peace and few regrets. *Sunlight* reads:

The sunlight is enough,
And the earth sucking life from the sun.
Horses in a wide field are a part of it,
Dappled and white and brown;
Trees are another kind of life,
Linked to us but not understood.
(Whoever can understand a horse or a tree
Can understand a star or a planet.
But one may feel things without understanding,
Or one may understand them through feeling.)

From New Mexico

The simple light of the sun is enough.
One will never remember
A greater thing when one dies
Than sunlight falling aslant long rows of corn,
Or rainy days heavy with grey sullen skies.
Not love, not the intense moment of passion,
Not birth, is as poignant
As the sudden flash that passes,
Like light reflected in a mirror,
From nature to us.

The last five lines are five too many. The fault is "the crime of adjectives," and negations that blur too dark a gray over the already decently crossed slants of afternoon light.

Joseph Warren Beach once wrote of a poet, "He has been known to cry, but never to weep." That would apply to *Red Earth*, the book.

Attractions of a house swept and garnished, ready for a hurdy-gurdy or the undertaker; an open door for tambourines and bells, or crape and a coffin—there is a hospitality that widely varied in *Red Earth*.

Here is an Indian song—only four lines—to be read a hundred times, and then again. It is called *The Wind* and goes:

The wind is carrying me round the sky;
The wind is carrying me round the sky.
My body is here in the valley—
The wind is carrying me round the sky.

Carl Sandburg

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MR. AIKEN'S BOW TO PUNCH

Punch, The Immortal Liar, by Conrad Aiken. Alfred A. Knopf.

Four years ago I reviewed for POETRY a book by Conrad Aiken—*Turns and Movies*, it was called. Looking back at that review I see that I accused him of being derivative, always haunted by the ghosts of the other story-tellers in verse. And I added:

This is the more unfortunate because Mr. Aiken has invention, vividness, compression and at times a pleasing lyric quality. His situations are real situations, swiftly told, his technique easy and effective. It is hard to say just where the authenticity seeps out, yet the total effect is that of a clever craftsman, working well in the medium of his day, yet never quite reaching to the heights.

Today that accusation no longer stands, the authenticity no longer seeps out. Conrad Aiken has found himself.

Punch, The Immortal Liar is a real achievement. All the good qualities of his earlier work are here—the invention and swiftness and surety of his narrative sense, the vividness of phrase and of situation; and they are no longer troubled by ghosts. Even the witty acerbity which in Mr. Aiken's prose criticism, in *Scepticisms* and elsewhere, makes one instinctively doubt his judgments, feeling that some personal complex must underlie so inclusive a displeasure—even this acerbity is of value in *Punch*, since one cannot doubt Mr. Aiken's judgment of a character of his own invention.

Developing the technique he used so effectively in

Mr. Aiken's Bow to Punch

Senlin, Mr. Aiken has divided his poem into a number of short facets, telling the story from different angles. This cutting the story apart serves a double purpose: it avoids the strain put upon poetry by a long sustained narrative—a strain which the medium can seldom if ever survive, and it serves to throw his character into relief, to show Punch in the round.

The section called *What Punch Told Them* contains a real masterpiece of bragging—the good old robust bragging of burlier days, with a big sweep of imagination, a dash of Rabelais and a fine abandon. The pathetic inadequacy of the man behind the bragging, as it is later revealed, comes with great poignancy.

To my thinking however the *Epilogue* is a mistake. Mr. Aiken has thoroughly established in the body of the story the thesis that all men are puppets. And when the reader has accepted this it is disconcerting to find it stated explicitly in the epilogue that the author of the book is no exception to the rule of mankind. But this is quite unable to spoil what is otherwise a very fine piece of work.

Here is a lyric, spoken to Punch in a dream, which gives the mood of the gallant and pathological braggadocio of the story.

Solomon, clown, put by your crown;
And Judas, break your tree.
Seal up your tomb and burn your cross,
Jesus of Galilee!

For here walks one who makes you seem
But atoms that creep in grass;

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You are the pageant of his dream,
And he will bid you pass.

Let Rome go over the earth in gold
With trumpets harshly blown!
For here comes one whose splendor burns
More gloriously, alone.

Heliogabalus, laugh your last!
Queen Sappho, lie you down!
Punch the immortal shakes the seas
And takes the sun for crown.

E. T.

A CONTRAST

In American, by John V. A. Weaver. Alfred A. Knopf.

The Well of Being, by Herbert Jones. John Lane Co.

These two books offer an interesting contrast of character, mood, manner. Here are two young American poets starting out from the same town—Chicago—with talent and literary ambition. The one explores the neighboring streets, shops, parks; and his first book presents the everyday adventures of every-day city people in the slangy jargon with which they disguise the English language. The other goes to London as the best place in which to work out a literary career, and seeks beauty not in common life but in refined and sophisticated experience. Two sonnets, both love lyrics, will present the resulting contrast better than pages of disquisition. The first, *Au Revoir*, is from Mr. Weaver's book:

Don't kiss me! Not no more! . . . Oh, can't you see?
Everythin's perfect now, the way it is.

Why do I hafta fight and beg like this?
It's been so sweet—oh, can't you leave things be?
Oh, now I hurt you! Dear, don't look so sad. . . .
Oh, gee! I guess men ain't got ways to know
How a girl feels, and when it's time to go,
And how too much of even kisses is bad.
But it's the things you didn't just quite do,
And what's left over for some other day,
That makes her wonder and hope and cry and pray,
And tell herself, "Next time!" and dream of you.
Good night, dear . . . you must go . . . it's for your sake.
I'll dream about that kiss you didn't take. . . .

Mr. Jones' sonnet is number *XXVIII* in a sequence of sixty-two:

I know how it will be when we have met
After these months which you as well as I
Have spent in longing: you'll be very shy,
Your grey eyes very bright, a little wet;
You'll kiss me, in the station crowd, and yet
When we're alone, you'll blush, and laugh, and try
Not to be shy, and fail, and wonder why,
And ask me if I'll have a cigarette.

Doubtless I'll smoke it, but I'll watch meanwhile
The play of light and shadow, blush and smile,
Over your face, so quiet yet so stirred.
No matter if you think your mood absurd—
Bashful, when you're alone with me: I know
How that will vanish in one soft-breathed "Oh!"

Both young men, perhaps, are feeling their way as yet toward their different goals. There is nothing final, nothing fully demonstrated, in either book. The danger in the one case is of course super-sophistication—an intellectual thinning-out of emotion, and a too dapper use of an

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over-studied instrument. In the other case the danger is vulgarization—a danger which may become a persistent and aggressive temptation if Mr. Weaver's book proves a best-seller, so that popular magazines and newspaper syndicates try to make its author a rival of Walt Mason.

As yet neither young poet has yielded to the danger. Mr. Jones' poetry, while slight as yet and naively full of clichés, has a certain authentic youthful delicacy—a delicacy a bit too gentlemanly, perhaps, but sincere and sweet; as if he were playing, with grace and feeling, old-fashioned airs on a flute. And in Mr. Weaver's book there is no vulgarity; for no dialect that passes through human lips is vulgar *per se*, however snobs may call it so in Piccadilly or Madison Street; and these poems "in the American language" are lifted above vulgarity by the genuine human emotion in them, the authentic characterization, the unexpected little turns of pathos, tenderness or humor.

Sometimes Mr. Weaver's imagination is adventurous, but the leap is usually justified, as in *Moonlight*:

Say—listen—
If you could only take a bath in moonlight!
Hey! Can't you just see yourself
Take a runnin' dive
Inta a pool o' glowin' blue,
Feel it glidin' over you
All aroun' and inta you?
Grab a star—huh?—
Use it for soap;
Beat it up to bubbles
And white sparkin' foam—

Roll and swash—
Gee!
I just like to bet
You could wash your soul clean
In moonlight!

Sometimes the monologues—of a bar-keep, perhaps, or a drug-store man—seem harsh in their bald realism; but in each case the poet gives us a hint of the man's dream, shows us the special queer glint that lights his life. It is vital stuff, this book—a good rich promise.

The *pièce de résistance* in Mr. Jones' volume is a love-story in a thousand lines of rhymed verse—a quiet tale, simply told, of a youth and maid meeting here and there in Europe, and falling joyously in love. The description of the girl will suggest the style:

A beauty? Never. Something far more rare:
A spirit bright and flame-like, straight and clear,
That shone from laughing eyes and filled the air
Around her; knowing neither doubt nor fear;
A little out of breath, with glowing cheeks,
As if the sun and tingling frost were brought
Into the room with her; and when she speaks,
Her quaint and happy phrases come unsought.

The story moves along with a certain soft music, in a style more mature than that of the sonnets. There is a faint, delicate perfume in it, as of a genuine and sensitive youthfulness. Mr. Jones will have to guard against temptations toward literary sophistication which beset an American aspirant in London. Probably he would be in less danger at home—perhaps he needs crude contacts.

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It will be interesting to watch these two young Chicago poets, travelling such different roads from the same starting-point. H. M.

STILL A SOUL TO SAVE

Before Dawn, by Irene Rutherford McLeod. B. W. Huebsch.

On the jacket of *Before Dawn* appears the same portrait of Miss McLeod which adorned the extremely promising *Songs to Save a Soul*, published several years ago. The fact is significant. Miss McLeod has not developed. She is still trying to save her soul, but she has grown a trifle weary in the process.

Most of the poems express a woman's reaction to the war. One does not doubt the author's sincerity; but fresh, deep-rooted poignancy is lacking. And there is a lack of reticence, of restraint—qualities hardly to be expected in a poet who writes of a lover and his beloved as "twin ships of joy upon a summer sea."

Included in the book is a sequence of sixteen inconsequential sonnets. There are good lines, but enough atrocious ones to appal, or amuse, the reader; for example:

How sexual education still is rotten.

Monogamy in males is nature's freak.

This scorpion janitress, whose watchful part
Is to destroy who comes his heart to maim.

Probably the best lines are at the end of one of the longer poems, untitled like most of them.

Still a Soul to Save

Patient Mother, I have come,
With some withered flowers, home:
Some were flowers, some were weeds—
Life has given to both their seeds.
Lying in thy heart, I pray
Winds may bear the weeds away
Where their roots shall sprawl in vain.
But O my flowers, spring again!

For that matter, Miss McLeod is at her best in her longer poems. *Maggie Winwood*, a narrative of some seven hundred rhymed octosyllabic lines, has elements of strength, effectiveness in character portrayal, and restraint. Objectiveness is the saving grace of this poem, as a somewhat futile subjectiveness explains the weakness of other poems in the volume. *Nelson Antrim Crawford*

COLERIDGE AND WORDSWORTH

Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, with Wordsworth's Preface and Essays on Poetry. University Press, Cambridge, England.

This caption summarizes the elaborate title of a work dealing with the earliest of the reform movements in modern English verse—a work edited by George Sampson and introduced, lengthily, by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. The volume offers such portions of Coleridge's book as can be combined to form a shapely little treatise for the use of "all who enjoy a poet's interpretation of poetry unclouded by the obscurity of yesterday's philosophy," and also those Wordsworthian essays "out of which the book arose and without which it might never have been written." Quiller-

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Couch's introduction offers a judicious union of the biographical, the historical and the critical. *H. B. F.*

CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM PARIS

My dear POETRY: I was waiting for a masterpiece to unveil to you; but the offerings, if many, have not been masterly. Yet our muse has given a few golden songs. I wish I might enclose in my letter something of their amiable beauty, transmuted into the metal of your speech.

Pierre Camo has published his *Book of Regrets* done in the mellifluous and azure tones of Ronsard and Chenier. Camo is a troubadour from the Pyrenees who has pitched his tent in Madagascar, his aloofness from Paris being the condition of his originality. His classical prosody gives him a place apart from the crowd of modernists. The sonnet, the stanza, are the genuine mold of his sensitiveness; such molds might be crushed to dust in the topsyturvy productiveness of Paris.

New books from Paul Valery, Georges Duhamel and Mallarmé have a somewhat different sound.

Valery's works are few, and most of them can be found only in reviews and anthologies. *Les Odes* has just come out, and *La Nouvelle Revue Française* has given us *Sea Cemetery*. These works show an evolution in Valery. In his odes he turns back to the traditional forms of Racine,

Vigny, Hugo; yet he is a creator because of his breadth of vision and ecstasy. *Sea Cemetery* is a meditation; the poet stands before the graves where his dear ones sleep to the sea's perpetual chanting. He sees their souls reborn in flowers. A wide serenity carries him above the petty emotions of life:

Fair sky, true sky, look down on me who change;
After so much pride, after so much strange
Idleness, but pregnant with power,
I give myself up to this resplendent space;
On the roofs of the dead my shadow moves,
Subduing me to its fleeting frailty.

Briny and cool water work an emotional change in the poet:

The wind rises! I must try to live!
The immense air opens and closes my book;
In foam-dust the daring wave flashes from the rocks.
Away, dazzled pages!

Valery's verse unites the intellectual and verbal magics which Mallarmé blended so beautifully.

George Duhamel's art is purely emotional. His war meditations, published as *La Vie des Martyres*, have won world-wide fame—I am sure you have read some of them together with Barbusse's. His *Elegies* are still permeated with the horror of those unforgotten scenes: the *Ballad of the Man with the Wounded Throat*, *The Sadness of Sergeant Gautier*, the already famous *Ballad of Florentin Prunier*. In the pages of the new book we hear the sighs of sleepless nights, the rattle of dying throats, the farewells of fellow-

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creatures. But through the suffering we feel the approach of hope, for the beauty of things earthly comes with biting acidity to the poet's heart. Blossoming apple-trees, glittering sea, a familiar street, restore hope to his mind. The *Elegies* hesitate between despair and bliss—a smile exquisitely veiled with tears:

I knew you, happiness!
Despair, I know you.
In turns have you not tortured
My slavish heart!

Of his *Ballad of Florentin Prunier* I shall quote a few lines. The hero's mother has come from the farthest frontier of the provinces:

She carries a basket with twelve apples,
And fresh butter in a small pot.
All day long she stays in her chair,
Near the bed where Florentin is dying.
She stares obstinately
At the wan face damp with sweat.
She stares and never complains—
It is her way, being a mother.
For twenty long days he held death at bay,
While his mother was near him.
At last one morning, as she was weary
With twenty nights spent God knows where,
She let her head hang a little,
And slept for a little while.
And Florentin Prunier died quickly
And quietly, not to waken her.

The daughter of Stéphane Mallarmé has carefully gath-

ered a few hitherto unpublished lines of the famous writer of *The Afternoon of a Faun*. An amiable distraction of a great poet—that's what they seem to be. Some of them are a series of addresses written in quatrains. Some are inscriptions for red Easter eggs, for New Year's gifts, for fans. A certain number of these quatrains are delightful trifles; a few relate the funny little facts of life. Particularly charming is Mallarmé's fancy when he writes to the ladies. Everywhere we recognize the delicate mirage which his more familiar works have taught us to admire.

I am glad I can associate such a stern production as Duhamel's with Mallarmé's precious grace. Seriousness and fancy have always attended our muse; a new blending of them seems to be in the making.

If the influences of Moréas and Rimbaud are still discernible in the verse of today, yet a great deal of purely fanciful verse has been issued lately, verse which reflects the ironical smile of Laforgue and Apollinaire. The changes which the war has brought into our social life as well as our verse are suggested not only in serious poems, but in occasional outbursts of gayety and fancy. France may be a sober—shall I risk saying puritanical?—country (you should see her provincial towns and study her Parisian middle-class!); but in spite of difficult circumstances, in spite of an official gravity and its communicative gloom, modern verse reflects the most diverse moods.

Fancy has now left Montmartre—Max Jacob is never at home!—to dwell with Jean Cocteau near the Champs

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Elysées. Having danced Auric's one-step on the terrace of a fashionable sky-scraper, they both went back to the little band of their youth, led by Poulenc at a street corner. There they mixed up with soldiers, nurses, children and sentimental workmen.

Back home the couple entertain their six musician friends and a few poets. The apartment is simple, of a refined poverty, such as Okakura would have liked. The chief ornament is a rose in a glass of water, the very immortal French rose that Raymond Radiguet boasts of having thrown like a bomb in the *Galerie des Machines*, full of modern and exotic monsters. The poetry of this group aims to be as perfect, as useless and as indispensable as red on beautiful cheeks, as a rare wine or a silent promenade; and some of Cocteau's and Radiguet's verse is not far from such perfection.

Jean Catel

THE WINTER'S PUBLISHING IN ENGLAND

Dear POETRY: The quite unnatural interest in poetry, which the British public was stirred to by the emotional activity of the War, has given way now, broken down before another bad attack of the usual British lethargy in matters artistic. Two books which a year or so ago would have won for their authors a wide as well as a narrow circle of readers—Edmund Blunden's *Waggoner* (Sidgwick & Jackson, and Alfred A. Knopf) and Wilfred Owen's *Poems* (Chatto & Windus), books which have been greeted enthu-

The Winter's Publishing in England

siastically by nearly all reviewers—have achieved a reputation in the narrower sense, it is true; but have not reached the sales of far inferior stuff which appeared during those tragic years. Edmund Blunden was recognized at once as a distinguished poet of English country life; and Wilfred Owen, whose posthumous war-poems have now appeared, is generally considered an abler war-poet than Nichols, Graves, or even Sassoon himself. He has an absolute clarity and intense vividness of vision and an unflinching sympathy, which are hardly equalled anywhere in the poetry of the War.

The *Collected Poems* of Edward Thomas (Selwyn & Blount, and Henry Holt & Co.) have now appeared, with an introduction by Walter de la Mare. A collected edition of Mr. de la Mare's own poems has also appeared; (Martin Secher, and Henry Holt & Co.)—but this does not, unhappily, include the poems published in illustration of Pamela Bianco's drawings in *Flora* (Wm. Heinemann); in many respects his best work, as well as his latest.

W. H. Davies has published another volume, the *Song of Life* (Fifield), which is in fair accord with his earlier work. One of the most interesting books produced during the winter is Robert Graves' *Pier-glass* (Martin Secher), a work which shows that he is developing in a new and quite unexpected direction. It is not a kind of poetry that is likely to be popular; but such poems as *The Gnat*, *The Pier-glass* and *The Jubilee Murder Cycle*, are an interesting variation from the usual modern trend.

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John Masefield's racing poem, *Right-Royal*, is too widely known to need comment.

The first number of a new annual anthology has appeared, Mr. Masefield contributing the introduction. William Heinemann is the publisher, and it is to present successive collections of *Public School Verse*, thus in a way anticipating the poetry of the next generation. The first number has discovered, in P. C. Quennell, of Berkhansted School, at least one poet of surprising promise and no inconsiderable attainment. It is to be hoped that those responsible will insure that his talent is not forced. A second volume is in the press. R. Hughes

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

KREYMBORG'S MILLIONS

The Dial for May opens its page of *Comment* by quoting this remark of W. C. Blum:

Williams' first suggestion was that someone give Alfred Kreymborg one hundred thousand dollars.

And the editor goes on to inform us of a windfall of money:

What do you know? Somebody's gone and done it! Alfred Kreymborg and Harold Loeb announce an *International Magazine of the Arts*, to be printed in Italy and sold all round the block. How much is \$100,000 in lire, just now?

"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Alfred Kreymborg.

Kreymborg's Millions

Some people are born lucky! Nobody ever offered POETRY an hundred thousand, whether in pounds, dollars, or lire! And POETRY has been a conspicuous target for such windfalls these ten years—nearly—whereas Mr. Kreymborg carried *Others* scarcely more than a year.

The new international is to be called *The Broom*. May it sweep clean without raising too much dust.

NOTES

Genevieve Taggard, who first appeared in POETRY in June of last year, removed soon after from Berkeley to New York, and last winter became one of the nine editors of *The Measure*, the new poetry magazine which we greeted last month. In March, Miss Taggard married Mr. Robert L. Wolf, and the bridal pair are living at present near Farmington, Conn.

Miss Amy Lowell, of Brookline, Mass., requires no introduction. Her latest book of verse, *Legends*, just published by the Macmillan Co., is advertised in this issue.

Mrs. Grace Hazard Conkling, who is in the Smith College faculty, lives in Northampton, Mass. Her latest book of verse, published last year by Henry Holt & Co., is *Wilderness Songs*.

Mr. Morris Gilbert, of Yonkers, N. Y., who served in the navy during the war, and afterwards in the Near-East Relief, is the author of *A Book of Verse*, privately printed in 1917.

Mr. Mark Turbyfill, of Chicago, who received in 1919 POETRY's prize for a young poet, will soon issue, through Monroe Wheeler, of Evanston, Ill., his first book of verse, *The Living Frieze*.

Mr. Marx G. Sabel, of Jacksonville, Florida, has appeared in various magazines.

Mr. Jun Fujita is a Japanese poet resident in Chicago, and now in the employ of *The Evening Post*.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Miss Ruth Suckow, who is a bee-culturist in Earlville, Iowa, has appeared in various magazines.

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Mr. Clifford F. Gessler, who has published in the special magazines, recently left Chicago to follow his profession of journalism in Honolulu.

Miss Anne Elizabeth Wilson, now of Brooklyn, but a native of Kentucky, has published little as yet. Ditto, Miss Muriel Safford, of New York City.

Moon Kwan is a Chinese poet who studied recently in the University of California, but is now, the editor is informed, in Europe.

Mr. John Peale Bishop, a native of West Virginia and a resident of New York, has become, since he got out of khaki, managing editor of our brilliant contemporary, *Vanity Fair*.

The editor regrets to announce that Mr. Richard Aldington has been compelled to resign as London correspondent of POETRY, because of numerous and pressing literary engagements in England. Mr. Aldington's first appearance as a poet was with *Choricos* and two other poems in POETRY's second number, November, 1912, when he was a boy of twenty. Since then many of his best poems, and of late a number of editorials and reviews, have been presented in our pages; and we shall hope for further contributions.

Since his three years' service as an infantryman on the Western Front, Mr. Aldington has gradually become engrossed in critical and editorial labors. We shall hope that they will not absorb him to the neglect of poetry.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Avon's Harvest, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co.

Ships in Harbour, by David Morton. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

As the Larks Rise, by Theodosia Garrison. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Poems, by Augusta E. Stetson, C. S. D. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Resurrecting Life, by Michael Strange. Alfred A. Knopf.

The Harvest Home, by James B. Kenyon. James T. White & Co.

Some Songs of Bilitis, by S. Fowler Wright. Birmingham, England.

Poems, by Arthur L. Phelps, English Club of Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.

Poems, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield & Co.

Highland Light and Other Poems, by Henry Adams Bellows. Macmillan Co.

POETRY is one of the three good magazines in America.
Geoffrey Parsons, of the New York Tribune.

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GALLERY OF PAINTINGS

THE SHOP

THE shop is red and crimson. Under the forge
Men hold red bars of iron with black iron tongs.
It crashes—sparks spatter out; it crashes again, again.
At last the iron is bent as it belongs.

Swedes, Norwegians, Poles or Greeks—they are men:
They grin when they please, look ugly when they please;
They wear black oakum in their ears for the noise;
They know their job, handle their tools with ease.

Their eyes are clean and white in their black faces;
If they like, they are surly, can speak an ugly no;
They laugh great blocks of mirth, their jokes are simple;
They know where they stand, which way they go.

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If I wore overalls, lost my disguise
Of womanhood and youth, they would call me friend;
They would see I am one of them, and we could talk
And laugh together, and smoke at the day's end.

DINGY STREET

It is twilight by the dreary edge of town,
And the December air
Is harsh and bitter. All the trees are bare,
The leaves are scattered and trodden down
To pulp; and every house is brown.
There is no trace of beauty anywhere.

Night comes slowly, the houses hide in the gloom;
But toward the muddy street
One by one their shabby windows bloom
Like golden flowers, to shine and greet
The bundled effigies on sodden feet
Trudging toward welcome in the hidden room.

There is a magic in it. There once more,
Body and spirit, they are warmed and fed.
There, as a thousand times before,
The ancient feast is spread—
The simple miracles of love and bread.
They stumble into beauty at the door.

INTERIOR

Words curl like fragrant smoke-wreaths in the room
From the majestic beard of an old man
Who props his shabby feet upon the stove
Recalling ancient sorrows. In the gloom
Beyond the lamp a woman thinks of love,
Her round arms wrapped in her apron, her dark head
Drooping. She has a bitter thing to learn.
His words drift over her . . . uncomforted
Her pain whirls up and twists like a scarlet thread
Among his words. He rises, shoves his chair
Back from the stove, pauses beside her there;
Shuffles irresolutely off to bed.

CUBIST PORTRAIT

She is purposeless as a cyclone; she must move
Either by chance or in a predestined groove,
Following a whim not her own, unable to shape
Her course. From chance or God even she cannot escape!

Think of a cyclone sitting far-off with its head in its hands,
Motionless, drearily longing for distant lands
Where every lonely hurricane may at last discover
Its own transcendent, implacable, indestructible lover!

What is a cyclone? Only thin air moving fast
From here to yonder, to become silent emptiness at last.

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TWO WOMEN

Two faint shadows of women were ascending
The pathway of a desolate hill,
Pale as moth-wings beneath the low-bending
Sycamore branches, in the moonlight paler still.

“This one is dead,” said the moon; “her face is ashén,
She is dry as a withered leaf—
What has she known of beauty or of passion
To come by moonlight to the mountain of grief?”

“The other too is dead,” said the earth, “yet her feet are
burning—
I feel them hot and restless as blown fire.
She has known many paths, why is she turning
Here, from the secret valley of desire?”

They passed, the moon paled, and from leafy places
Morning crept forth. At last they came
From the mountain of grief—women with tear-wet faces
Who had been withered leaf and shadow of flame.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Good morning, madam, in your sleepy brown hair—
Twist yourself awake, blink and stare!
I am lying on the floor,
With the old rose-red

Dressing-gown you wore
When you went to bed.

Don't look stupid with your drowsy blue eyes—
Here by the bed is your disguise!
You're a gentle wife
And a tender mother,
And all your life
You shall be no other.

Life is a shawl to wrap about your shoulder—
Every day warmer, every day older.
In half an hour
You'll be dressed,
Youth like a flower
Wilting on your breast.

DREAM-KISS

Moment of delight—most delicate,
Cool as a rose is cool;
Swift and silent as a pool
To mirror wings in flight;
Passionate as frost is passionate
With patterns intricate and white;
Pure as music in the night,
Far off, yet intimate—
It came

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Poignant as beauty on swift feet of flame.
It paused . . . was gone . . . most delicate
Moment of delight.

SHADOW

Like the flickering shadow
Of birds flying
Over a wide meadow,
Something passes;
Some forgotten or untold
Dream flies over,
Its wings brushing
Lightly against me, as rushing
Fingers of wind touch clover
And bending grasses.
I am cold
With the shadow of something dying.

AS YOU ARE NOW

Under golden boughs that lean and drift
You lift your head, and ripples of light
Touch the leaves till they quiver,
Reaching down in a motionless
Unachieved caress.
The branches ache with their desire,
And the wind holds its breath.
The moment dies in a shiver

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

Of icy fire—eternity and death.
Then leaves fall softly on your head.

NOCTURNE

The moonlit hill
And the black trees
Where a hidden bird
Sings and is still—
Even these
Leave me unstirred.

I am hidden deep,
Like the secret bough
Of a tree in leaf.
I am safe asleep—
What can touch me now
Of joy or grief?

For night and noon
The sky is shut,
The winds are dumb;
Behind the moon
No gates are cut
For the winds to come.

Could wind from the moon
Sweep down until,
Like a winter tree,

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My leaves were strewn
On the moonlit hill
And I stood free,

Beauty and pain
Would touch me now
With bitter cold,
As moonbeams rain
Through a naked bough
When the year is old.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

UNDER THE TREE

THE CORNFIELD

I went across the pasture lot
When not a one was watching me.
Away beyond the cattle barns
I climbed a little crooked tree.

And I could look down on the field
And see the corn, and how it grows
Across the world, and up and down,
In very straight and even rows.

And far away and far away—
I wonder if the farmer man
Knows all about the corn, and how
It comes together like a fan.

THE PILASTER

The church has pieces jutting out
Where corners of the walls begin.
I have one for my little house,
And I can feel myself go in.

I feel myself go in the bricks,
And I can see myself in there.
I'm always waiting all alone,
I'm sitting on a little chair.

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And I am sitting very still,
And I am waiting on and on
For something that is never there,
For something that is gone.

THE STAR

O little one, away so far,
You cannot hear me when I sing.

You cannot tell me what you are,
I cannot tell you anything.

WATER NOISES

When I am playing by myself,
And all the boys are lost around,
Then I can hear the water go—
It makes a little talking sound.

Along the rocks below the tree,
I see it ripple up and wink;
And I can hear it saying on,
“And do you think? and do you think?”

A bug shoots by that snaps and ticks,
And a bird flies up beside the tree
To go into the sky to sing.
I hear it say, “Killdee, killdee!”

Or else a yellow cow comes down
To splash a while and have a drink.
But when she goes I still can hear
The water say, "And do you think?"

CRESCENT MOON

And Dick said, "Look what I have found!"
And when we saw we danced around,
And made our feet just tip the ground.

We skipped our toes and sang, "Oh-lo!
Oh-who, oh-who, oh what do you know!
Oh-who, oh-hi, oh-loo, kee-lo!"

We clapped our hands and sang, "Oh-ee!"
It made us jump and laugh to see
The little new moon above the tree.

STRANGE TREE

Away beyond the Jarboe house
I saw a different kind of tree.
Its trunk was old and large and bent,
And I could feel it look at me.

The road was going on and on
Beyond, to reach some other place.
I saw a tree that looked at me,
And yet it did not have a face.

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It looked at me with all its limbs;
It looked at me with all its bark.
The yellow wrinkles on its sides
Were bent and dark.

And then I ran to get away,
But when I stopped and turned to see,
The tree was bending to the side
And leaning out to look at me.

A CHILD ASLEEP

And I looked for him everywhere
Because I wanted him to play;
And then I found him on his bed
Asleep, but it was day.

His eyes were shut behind the lids—
He couldn't lift them up to see.
And I looked at him very long,
And something in him looked at me.

And he was something like a cat
That is asleep, and like a dog;
Or like a thing that's in the woods
All day behind a log.

And then I was afraid of it,
Of something that was sleeping there.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

I didn't even say his name,
But I came down the stair.

MY HEART

My heart is beating up and down,
Is walking like some heavy feet.
My heart is going every day,
And I can hear it jump and beat.

At night before I go to sleep
I feel it beating in my head;
I hear it jumping in my neck
And in the pillow on my bed.

And then I make some little words
To go along and say with it—
*The men are sailing home from Troy,
And all the lamps are lit.*

*The men are sailing home from Troy,
And all the lamps are lit.*

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

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SEMPER EADEM

FOURTH DIMENSION

His life was strangely hedged about
By three, though he seemed not to know it:
One whom he loved, who shut him out;
One hid her passion in her doubt;
One was too fond and wise to show it.

The first blew on desire's dark flame
Until he tossed with every flicker
In agonies of sad self-blame,
That left him tired, but not yet tame
Enough to cease love's tireless bicker.

The second tried in vain to bind him,
Uncertain of what stirred in each.
Walking through labyrinths to find him,
She saw him shorn, but could not blind him;
And silence was her wittiest speech.

The third had known him since she bore him;
And suffered, though she may have smiled,
To know that barren wishes tore him,
When one was ready to adore him
As if he were not still her child.

Too wise to hate the one he wanted,
Too fond to pity her he scorned,

Her hours, like his own, were haunted
By devils that might well have daunted
A monster likewise hoofed and horned.

The first, meeting his mother, knew her
A woman very like her own.
The second wondered how to woo her,
While ever seeking to eschew her,
Fearful of what she must have known.

And so their days were all one tangle
Of this, one dropped, and that, one dared.
While he, from his peculiar angle,
Half-wished that loneliness might strangle
What they so curiously shared.

OVERTONES

Keep up your talk—
There is no need for silence now.
I am content to listen, and watch you now.
Your voice stops while you walk.

You move about,
And toss back from your brow
The lock that always falls across your brow.
Your grin is tinged with doubt.

Einstein and art
And ranching—it goes on somehow.

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Don't stop, or it will be too much somehow,
And you will hear my heart.

REFLECTIONS

Your eyes were strange with sorrow: were there tears
That touched their color to such troubled light?
Those mirrors wherein mine had shone so bright
Refused the image, looking on the years,
Like naked runners running upon spears,
That showed so impotently few tonight—
The pageant of a passion men requite
With death, and freedom whose chief wage is fears.

I would have outstared sorrow in your eyes,
But looking on them, mine reflected yours
As the most lucid pool shows stormy skies,
Cloud facing cloud, when deepest calm endures.
And though my lips had drunk your bitter wine,
You would have tasted bitterer, touching mine.

KNOWLEDGE

Now there is no confusion in our love—
For you are there
With the big brow, the cheek of tougher grain,
The rougher greying hair;
And I am here, with a woman's throat and hands.
We are apart and different.

Babette Deutsch

And there is something difference understands
That peace knows nothing of.
It is the pain in pleasure that we seek
To kill with kisses, and revive
With other kisses;
For by our hurt we know we are alive.

The tides return into the salty sea,
And the sea-fingered rocks are swept and grey.
There are no secrets where the sea has crept,
But the sea
Has kept its ageless mystery.
And we,
Beaten by the returning passional tides,
Searched by the stabbing fingers,
Washed and lapped and worn by the old assault,
Knowing again
The bitterness of the receding wave,
With renewed wonder facing the old pain,
We are as close
As one wave fallen upon another wave;
We are as far
As the sky's star from the sea-shaken star.

Love is not the moon
Pulling the whole sea up to her.
And there is something darkness understands
These moons know nothing of.

Babette Deutsch

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FOUR POEMS

IN THE BARN

The sun, in wanton pride,
Drenches the country-side
With spilt gold from his old autumnal store.
But Scipio sits within the barn's thick gloom,
The merest crack of light coming in the door—
Sits and husks the corn long after working hours.
Vainly for him the autumn bloom
Is on the flowers.

The inside of the barn is velvet black
Except where a gold thread runs along a crack;
And the inquisitive sun thrusts points of light
Through chink and cranny, piercing the midnight.
The dry husks rattle, and his shuffling feet
Keep time to what he sings—an elusive tune,
Husky and monotonous and sweet,
Scarce audible, so softly does he croon
To keep away the evil eye:

*Everybody
Who is livin'
Got to die.*

Across the evening fields the setting sun
Richly intones toil done.
The home-bound negroes idle in the lanes,
Gossiping as they go; coarse laughter falls

Josephine Pinckney

On the resonant air; from a far field cat-calls
Float over, and a banjo's strains.
Shucking corn in the darkness, Scipio in reply
Sits and sings his mournful, husky stave:

*Wid a silver spade
You kin dig my grave;
Everybody
Who is livin'
Got to die.*

STRANGE

We believed
That the tides of our being
Set to each other.

But when we came to speak,
There was a distance between us
More wide and strange
Than the silvery waste
Of the marsh under the moon.

And your voice came
From that untrodden stillness
Like the calling of some marsh creature
Disturbed—seeking.

And I, too, was dumb—frozen,
Like the flood-tide
And moon-silent marsh.

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THE OUTCAST

Into the valleys I flee, into the shadows;
But there is no peace, no sanctuary.
The hills, like elephants,
Shoulder noiseless through the clouds
And close in on me.
Where shall I hide from the tread of their feet?

I have overset the gods in the temples, and there is none
to protect me—
The little gods of jade with staring eyes,
The great gold and black gods with foolish faces.

Tell me, little gods of the North and East, and of the
South and West,
How long shall my bones wait, lying on these rocks,
To become as white as the broken plaster
Of the images in the temple?
Tell me, true gods,
Speak a swift word!—
For the clouds descend in a hot white mist of wrath,
And through them stamp the elephants . . .
The terrible elephants . . .
Trumpeting . . .

SWAMP LILIES

Today I feel new-born, for I have seen
A stretch of cloistered wood thick-spread with green,

Josephine Pinckney

Where wet wild lilies grew on every side,
Streaming away—an immobile white tide.
Not as the sun that bursts upon our eyes
At morning, making glory of the skies,
But like the slow, pervading evening light
They filled the eye—a world of silvery white
Withdrawn and exquisite, as from the sod
They breathed the still inviolateness of God.

Josephine Pinckney

FORGOTTEN

How can I remember
Autumn and pain,
When trees hold dreams
In their arms again?

How can my heart break
Till it cries?
The joy of summer
Has made me wise.

I can't remember
What hurt me so—
Autumn and winter
Were so long ago.

Harold Vinal

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NUMBERS

Three sheep graze on the low hill
Beneath the shadow of five trees.

Three sheep!

Five old sycamores!

(The noon is very full of sleep.
The noon's a shepherd kind and still.
The noon's a shepherd takes his ease
Beneath the shadow of five trees,
Five old sycamores.)

Three sheep graze on the low hill.
Down in the grass, in twos and fours,
Cows are munching in the field.
Three sheep graze on the low hill:
Bless them, Lord, to give me wool.
Cows are munching in the field:
Bless them that their teats be full.
Bless the sheep and cows to yield
Wool to keep my children warm,
Milk that they should grow therefrom.

Three sheep graze on the low hill,
Beneath five sycamores.
Cows are munching in the field,
All in twos and fours.

On an elm-tree far aloof
There are nine-and-twenty crows,

Croaking to the blue sky roof
Fifteen hundred ancient woes.

In a cracked deserted house,
Six owls cloaked with age and dream—
In a cracked deserted house,
Six owls wait upon a beam,
Wait for the nocturnal mouse.

In the stackyard at my farm
There are fourteen stacks of hay.

 Lord, I pray
Keep my golden goods from harm,
Fourteen shining stacks of hay!

Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
Six owls, nine-and-twenty crows,
Three sheep grazing on the hill

 Beneath five sycamores,
Fat cows munching in a field,
 All in twos and fours—
Fat cows munching in a field,
Fourteen shining stacks of hay.

At a table in a room
Where beyond the window-frames
Glow the sweet geranium—
At a table in a room
My three children play their games
Till their father-poet come.

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Stop a moment, listen, wait
Till a father-poet come—
Lovely ones of lovely names,
He shall not come late.

Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
Six owls, nine-and-twenty crows,
Fifteen hundred ancient woes,
Three sheep grazing on the hill
 Beneath five sycamores,
Fat cows munching in a field
 All in twos and fours—
Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
My three lovely children, one
Mother laughing like the sun,
Sweetheart laughing like the sun
 When the baby laughters run.

Now the goal I sought is won,
Sweetheart laughing like the sun,
Now the goal I sought is won,
 Sweet, my song is done.

Louis Golding

O CHANGING ONE

Sometimes, O changing one,
Your feet are like white foam
Riding the long blue rhythms of my thought—
Like foam on a subsiding lake
In the hour next before sunset.

And sometimes your feet are leaves
Red from the first frost,
Whirling into the corners of my mind,
Whirling into the sunlight again;
Dancing, chaotic,
Gay in their brief autumn.

But sometimes
Your feet are like black velvet,
And you move without sound within the shadows;
You circle the firelight of my thought.
And I, by the red fire that fights the shadows,
Wonder what prey you seek—
I, not wholly at ease.

William A. Norris

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GOLDEN DARKNESS

THERE WAS A TIME

There was a time when I was shy and lonely,
And stood in strange bewilderment apart;
And no one spoke to me, and silence only
Would fold my songs into her tender heart.

There was a time when only windy darkness
Would fan my dreams with glamoured loveliness.
But you have come, and nights are filled with starkness;
And I am lonely for my loneliness.

Oh, you have come—and silence is a stranger,
And darkness keeps aloof from my distress;
And you—oh, you are all too fraught with danger,
And I am lonely for my loneliness.

CLOUDS AND WAVES

With bent heads hidden the clouds run by,
Muffled in shadow, across the sky.

With lowered eyes, in the darkness of the sea,
The hunched lean waves scud away fearfully.

How great is the wrong, and where is the place?
What is the truth that they cannot face?

COBWEBS

Rise in the cool dim dawn
When a mist is hung on the pane—
The loose gray cobweb of the fog
Spun by the rain.

When the sun's long golden fingers
Have brushed it away—then go
And watch the sky through the tree-tops
Fall like snow.

And after, when you are tired
And twilight hangs on the leaves,
Listen—and the silence will tell you
Why it grieves.

For the fog, the sky and the twilight
Are the cobwebs that brush the eyes
When a man would enter the dusty door
Of paradise.

GREY

A bleak wind rides on the waves,
And the shadowy foam is hurled.
Grey rains are on the hills,
And a grey dusk is over the world.

Bleak moods and shadowy moods
Move like the moods of the sea;

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The mist, a grey unspoken thought,
Is looking strangely at me.

And I am lost in greyness—
My dreams are still and furled;
For the grey rains are on the hills,
And a grey dusk is over the world.

RAINS

In the country the rain comes softly with timid feet;
A grey silence is in her face, and strands of darkness
blowing from her hair,
And trees are dark in her eyes, and the wind is a mournful
gesture.

Softly the rain comes over the hills and her face is memory:
It is filled with the twilight blowing of waves and grasses;
It is filled with shadowy cloud-paws feeling among the
valleys;
It is filled with the leap of trees that are instantly caught
by the earth.

The spirit of all things breathes on the invisible pane of
time,
And slowly out of the shadows the grey face of the rain
comes into being—
Softly the rain comes over the hills and her face is sorrow.

But the rain in the city is a jazz rain:
The legs of the rain in the city are nimble—

She is loud on the stones, on the roof-tops, on the windows;
Her dancing is filled with the sway and the glitter of tinsel.
Behind her the street is a wide grin, showing the black
teeth of houses—

The street is a wicked leer dark with ugly passion.
But though the laughter of the jazz rain is coarse in the
gutter;

Though her legs are nimble and innumerable on the pave-
ments,

Though the jazz rain speaks so loud,
The brazen rain has never a word for me.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

I know that life is Jason,
And that beauty is the witch-maiden helping him.
I know that the soft, luminous night of stars
Is the golden fleece he is seeking.
I know that in the beginning
He sowed the boulders, the teeth of dead ages,
And the innumerable armored cities have arisen.
I know that he has thrown among them love and desire,
And they have warred and shall war with each other until
the end.

And if you doubt the least word I have said,
Come out on the dark beach some strange summer night
And watch the huge quivering serpent of the ocean
Still coiled around the trunk of the tree of paradise.

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BECAUSE

Because I have not kissed as yet one burning mouth,
I have kissed a hundred.
Because I have not looked into one pair of eyes,
A hundred have haunted me.
Because I have not lived one hour in passion's flame,
I have died in a hundred others.

MOTES

The stars are mystical motes
Delicately glimmering
In blue sunlight.
I move my hand
Through the elfin radiance,
And my fingers are strange
With dream and glamour.

THE SUBWAY IS LIT

The subway is lit like a great cathedral,
And myriad shadows whisper and float.
But the eyes of darkness are filled with fury,
And a scream of steel is in the wind's throat.
The trains are moving like things of madness,
And the eyes of men have a glassy stare.
Where is the music of holiness?
And where the uplifted face of a prayer?

THE BUBBLE

We have kings, and the deadly sins seven;
We have lives for all things that die;
We have wars and quite a bit of trouble:
But God, ensconced in his heaven,
Watches through air blue as sky,
And delights in his beautiful bubble.

THE RETURN

In some far and lonely midnight
I shall arise as in a dream,
And part dark curtains on a strange room
Where mysterious candles gleam.

I shall open an unknown book
In that weird and wind-stirred place,
And come upon a poem
With a sad face.

I shall listen to my dead heart's cry
Faint through the years that are gone,
And I shall feel over my shoulder
The Silence looking on.

And very softly he will touch me,
And I shall turn toward the gloom;
He will take my arm and quietly
Lead me out of the room.

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COMMENT

HERE IN CASS STREET

WE should like to pass on to our readers a more liberal share of the "life" of the POETRY office—to introduce them to our extremely varied callers, show them scraps of our still more varied correspondence, let them read our contradictory clippings. And if only the seal of confidence could be removed, we should make them laugh by printing a few of our "museum" features—poems so amusingly bad that we could not bear to send them back without making copies for preservation.

One day, for example, the arriving editor discovers, so to speak, a foundling on the door-step—a young poet from New York or Oklahoma who has started out to see the world with a few dollars in his pocket, and who must find some kind of a job in State Street or La Salle to keep him fed and housed, and to oil the wheels of his journey. Again, an elderly poet-adventurer appears fresh from prison, where he had been tangled up in some friend's attempt at counterfeiting—a lank starveling figure, the gaunt picture of despair, but offering, to the editor's surprise, two or three acceptable poems; and leaping alive, even to a smile, at the actual receipt of a check. Or, a rainy morning is brightened with color by the visit of two quite astonishingly superb English ladies—a poet and her sister—who are speeding through the town

with their uncle, Sir Kenneth Somebody, and who leave us *édition-de-luxe* books and Queen of Sheba memories.

Helen Hoyt once gave us a guest book—it was while she was still Helen Hoyt, two years before her bridal New Year's day of 1921, when she became Mrs. William Whittingham Lyman out in California and took up her abode in Berkeley. Let us look over its entries since Christmas, and pause a moment with a few of the visitors:

There are Henry Bellamann and Glenn Ward Dresbach just before the turn of the year. Southern poets both, the one from South Carolina and the other New Mexico: Mr. Bellamann a musician, as well as president of the Columbia Poetry Society; and Mr. Dresbach an efficiency expert—a rare talent for a poet!—who had been making copper efficacious at Tyrone. And with the new year comes Edward Sapir from Ottawa, where he has been gathering and translating French-Canadian folk-songs. And bluff, black-bearded Jo Davidson, sculptor of all the war-heroes, draws his inky portrait in the book. And little Winifred Bryher writes her slender name there—the quiet English girl-author who was even then on her way to New York to surprise her friends by marrying Robert McAlmon.

Sara Bard Field, the warrior-suffragette from California; and Nora Douglas Holt, the beautiful bronze-colored founder and editor of the new and interesting Negro organ, *Music and Poetry*—these two are neighbors in the book. A week later comes John Drinkwater, and at the

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end of March Franklin P. Adams, the St. Simeon Stylites of the New York *Tribune*. Next Clinton Masseck, now of Kansas, erstwhile a warrior in the most fiery battle-line of the Argonne. A few days later it is Nicolas Roerich, the big-brained, high-souled Russian painter and dreamer, whose pictures are a more vivid revelation than Lenin's politics; and whose poems—if we could get at them in the three or four books he has published, may be as full of color and vitality.

And so it goes. The correspondence is more full of contrasts, possibly, than the visitors. Bits of it come from remote corners of the earth, but most of it bears George Washington's familiar red portrait on the envelope. The editor is asked not only to criticize poems—that is an obvious and common request—but to advise about publishers, to prepare club programs; to write an article on Florence Kiper Frank or Haniel Long for the benefit of some college-student's thesis; to reveal the author of some wandering poem—usually an incredibly poor one; to save some hapless poet from starvation or get him out of jail; to pass judgment on some elaborate system of psycho-analysis, or on some meticulous questionnaire which is to reveal with mathematical accuracy the ability of students in a certain great university to judge poetry—a questionnaire which so befuddles the editor's brain that judging poetry becomes a madhouse dance. These are but a few of the demands put forth by acquisitive minds—sometimes of marvellous ingenuity, and still more marvel-

lous confidence in the editor's lavishness of time, interest and spirit to meet them.

The poets themselves are usually more reasonable than these questioners who are studying or writing about them. Of course now and then the ego flaps its wings and temperament becomes temper, but on the whole they are tolerant of the editor's short-comings and astonishingly patient during that too-long period which usually divides acceptance from publication. They are very different—these poets: one, an I. W. W. coal-miner; another, a bedridden invalid in New Zealand; number three, a fine lady in the smartest of smart sets; number four, a plantation Negro in Georgia; number five, a Syrian rug-dealer; number six, a live-wire reporter on the *New York Scald*; seven, a corporation lawyer; eight, a little crippled seamstress sewing and writing in a wheeled chair; nine, a lovely red-haired siren, the heroine of an hundred romances; ten, a lonely spinster, inaccessible in her emotional desert; eleven, a half-mad starveling whose little gleam of genius may be extinguished by niggardly denial of light and air and food for body and soul; and twelve, fortune's favorite, whose gleam may be extinguished by the sheer mass and weight of his possessions and opportunities. And there are the married and the single, the too much married and too little, the much divorced and the undivorced, and the careless few who get on without any of these formalities.

In short, there are today five hundred and ninety-six

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names in POETRY's card-index of accepted poets; and a history, thrilling but never to be fully revealed, goes with each card. Nearly a score of nationalities are represented either directly or through immigration, and forty-one of our forty-eight states, besides the District of Columbia and Hawaii. One of the severest shocks of the editor's career is the discovery that Indiana is not among them. Are there no poets left in Riley's own state, the state where they were wont to foregather and go on pilgrimages? Or have the poets of Indiana, one and all, boycotted POETRY? Anyway, Indiana is missing from our list, along with Delaware, Idaho, North Dakota, Mississippi, North Carolina and Utah.

It's a long and crowded trail we have travelled these eight-and-a-half stirring years. H. M.

THE NEBRASKA LAUREATE

The legislature of the state of Nebraska has fitly honored its most conspicuous poet-citizen by appointing him Poet Laureate of the state. Mr. Neihardt earns this distinction not only by his artistic achievement in general, but also by the fact that, as the resolution puts it, he "has written a national epic wherein he has developed the mood of courage with which our pioneers explored and subdued our plains, and thus has inspired in Americans that love of the land and its heroes whereby great national traditions are built and perpetuated."

We congratulate Nebraska upon its gracious decree, and Mr. Neihardt upon the official appreciation of his state. The appreciation might have been further emphasized by a salary or some form of financial award, but perhaps that is too ideal an expression of truly poetic justice to expect at present.

We have criticized Mr. Neihardt's artistic principles and methods in the writing of his epic narratives, but a difference of opinion in detail does not prevent our appreciation of his artistic sincerity and quality, and of the value of his exploration of a field too little recognized in the arts. It will be remembered that one volume of the projected trilogy, *The Song of Three Friends*, shared last year with the *Poems* of the late Gladys Cromwell first honors in the P. S. A. prize award for the best book of verse published by a poet of the United States during the year 1919.

The New York *Evening Mail* discovers "subtle Sinn-Fein propaganda" in the new Nebraska laureateship. This would seem to be straining a point, even if Mr. Neihardt were an Irishman, which no one ventures to allege of a poet born in Illinois of middle-western ancestry. However, this laureateship is not quite the first, the *Nebraska State Journal* to the contrary notwithstanding; for in 1919 the legislature of California bestowed a similar honor upon Miss Ina Coolbrith in declaring her, by official decree, "The Loved Laurel-crowned Poet of California."

H. M.

REVIEWS

A CENSUS SPIRITUAL

Domesday Book, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Masters is both a lawyer and a poet—a fact which has advantages and disadvantages. As a lawyer, it makes him one of the shrewdest, most keenly imaginative cross-examiners who ever turned inside-out the soul of an unfortunate witness; and, on the other hand, it probably tempts him away from legal drynesses and asperities. As a poet, it gives him a comprehensive and sympathetic experience of the “innards” of life—the human motives and processes, enforcing upon him respect for the truth, for all the aspects and values in any given “case”; and, on the other hand, it carries these qualities too far toward absolute legal justice, involving the precision and prolixity of an argument or brief, with its thorough and searching statements of all aspects of a given question.

The mere use of a ten-syllable iambic line through hundreds of pages of course does not make a poem; it may as well be admitted that many of these monologues are throughout the baldest prose, and that even the finest of them have passages which strain the rather liberal amenities usually accorded to the epic bard. Indeed, a more exacting taste would have struck out quite a number—the statements of people whose tangent touch upon Elenor Murray was too remote to be artistically relevant.

However, after granting the numerous and manifest

A Census Spiritual

deductions, *Domesday Book* establishes its epic claim. Not by accomplishing its specific charge, to be

a census spiritual
Taken of our America—

although perhaps it comes nearer than any other book to such a prodigious achievement—but by the sheer immensity and weight of its masses, the depth and richness of its colors, all thrown together into a rough shapeliness, and charged with a rude glamour, like a mountain lifted against the sunset fires of the sky. The mountain has not been molded and perfected by art, in all details it is faulty; yet there it stands, of a truth and beauty formidable and unquestionable.

Mr. Masters' book, whether a complete "census spiritual" or not, is life—modern life, unflinching, uncompromising and unashamed; not a mere photograph, moreover, but a transfigured vision presenting the beauty and terror inherent in the human tragedy—in our modern human tragedy, which always seems half wrought out, infinitely complicated, unachieved, a thing to laugh as well as to weep. Like all artists of power and sweep, this poet neither palliates nor apologizes. He carries his heroine and her friends through deeds of vulgar disrepute and even crime, and yet brings them out unbereft of piteous dignity and beauty. He accepts all, with understanding and sympathy for human frailty and aspiration.

¶ Certain of the actors in the ever-widening circles of this drama confess themselves with ruthless precision, so that

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we know them completely and recognize their hard dilemma. Henry Murray, for example, the ineffectual father who sees his girl slipping away and agonizes because he is powerless to hold her:

This daughter and myself, while temperaments
Kept us at swords' points, while I saw in her
Traits of myself I liked not, also traits
Of the child's mother which I loathe, because
They have undone me.

And Gregory Wenner, futile both as business man and lover. And Gottlieb Gerald, absorbed in making pianos and dreams. And the slap-dash Alaska man and the cheaply second-rate Barrett Bays—both accepting all they could get for as slight a return as possible. And finally Elenor Murray herself:

Who was this woman?
This Elenor Murray was America.
Corrupt, deceived, deceiving, self-deceived,
Half-disciplined, half-lettered, crude and smart;
Enslaved yet wanting freedom; brave and coarse,
Cowardly, shabby, hypocritical;
Generous, loving, noble, full of prayer;
Scorning, embracing rituals, recreant
To Christ so much professed; adventuresome;
Curious, mediocre, venal; hungry
For money, place, experience; restless—no
Repose, restraint; before the world made up
To act and sport ideals—go abroad
To bring the world its freedom, having choked
Freedom at home: the girl was this because
These things were bred in her—she breathed them in
Here where she lived and grew.

Yet that word, however searching, is not all. One of the jurymen protests:

Look at her—she's brave,
Devoted, loyal, true and dutiful.
She's will to life, and through it senses God,
And seeks to serve the cosmic soul.

And with all potencies clamorous but impotent within her; giving herself away generously, passionately, but always wastefully, she passes by and goes out like a little flickering torch borne by Fate through the high winds of Time.

Does the poet prove his thesis? Does he make this girl—restless, sterile, erotic, but somehow clinging to, even while violating, a certain integrity of soul—a symbol of our country of tireless searching, immense achievement and fertile dreams? Probably most of us will deny the authority and completeness of the picture; probably the most searching critical challenge to this epic bard would be a demand for a hero, or heroine—for a single luminous soul to whom our hope and faith might cling. The heroic is found in life, and in all the great epics of the past. Perhaps it is not justly evident here.

However, whether we grant the main thesis or not, the book has immensity of scope and power. It is a modern tale of psychological adventure; grouping somewhat with *The Ring and the Book*, no doubt, but taking an every-day American life, through peace and war, as its text, instead of a mediaeval Italian crime. It is a rounding-up of our

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modern human democracy by a poet of profound experience and insight. H. M.

LITTLE THEATRE RHYTHMS

Plays for Merry Andrews, by Alfred Kreymborg. Sunwise Turn, New York.

There are certain Broadway critics, using the term generically, who decry the potentialities of the "Little Theatres" because they do not function like Big Theatres. Without considering the medium, or the plays written and produced through this medium, these critics damn them as piffing. It will require a new hatch of critics to handle this art of the Little Theatre.

Because a small group gathers to hear subtleties in humor, minute shadings in tone, experiments in rhythms; to concentrate on complexities or relax to simplicities, one may not necessarily infer that its blood is thin. A healthy audience functions in various ways; it does not always wear its heart on its sleeve, or stand in a ten-acre lot to hear its soul bellowed to the highways.

Alfred Kreymborg's soul would feel cramped in a ten-acre lot, whereas it expands in intimacy. He has accepted the Little Theatre as his natural medium, accepted it also as a form of art to be expressed through poetry, music, and dance. We have here no note-book jottings from real life, dialogue heard in passing, sketch life-class work. In the *Plays for Merry Andrews*, the use of sug-

gestion is not so remote as with many of the Fifth Avenue school of "opacity." In a play the poet must consider that the auditor does not register with the same concentration as the reader. Mr. Kreyborg's simplicity appears to be guileless, but there is always the suggestion under his naive surfaces. His rhythms and images are easy to imitate, but not his charm and his humor; and to capture his agile handling of suggestion is a challenge—the quiet glance with a keen edge back of it which points up to a dart and shoots through so deftly that we are unaware of its awareness.

In the matter of rhythm, he is not an "eye poet." He is a musician arranging and combining words as notes and musical phrases. He writes gavottes, scherzos, minuets and fugues; and he sings and dances his thoughts about the stage. Often his verbal attempts at polyphonic musical forms result only in the husk of tone. His words do not always vibrate, but on the whole there is a blending of tone through the combining of vibrations from his succession of sounds. His rhythms riot in their variety through all of his plays, which helps to promote the feeling of dance. When his staccato verges on the monotonous he gives it a fillip with a sudden turn or lift. One culminating effect which he uses is to lead us up to the height of expectancy, and leave his suggestion suspended in mid-air while we go soaring on the impetus.

The rhythms of his prose are neither "intentionally odd" nor "intentionally dark"; they are patterned to

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express his whimsical personality according to the varied meanings of his fanciful plot. Take a passage of staccato from *Vote the New Moon*. The citizens are voting, they are definite and determined, and although their hammers have been dropped the concise rapping is continued in the speech:

Crier. Burgher, what do you mean by "One for the red"?—
Burgess, you by "One for the blue"?

Burgher. I mean—

Burgess. I mean—

Crier. What do you mean?

Burgher. We mean—

Burgess. We're tired—

Crier. Tired?

Burgher. Of old moons—

Burgess. We want—

Crier. You want?

Duo. A new moon!

He also uses his staccato to convey his numerous sprightly moods. Again in *Vote the New Moon* the harmonized resolve to vote for the purple is expressed in a fine blending of resounding vibration:

Burgher. One for the purple—

Burgess. One for the purple—

Burgher. One for the purple—

Burgess. One for the purple—

ending in a strong chord from the Crier—

Crier. Blasphemous!

Although this volume is freer from the fault shown in his earlier group of *Poem Mimes*—the fault of assembling

Little Theatre Rhythms

poems more or less related into a play instead of conceiving the play as a whole poem, in quality it falls short of the earlier book, which is consistently fanciful, poetic, musical. The *Plays for Merry Andrews* is made up of two plays in this earlier manner—*Vote the New Moon* and *Monday*—whose quality is up to his standard while they have developed in form. The two attempts to mix the reality of farce and burlesque with the fanciful result in *At the Sign of the Thumb and Nose* and *Uneasy Street*. Of these the first is the more successful, the second being a rather doubtful experiment for the Little Theatre. The bulk of the coffin would crowd the humor off the boards. It begins in irony and ends in farce. The first half is nicely pointed and balanced, but this is lost in the later confusion of a rather commonplace dialogue and a bizarre ending. *The Silent Waiter* is a topic discussed with some new angles, but it is not a good play. The handling of the window panels, the hands, and the headless waiter, while piquing the interest at first, proves tricky. The end of the discussion is trite.

The danger of the subtleties of the Little Theatre becoming effete is obvious, but then there is the danger of the Big Theatre becoming banal. The two theatres cannot be paralleled—they are two different mediums.

Alfred Kreyborg's danger lies in his facility to sing, to be whimsical, to charm; in the temptation to spread his material too thin and caper for the fun of capering.

Laura Sherry

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NIGHTMARE FINGERS

Resurrecting Life, by Michael Strange. Alfred A. Knopf.
Clair de Lune, by Michael Strange. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The *New York Times*, quoted on the jacket of the first of these books, recommends it as follows:

Michael Strange is a signature underneath which can always be found images, phrases, the embodiment in colorful words of things seen or felt or thought, so unusual and so outstanding that they strike the attention at once and remain in the memory.

Benjamin De Casseres says of it:

The poems of Michael Strange do not "fly to the eyes." They touch you remotely at first as with nightmare fingers. You go back to study them, to concentrate on them, to marry them.

In the light of such praise, it is only fair to give an example:

O those vast limbs in the chrysalis of me—
O this titanic aerial being so fettered yet
In the slime of my defective understanding—
This God with spheres nestling in His palm
Asleep in me yet—
And veiled in the stupor of my fear of things
Concerning this one tiny world.

However, in case one quotation is insufficient, and because the poems have as yet only touched us "with nightmare fingers" whereas someone else may want to "marry them," it may be reassuring to quote *Vision* in its entirety:

I will follow the inward chime
Back through empurpling cups of concave hills—
Back through a swaying clot of drowned faces—

Nightmare Fingers

(All fastened and by nightmare pain into the sedges of memory)
Back through those negative rivers stilled past egress—
And out at last beyond brightening grasses—
Grasses rushing up into hills—peaks—
And up through these through a fume of clouds—aye at last into ether—
Ether—bright with those silver tracks of planet-visiting angels—
And austere-ly fragrant from the trailing of their doom-lined scarves—
Aye—out into ether humming from the dart of stars
Shaken by a choral thunder—
Until at last appearing among arching naves—
These ascending in architectural jet—
And arrested in vast foaming coils of livid lace—
And where—enlarging at the farthest end of distance—
The Eucharist—chromatic-rayed
And holding forth its Mystic Tenant—
Of Transfigured Rest.

Clair de Lune, the play by this author which John Barrymore produced recently in New York, is at least written in prose.

Marion Strobel

THE SILVER STALLION

Young Girl and Other Poems, by Hildegard Flanner;
with an introduction and decorations by Porter Garnett.

H. S. Crocker Co., San Francisco.

Poems for Men, by John Austin. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Star-drift, by Brian Padraic O'Seasain. Four Seas Co.

Poems and Essays, by Alfred Hitch. Privately printed,
Stockton, Cal.

Moods of Manhattan, by Louise Mallinckrodt Kueffner.
Modernist Press, New York.

The Blue Crane, by Ivan Swift. James T. White & Co.

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High Company, by Harry Lee. Fred. A. Stokes Co.

A Music-teacher's Note-book, by Henry Bellamann.

Poetry Book Shop, New York.

Wading through these young first books reminded me of a time I had last summer looking for a run-away horse in the Maine woods. The silver stallion appears for an instant, now and then, but it is an uncomfortable business looking for him through the uncouth growths.

Possibly Hildegarde Flanner offers us freer and wider glimpses through the leaves of her little volume. Indeed, her book is a small wood of white birch-trees, pale and slender and frail. The poems are delicate, and in *This Morning* she offers us a moment like this:

After the emotion of rain
The mist parts across the morning,
Like the smile of one
Who has laughed in sleep
And cannot remember why.

There is a quaint simplicity in *Discovery*, but in the main the book lacks music, though one finds a hint of music and even strength in *Communion*. *Young Girl* received last year the Emily Chamberlain Cook Prize at the University of California; and she is almost, if not entirely, worthy of the beautiful dress and golden ornaments which Porter Garnett and the Crocker Company have so generously given her.

Mr. Austin's *Poems for Men*, if more virile, are full of a cold reserve, and a traditional and hampering growth of words; and coming, as they do, in the newer and freer

The Silver Stallion

forms, they are but the wolf in sheep's clothing. The book is studied stuff, impersonal and unstimulating, but in the rhyming verses the poet confesses a little, and in *A Bedroom* one comes on—

The fancied forest of Desire,
Among whose unseen leaves
Flits the golden-feathered bird.

I have read and re-read *Star-drift* and *Poems and Essays*, trying to be convinced that they are poetry. I cannot doubt that Mr. O'Seasnain and Mr. Hitch appreciate the glittering of great cities at night and the beauty of a dawn over the mountains; I cannot doubt that the wonder of earth has a word for them, that they have ideas, that Mr. O'Seasnain is "furious with the littlenesses of life," and that Mr. Hitch sees "his old age with its white hair—a signal of distress, white flag of surrender," and is sometimes struck with the futility of his own too many words. But what has all this to do with the great silver stallion whose hoof-beats are shaking the unknown winds like curtains over the hills?

Somewhat removed from forests and the mythological silver stallion, is Miss Kueffner's *Moods of Manhattan*. In *Afterword* she begs us not to ask, Is it prose?—is it verse? And we shall spare her the inconvenience of asking her, Is it poetry? We shall not compare or contrast her with Whitman or Sandburg whom she has obviously imitated, and the only little comment we make is, that her work is very much like Oppenheim—at his worst.

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The Blue Crane, by Ivan Swift, is crammed with respectability and politeness, and a triteness that sometimes washes its face. Old-fashioned words like *yon*, *thy*, *full sure* are found all over the book. And for Mr. Swift "A quiet place is full of eloquent whispers," a tree is "a trim sentry," and "I fain would laugh," if you please!

Captain Harry Lee probably realizes that his *High Company* is shredded prose, as he subtitles it *Sketches*. Some of these are good war sketches, simple and sincere, and there is sympathy and drama in *Winged Heels*. Others are sentimental and melodramatic, and through the whole book runs the so-called free-verse style of certain cigarette advertisements. John Burroughs, who in a recent issue of *Current Opinion* called Mr. Sandburg's poetry "Bolshevich trash", wrote on the cover of *High Company*, "These poems have great merit; they strike me as about the best free-verse poetry I have seen."

I have saved the last book for a little relief. One finds in Mr. Bellamann's poems a precision and a choice of words that give a mood without any fringes, or "muddle, mist and moonshine"—as in *Yellow Leaves*:

Yellow leaves among the green,
Like gold coins
Deep in old fountains.

In *Dans Le Sillage*, the poet touches off some of his contemporaries:

There's Fletcher,
Painting with frost
On silk watered like an opal sea.

The Silver Stallion

Amy Lowell rides like Joan
Under colored banners,
Flashing a thousand lights
From her two-edged sword.
Ezra Pound mutters darkly
Behind a Chinese veil.

And here one strikes the gravest fault in the book: there is too much of Fletcher, Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound in the poems.

If these first books are a bit discouraging, still

The winds are neighing
Amid the monotonous hills—

and the silver stallion may be not far away.

Oscar Williams

WHO WRITES FOLK-SONGS?

Poetic Origins and The Ballad, by Louise Pound. Macmillan Co.

Just when and how the theory of the communal origin of folk-song, and hence of poetry itself, came to be evolved, I do not know. But for many years students of folk-lore have held tenaciously to the idea that folk-poetry is of crowd origin—i. e., the spontaneous improvisation of many minds, preferably during a dance or some community festival.

The idea is very like, and no doubt based upon, that similar “play-instinct” theory of the origin of art—a theory which saw nothing incongruous in the analogy between creative effort and a sportive calf’s jumping!

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To me the belief that the genesis of poetry, or of rhythm, was in the "hand-clapping and thigh-slapping" of primitive people during a dance has always seemed unnecessarily far-fetched. As if man were outside creation, and some special arbitrary means had to be devised for inculcating in him the laws of that world of which he is a part! And also, how account then for the genesis of space-rhythm? Did the primitive potter and artist evolve their volumes and lines to a similar bodily accompaniment? And should the artist today, who wishes to regain the old simplicity, take a twirl or two and jump like Nijinsky between each stroke that he gives to his canvas?

Miss Pound does not attempt to explain psychologically the beginnings of poetry. Her method is historical, and she adheres very strictly to the task she has set herself, which is to show: that the classic English and Scotch ballads, such as are preserved in the Percy and Child collections, could be only the work of individual poets, and not of a crowd or "festal throng"; and that the accepted belief in the communal origin of folk-poetry thus falls down, so far as it is based specifically upon these ballads. Miss Pound then uses the evidence of the living folk-poetry nearest at hand—that of the American Indian, the Negro, and the cowboy—to show that it too is almost always of individual authorship (and most markedly inferior when, presumably, it is not); but that it is, in any case, of a character essentially different from the Child ballads, these latter being of a much higher artistic

order and obviously the work of individual poets above the peasant average, whether in that time or this.

One chapter seems to me to be missing from Miss Pound's book which would make it finally conclusive: a chapter on the medieval troubadours of the Continent. With this as a background, the conviction that the Percy and Child ballads must have been the work of individual authors, who held as stock-in-trade the poetic traditions of an older guild of minstrels and entertainers, would be inescapable.

Apart from the specific problem of comparison involved, Miss Pound's summary of the origins of our indigenous folk-poetry is exceedingly interesting. Beginning with the poetry of the American Indian, she shows that the individual poet is as well known in the most primitive tribe as in our own more sophisticated society; and that there is no evidence that Indian poetry, although communally sung, is so composed. She shows also that many of the Negro spirituals are based upon the white man's hymns, from which their form and substance are largely derived. Thus although the individual authorship of the spirituals may be lost sight of, their parentage at least is not of crowd origin; and the additions made by the Negro congregation in singing these songs are mostly in the nature of refrain.

As for the American cowboy songs, for which Mr. Lomax has claimed a communal origin, Miss Pound shows that almost all of these are of known authorship; although

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she does not on this account deny their genuine folk character, nor (as Professor Gerould in the New York *Evening Post* implies) discount them as mere "derelicts" because they have been based upon earlier songs or adapted to familiar tunes. On this score one would have to call many of Burns' poems mere derelicts, and discard with them as well a large body of accepted folk-songs.

But Miss Pound's definition of folk-poetry is perhaps wider than many folk-lore scholars will accept. She says:

All types of song are folk-songs, for the literary historian, which fulfil two tests: the people must like them and sing them—they must have "lived in the folk-mouth"; and they must have persisted in oral currency through a fair period of years. They must have achieved an existence not dependent upon a printed original. . . . Whatever has commended itself to the folk-consciousness, and has established currency for itself apart from written sources, is genuine folk-literature.

By this she does not mean, of course, that the song must never have had a printed origin, but that it must have become independent of this by being transplanted into the folk-memory. If the folk-lore scholars object to the inclusiveness of this definition, they will have to admit that many of their own restrictions would, if collectively applied, rule out practically the whole body of accepted folk-song, including the classic English ballads.

Thus, if known authorship discounts the term "folk-poetry," then the poetry of the American Indian is not folk-poetry. If printed sources are not allowed, then all the old ballads collected in broadsides or chap-books must go. If the fact that *The Cowboy's Lament* was adapted

Who Writes Folk-songs?

from a popular Irish song of the eighteenth century makes its folk pretensions insecure, then *Barbara Allen*, which was also a stage song, will have to be discarded. In fact, if all the arbitrary barbed-wire fences of the folk-lorists are heeded, what will be left of the open range of folk-song? The professor of folk-song, like the melancholy cowboy, will have to go.

We are faced then with the necessity of accepting a wider definition of folk-song; or we may be brought to the pass of confessing that there is no such thing—there is only poetry, of various kinds. Also it may as well be admitted that folk-songs are as diversified in character as any other kind of poetry; and it is impossible to make any one type the “norm” to which all other examples must conform. Certainly the classic English ballads can not—as is too often done—be made the touchstone of what is or is not folk-poetry. Theirs is a highly specialized form; their authors were undoubtedly fairly sophisticated poets; and we have every right to believe that the ballads became folk-songs by the well-known process of descent.

In other words, we must recognize two broad sources of folk-song: one of the soil, as with genuinely primitive people like the American Indian (though none the less of individual origin); and the other of the stage, the church, the court, or the city, descending again to the soil and the folk, there to be rediscovered as folk-song.

Such ideas as these, presented by Miss Pound, are sufficiently radical to meet much opposition from the

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adherents of the accepted belief in the communal "crowd" origin of folk-song. But just one thing is needed from Miss Pound's opponents to prove her theory a house of cards, and that is some evidence of a crowd or group improvisation of the ballads, or of any poetry higher than the nursery-rhyme type used in games. Did anyone ever see it happen?
A. C. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

PROFESSOR PHELPS AND ROSTAND

My dear POETRY: William Lyon Phelps has set my nerves cringing—is it possible that a Yale University professor should write the silly pompous windy stuff about Edmond Rostand which appears in the April *Yale Review*!

What a pity, when the whole world is trying to get a clear insight into things, to read such trashy stuff! Fortunately we know better, but some Frenchmen may judge American criticism and clearness of perception by Mr. Phelps' oracular utterances. Note the wisdom of this:

Creative genius is the most valuable gift that man can receive.

Isn't this a wonderfully stamped medal?—

He is a poet and a playwright, but above all, he is a magician.

But I wouldn't care about Mr. Phelps' platitudes if he didn't pretend to judge France and French drama with the same sweeping alacrity. I shall not trouble you with a reply *en forme*. Suffice it to say that nobody here with

Professor Phelps and Rostand

a sane mind thinks Rostand a "national" poet; and that anyhow poetry had nothing to do with our aching backs, our smarting feet—and final triumph. Nobody but dusty mediaeval people can foster such illusions.

The article contains such luminous ideas as these:

We must go back to La Fontaine for anything approaching the human manipulation of the animal kingdom.

No modern dramatist has reached the Shakespearean level except Rostand.

If Mr. Phelps wants to understand our modern drama better, let him come to *Le Vieux Colombier* with Copeau as a director, to *Le Théâtre des Arts* and a few others. Let him not forget, above all, that what we applaud is a dozen immortal masterpieces, among which we do not count *L'Aiglon*, *Cyrano*, or *Chantecler*. . . *Jean Catel*

Paris: April 25th, 1921.

NOTES

Marjorie Allen Seiffert (Mrs. Otto S.), of Moline, Ill., has appeared frequently in POETRY, and in 1919 her dialogue, *The Old Woman*, received one of our annual prizes. Her book, *A Woman of Thirty*, was published the same year by Alfred A. Knopf.

Babette Deutsch (now Mrs. A. Yarmolinsky), of New York, is the author of *Banners* (Geo. H. Doran Co.). Harcourt, Brace & Howe will publish next autumn an anthology of Russian poetry selected and translated by Mr. and Mrs. Yarmolinsky.

Mr. Oscar Williams, a Russian by birth, resident in New York but now sojourning in Chicago, will publish next autumn, through the Yale Press, his first book of verse.

The other poets of this month are new to our readers.

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Mr. Louis Golding, of London, is the author of *Sorrows of War*, published in this country by E. P. Dutton & Co. A second book of poems, *Shepherd Singing Ragtime*, will soon appear in England. His first novel, *Forward from Babylon*, is one of six recently selected as the best of 1920-21 in competition for the *Vie Heureuse* prize in Paris.

Miss Elizabeth Roberts, of Chicago, who has appeared in various magazines, will soon publish a book of poems, *Under the Tree*.

Ditto Mr. Harold Vinal, of Boston, whose book will be entitled *April Flame*.

Miss Josephine Pinckney, of Charleston, has published little as yet. Her poem, *In the Barn*, received recently a prize from the Poetry Society of South Carolina.

Mr. William A. Norris is a young poet of Milwaukee, Wis.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Legends, by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Songs in the Common Chord, by Amelia E. Barr. D. Appleton & Co.

Spanish Moss and English Myrtle, by Margaret Dashiell. Stratford Co.

The Two Captains, by Craven Langstroth Betts. Alfred Allen Watts Co., New York.

A Love Cycle, by Margery Mayo. Privately printed, Denver.

Souvenirs, by Badry Farkouh. Privately printed.

Ireland, Broadway and Other Loves, by Mary Fleming. Guido Bruno, New York.

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The Cult of Content, by Noel Leslie. Four Seas Co.

PROSE:

The Sacred Band: A Litany of Ingratitude, by Guido Bruno. New York.

POETRY is one of the three good magazines in America.

Geoffrey Parsons, of the New York Tribune.

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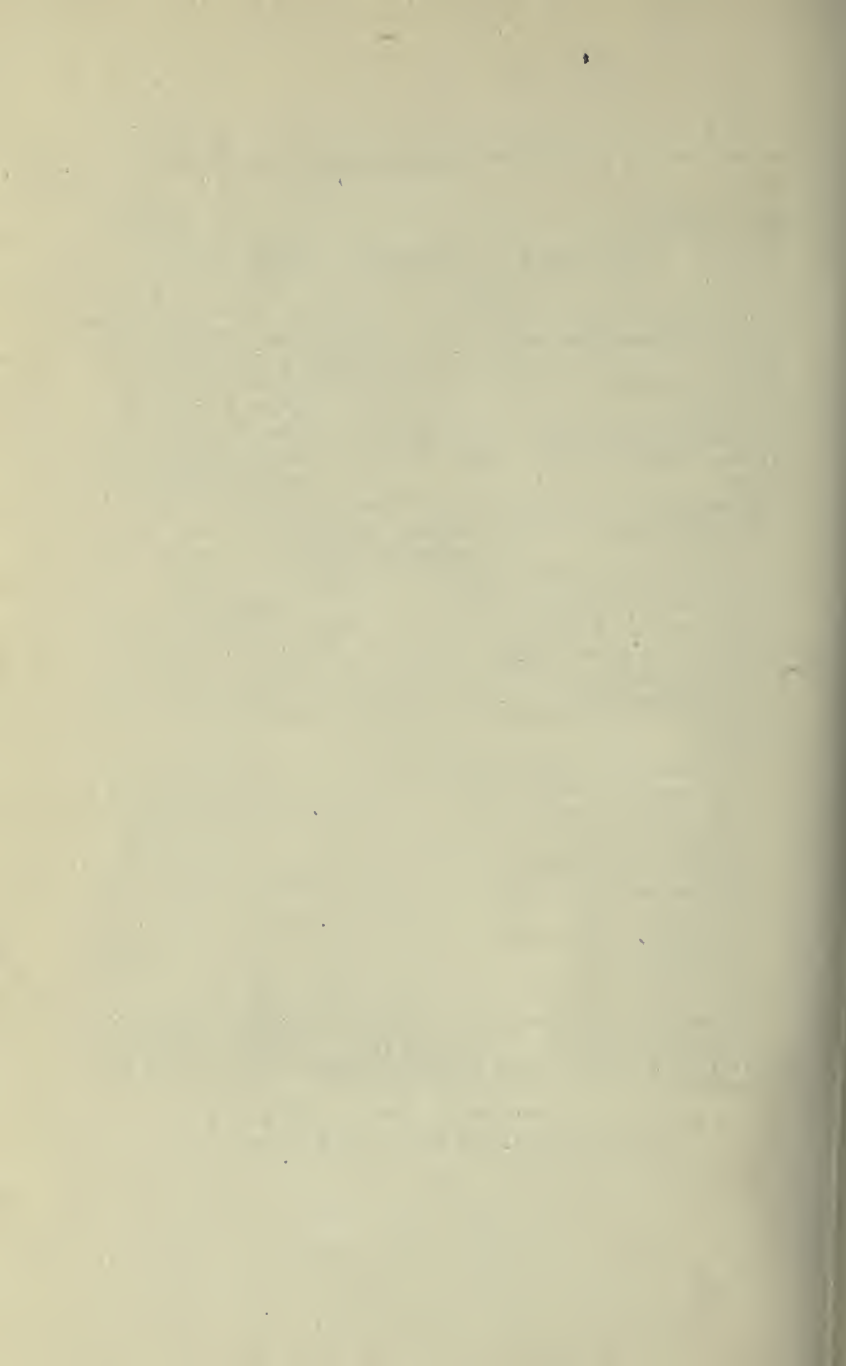
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2340



 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XVIII
No. V

AUGUST 1921

GROWTH

ADVENT

OUT of a silence greater than all words;
Over the unspeakable, dumb,
Everlasting hills
With their muter herds;
Swifter than a blade that kills;
Mightier than prayer;
Fairer than the dawn
When some dew yet remains unbroken;
Stronger than despair;
From the unspoken to the spoken,
While the heart rests momentarily;
Lovely as the half-uttered words of a child,
More delicate, more mild;
Terrible as the torn breasts of anguish

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When strong wills languish:
Suddenly, dreadfully, exquisitely,
Love, death, and God shall come.

SOWN

Rain and the patience of the planted field,
Grey skies that hasten to the need
Of brown moistening earth, and to the sealed
Faint harvest in the unbroken seed—
Patience for waiting give us! O planted men,
Who waits your budding and your heaped
Flowers of death? Again, again
Perhaps ye shall return—the reapers, not the reaped—
And, braver than corn-seed hid away together,
Of our meagre or our mighty yield
Shall wake for the gathering in harvest weather.

TO EARTH

Oh, fortunate the waiting that shall end in wonder,
And blessed now the patience that is in thy biding;
For now are the herded clouds and the wild rain's thunder
Over the roof of thy quiet seeds' hiding.

We too, O earth, shall need thy blessedness of waiting
For the green flowering of pastures, when the panting
Storm shall cease; though blood be the rain that is abating,
And men be the seeds of our wild planting.

WINTER

Now are ye lean, O trees, and shaped for soaring
Over the sacred snow that hides the land;
Now after stress of bitter storms endured
On the spent earth unmutinous ye stand.

Only your faces now are turned not earthward,
However deep your roots are clasped there.
With the gaunt gesture of a saint's uprising,
Ye are the resurrection that is prayer.

SPRING

Trees have a gesture of departure,
Yet forever stay;
Into what eager land they'd travel
No man may say.

In the spring they stand on tip-toe;
Yet, self-willed, remain
In autumn to let earthward
Their hopes like rain.

Yet forever a new spring cometh,
And their muteness swells
To the voice of one long risen
For long farewells;

Who with steps of eternal patience,
In eternal quest,

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Would venture a truth too lofty
 To be expressed;

Whose heart at times is burdened,
 When no dream consoles,
With a heritage too mighty
 For rooted souls.

HUMILITY

Open the doors of temples, scorn
Their veils! Yet in the flight of bird on sea,
In the fall of leaf from tree,
In the green patient spears of grain, in the torn
Sides of mountains where some verdure clings—
In all these things—
We have enough to brood on till we be
Ready and humble as the corn.

MID-MAY

Put aside your words, and there are left
Stones of the grey walls and apple-trees;
And in the flesh and mind, and in what seems
Birthing almost of an immortal soul,
Virginity and fortitude and hope—
Delicate as blossoms on the gnarled limbs
White, grey and green above the risen grass.

Charles R. Murphy

HOOFS AND HALOES.

TE DEUM

Out in the hot sun I saw Satan stand:

He stroked the peaches with his finger-tips,

And burst the melons open in his hand,

And squirted the fat grapes between his lips.

He cracked an apple, and deep in the rift

Of snowy meat his yellow teeth he thrust.

A daisy from the grass he plucked and sniffed—

His fiery breath soon charred it into dust.

He pinched the purple plums, and playfully

Took up his tail and twirled it round and round

To lash the gold leaves from a maple-tree,

And laughed—the birds fled screaming at the sound.

He swung the boughs, and with his sharp horns pricked

The pears as they went swinging through the air,

And drove his hoof into the ground, and kicked,

Stirring the damp earth through the grasses there;

Then tore the tangled undergrowth apart

Till in its shadow he was deftly placed,

And stretched and said: "I marvel at God's art!

The earth could not be formed more to my taste."

THE IDIOT

When earth was madly green he lay

And mocked his shadow's dancing feet,

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Or from his laughter ran away
To watch the poppies burn the wheat.

But when the frozen leaves whirled by
And colored birds were blown afar,
He climbed the bitter winter sky
And hanged himself upon a star.

BEAUTY IN FOURTH STREET

I

It was not strange that Beauty found
Our path in June, and eagerly
Thrust up the gay flowers through the ground
And put a bird on every tree.

But strange it was when skies were grey
That Beauty followed where we led,
And sat beside our stove all day,
And lay at night upon our bed.

II

I live with Beauty, and across the way
I see a shabby park where women sit
And scold the dirty children from their play,
While old men shift their wrinkled legs and spit.

David Osborne Hamilton

So close to me these dusty lives go past—
Shall I cry out how Beauty came to me?
O futile lips, be still! O heart, close fast!
Break not with joy, lest you set Beauty free!

OUR TIME

Once more earth bellows with the lust
Of rolling drums. Once more we win with fire
The passing wind, and perish for the dust
Of man's desire.

Fierce as the tiger in the night,
And greedy as the swine that roots the clod
Is man, whose spirit of eternal light
Moves into God.

David Osborne Hamilton

MEMORY

I walked with you beside the orchard bars,
Where the still plum-tree drops her whiteness down.
You kissed my brow: your kiss was like a crown.
You kissed my mouth: my crown was set with stars.

Margaret Belle Houston

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POEMS

ALL SOULS' EVE

Hark!—do you hear the choral dead?
Forgotten now their pride
Who on this night would have us know
They passed unsatisfied.

They shiver like the thin brown leaves
Upon a sapless tree,
Clinging with palsied, withered might
To their identity.

Their voices are the unearthly winds
That die before the dawn;
And each one has some tale to tell,
And, having told, is gone.

.

Ah!—you who come with sea-blue eyes,
And dead these hundred years,
Be satisfied! I hold the cup
Still brimming with your tears.

CHINESE EPITAPH

She was a Manchu lady . . .
Near the tomb where she lies

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter

Broods an ancient Buddha with robes of jade and of coral
And curious lapis-blue eyes.

She was a wistful lady . . .
When the west wind sighs
Inscrutable even as the terrible calm of Buddha
Her impassive disguise.

She was a Manchu lady . . .
Azure the skies,
And golden the tracery sealing the proud lips of Buddha
As the west wind dies.

ALCHEMY

They had no souls, the envious ones!
They were blind to your heart's beauty,
Deaf to your spirit's voice,
And dumb in the presence of your holiness.
But they felt a vague warmth
In their cold hands
As you passed.
And so they reached out
For your flaming soul;
Throwing it on their own dead altar-fires,
Warming their numb fingers in the golden flame
That rose to Heaven,
Flickered,
And went out.

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Somewhere, among the scattered ashes,
Lies the matrix-stone
Of your imperishable beauty.

INVOCATION

Tonight in sleep there came to me
A dream where Christ walked on the sea;
And, shipwrecked, I called out, to hear
His quiet answer, "I am near."
But when the waves had risen high
I doubted—till I heard him cry:
"Come take my hand, beloved one—
The long and lonely night is done.
Fear not! and you shall walk with me,
As Peter walked, upon the sea."

Who was it called? The night is slow
To answer; but awake I know
The clutching terror of the heart
That feels the weed-choked waters part,
And, drowning, rears a Christ who stands
With dim-remembered outstretched hands.
Who knows if Peter's Christ is mine?
Like Peter, now, I ask a sign . . .
If Christ still walks upon the sea—

How calm is dawn on Galilee!

Florence Kilpatrick Mixer

LULLABY

Come, sleep. Her heart's a wood-anemone.
Her thoughts are swallows flown
Across the dusk. Her hair's a willow-tree
By the west wind blown.
Her eyes are pools where bubbles rise and break—
Dream-bubbles from the deep.
Her soul's a moth that flutters in their wake.
Come sleep. . . . come sleep. . . .

Florence Kilpatrick Mixer

IT VANISHED

To C. A. B.

Can it matter to you and me
Where the hurrying years have fled,
Since they told me you ceased to be,
Since the day when they called you dead?
Death? As a cobweb spun
By night on the dew-drenched grass,
It vanished . . . I saw you pass
With your face to the rising sun.

Grace Hodsdon Boutelle

THE MOUNTAIN GRAVEYARD

High on the mountain where the storm-heads are,
Lying where all may see, there is a place
As hideous and shocking as a scar
That mars the beauty of a well-loved face.
Infinitely drear, and raw, and nude,
It waits and listens in the solitude.

There is no friendly tree in all that square
Of scattered stones and arid, troubled clay.
Bleak as the creed of those who journey there,
Hard as the code by which they lived their day,
It gives them all they ask of it—its best;
No beauty and no softness—only rest.

But oh, the pity of it all is this:
They lived with beauty and their eyes were blind.
Dreaming of far strong joys, they came to miss
Those that were near. So at the last we find
No tenderness of blossom, but instead
Mute emblems of the longings of the dead.

These rain-bleached sea-shells in an ordered row
Tell of an ocean that they never knew
Except in dreams which, through the ebb and flow
Of years, set seaward as the torrents do.
Always they planned to follow, knowing deep
Within their hearts that dreams are but for sleep.

DuBose Heyward

And see these tawdry bits of broken glass
Which speak the foreign glories of the town—
The crowds, the lights; these too are dreams that pass
Here where the hemming walls of rock look down,
And clasp their children fast within their keep
Until they cradle them at last to sleep.

Yet all the while if they could only know
The beauty that is theirs to breathe and touch—
The whisper of the dawn across the snow,
The vast low-drifting clouds that love them much—
Oh, they could call their dreams home down the sky,
And carry beauty with them when they die.

DuBose Heyward

INNOCENT SLEEP

My little son half woke last night—
A golden-headed rosiness,
Dark-eyed with drowsiness;
Peered for a moment at the candle-light.

So I have seen the daisies sleep
Pink-tipped along a mountain wall,
And hardly stir at all
At the bright dawn—their dreams have been so deep.

Nancy Campbell

DIRGE

To those under smoke-blackened tiles, and cavernous
echoing arches,
In tortuous hid courts where the roar never ceases
Of deep cobbled streets wherein dray upon dray ever
marches,
The sky is a broken lid, a litter of smashed yellow pieces.

To those under mouldering tiles, where life to an hour is
crowded—
Life, to a span of the floor, to an inch of the light;
And night is all feverous hot, a time to be bawded and
rowdied:
Day is a time of grinding, that looks for rest to the night.

Those who would live, do it quickly; with quick tears,
sudden laughter,
Quick oaths, terse blasphemous thoughts about God the
Creator.
Those who would die, do it quickly; with noose from the
rafter,
Or the black, shadowy eddies of Thames, the hurry-
hater.

Life is the master, the keen and grim destroyer of beauty.
Death is a quiet and deep reliever, where soul upon soul
And wizened and thwarted body on body are loosed from
their duty

Richard Hughes

Of living, and sink in a bottomless, edgeless, impalpable
hole.

Dead, they can see far above them, as if from the depth of
a pit,

Black on the glare small figures that twist and are shriv-
elled in it.

Richard Hughes

TIMELESSNESS

We knew a timeless place beside three trees,
Where lights across an arching bridge were set;
And, dark against the sky, was flung a frieze
Of human joy in shifting silhouette.

Figures of children—swift, and lovers—slow,
Made us a pageant as they crossed the hill.

We called it “being dead,” and watched them go,
Remembering when we were living still.

Now you have died, and found those timeless nights;
Ours was a dream which you have made come true.

Three trees are there, a hill, a bridge of lights:

I know, I know—I have been dead with you!

I shall put off my grief, my sick despair,

Since only joy is silhouetted there.

Louise Townsend Nicholl

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FOLK-SONG—FROM THE DANISH

Little Rose and her mother, from the boat where it lay,
Bantered each other in the merriest way.

Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!

Bantered each other in the merriest way!

“No lover shall wed me—no matter how bold—
Till trees in the garden bear blossoms of gold.”

Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!

“Till trees in the garden bear blossoms of gold.”

From the porch thinks Hr. Peder, amused at her jest,
“’Tis always the one who laughs latest laughs best!”

Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!

“’Tis always the one who laughs latest laughs best!”

And when later they entered the garden—behold
From each tree was hanging a ring of bright gold!

Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!

From each tree was hanging a ring of bright gold!

But Rosalie, scarlet as fresh-dripping blood,
Kept both her eyes fixed on the grass where she stood.

Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!

Kept both her eyes fixed on the grass where she stood.

Then Hr. Peder he kissed her, still full of the jest:
“Most surely the one who laughs latest laughs best!”

Ha, ha, ha, sa, sa, sa, sa!

“Most surely the one who laughs latest laughs best!”

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson

LUCREZIA BORGIA'S LAST LETTER

Before me shine the words of her last letter—

Lucrezia Borgia to the Pope at Rome—

Wherein she begs, as life's remaining fetter

Slips from her, that his prayers will guide her home:

*The favor God has shown to me confessing,
As swift my end approaches, Father, I,
A Christian though a sinner, ask your blessing
And kiss your feet in all humility.*

*The thought of death brings no regret, but pleasure;
And after the last sacrament great peace
Will be mine own—in overflowing measure,
If but your mercy marks my soul's release.*

And here the letter finds a sudden ending,

As though the dying hand had lost its power:

My children to Rome's love and care commending—

Ferrara—Friday—at the fourteenth hour.

An odor as of incense faintly lingers

About the page of saintly sophistries—

And I am thinking clever were the fingers

That could mix poison and write words like these.

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson

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IN THE NIGHT WATCHES

INVOCATION

Kwan-yin, mother of mercies,
Kwan-yin, goddess of prayer,
Hear my voice at thine altar,
Heed my foot on the stair!

Lo, the rice-bowl is empty;
Toa-tai smiles no more.
Sorrow lurks at our roof-tree,
Ruin waits at the door.

Kwan-yin, mother of mercies,
Kwan-yin, goddess of prayer,
Hear my voice at thine altar,
Heed my foot on the stair!

PIERROT AND COLUMBINE

The gods are dead, and we are old;
And we are old, for now at last,
For now at last our hearts are cold;
Our hearts are cold, and love is past.

Our love is past, and even so,
And even so our dreams have fled.
Our dreams have fled, and so we know,
And so we know the gods are dead!

REQUIEM

All the love, the love we gave them;
Tears, unanswered prayers to save them!
Now, what is there left to show?—
Wooden crosses in a row!

They wore their crown of thorns so lightly,
June still blossoms just as brightly.
How can laughing roses know
Of wooden crosses in a row?

Is it, then, so sweet, their sleeping?
After all, was life worth keeping?
There they lie, and none may know—
Wooden crosses in a row.

TOWARD EVENING

The poppies just outside my door
Still flaunt their crimson loveliness.
How can they blossom any more,
Now I have lost my happiness?

Not any grief of mine can mar
The beauty of this tranquil weather.
Each evening, with the first pale star,
Comes that same thrush we loved together,

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And pours gold notes from every bough
Of his old sacred apple-tree.
But he has lost his magic now—
He cannot sing you back to me.

Margaret DeLaughter

LOVE'S PASSING

Gold as the sun,
Bold as a boy,
Your wanton wings waken
The love you destroy,
Leaving within the heart of each flower
Longing for an impassioned hour.

Shade of the sea,
Maid of the sky,
Your azure wings beat on
My heart as you fly
Dreamily on in a happy trance,
Letting me wither with never a glance.

Rare as a pearl,
Fair as a nun,
Your white wings inspire
The love that you shun,

Gladys Edgerton

Rising from passion and glad desire
Into the sun's heart higher and higher.

Flown from the world,
Blown like a breath,
You leave me earth-rooted
And wedded to death,
Wasting for lips I have never known,
Hoarding my fragrance for you alone!

MY SEPULCHRE

The flame blue of heaven glows overhead,
Under my halting feet crisp leaves burn red.
Oh, what an ecstasy now to be dead!

Oh, what an ecstasy now to lie down
One with the autumn earth pulsing and brown—
So in the sunlight to slumber and drown!

To drown in a sea of gold, melt into air
Crisp with the tang of frost, pungent and rare—
Sunshine my sepulchre, wind my last prayer!
Gladys Edgerton

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POEMS ORIGINAL AND DERIVED

THE TRIPLE SHROUD

This is the triple shroud,
Spun of a single thread
On spindles of the whirling worlds
In thundering halls of dread;
It makes the living shine as flame,
And resurrects the dead.

Life is the shroud of love,
Woven of dust and breath.
Death is the shroud of life;
Love is the shroud of death.

THE WAY

Some souls have slept with sorrow,
And some have walked with shame.
With both I went in shadows
Through firmaments of flame—
To clasp the formless in the form,
The substance in the name.

ONCE MORE

Once more I strip my shroud from me,
Once more unfurl my azure wings,

Mason A. Freeman, Jr.

Pursue athwart the reeling suns
An ever-dancing star that sings
Of madder joys than I have dreamed,
And fiercer griefs than I have borne:
Yet would I burn between her breasts
Behind the curtains of the morn!

EPIGRAMS

The Poet

Up leaped the lark in flight,
And saw the dawn
Singing above the night.

The Untrammelled

Only the wind is free—
He shapes at will
The sea's plasticity.

The Beggar

The tulip lifts its bowl
Toward sun and cloud
To ask its daily dole.

Weeping-willow

Is it a maid I see
With hair unbound,
Or a weeping-willow tree?

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The Lotus

The lotus dreams that she
May root in mud,
Yet steal off with the bee.

On a Cameo

This image on a ring
Is all that lives
Of what was once a king.

Late Mourning

Plum petals fall like tears
Upon a grave
Neglected now for years.

Recognition

What seek you from the sky?
Long since
The noisy geese flew by.

The Prophetess

For years the earth has known
Impending fate
Each time the dead moon shone.

FROM THE VEDIC

The Egg

What lies hidden in the shell
Was born through torment deep in hell;

Mason A. Freeman, Jr.

And it will burst its bonds to sense
Analogous experience,
And swing through poles of heaven and hell
To lurk again within the shell.

Ecce Homo

Behold the man indeed—the inner self
Who sits inside, no bigger than one's thumb;
Who limbless moves, and lacking eyes can see;
Scans all the past, can all the future plumb.

The Herdsman

I hail the wandering herdsman of the night,
The watcher and the shepherd of the stars,
Who points the pathway leading to the light,
And for the sheep lets down the golden bars.

The Rosary

Within the all-enfolding hands
The worlds are being told like beads.
Lift up your eyes and look thereon!—
What need have ye of forms and creeds?

Creation

The moon was gendered from my mind,
And from my eye the sun had birth,
And from my breast the winds burst forth,
And underneath my feet the earth.

Mason A. Freeman, Jr.

BEYOND SORROW

SO IT BEFELL

When the day is long
And full of pain,
I remember
A certain little lane
Where every night,
At half-past seven,
The train flashed by
On its way to heaven.

There you and I,
Watching in the lane,
Dreamed of riding
Inside the train—
Away from the wide
Sun-flowered plain
And tall fields of
High rolling grain.

When night is long
And strangely sane,
I remember
A certain little lane,
Where, on one night—
So it befell—
The train passed heaven
On its way to hell.

WITHOUT GRIEF

Beyond sorrow I have seen a pool
Of clear green waters
Without shadows,
And in it lay my body cool
And quiet as a leaf.
And I have watched it lying there
And seen the sunlight on it—
Now I come back and meet you
Without grief.

I WOULD BE FREE

I would be free of you, my body;
Free of you, too, my little soul.
I am so tired of this mocking hobby,
I am so tired of this imaged whole.

I would be neither base nor godly.
Loathing myself, could I bear then
To see all life and suffering oddly
Twisted and shaped to the needs of men?

I would be neither my own nor another's:
I would not tend for myself, nor hate
The flame of silence that in me smothers
Under the crackling smoke of fate.

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God!—what is there for such as in me
Cannot be two and are not whole?
Within the spirit dwells the body,
Upon the body feeds the soul.

CRISIS

Then, being aloof,
To give myself
Was nothing to me:
Only leaves falling
On the roof
Were prophecy.

DESPAIR

If the dream goes
Does it matter?
Life remains compact,
Integrate, whole;
And the living of it
Is the same
Day by identical day—
There is nothing missing!

NOW MORE THAN EVER DIVIDED

Now more than ever divided,
Loving and yet not loving,

Eda Lou Walton

A worshiper of your gentleness,
Demanding my own aloofness;
Now more than ever divided,
Two of myself, two in you;
Reared as a tower of granite
Bright on the last blue hill,
Crumbled and rooted with wild-flowers
Under the touch of your hand,
Torn as a leaf from a woodvine
Colorfully tossed to the wind,
Caught with dry tendrils of yearning
Close to an ancient wall!

IN RECOMPENSE

Now for the long years when I could not love you,
I bring in recompense this gift of yearning—
A luminous vase uplifted to the sun,
Blue with the shadows of near-twilight.
Here in its full round symmetry of darkness,
Burning with swift curved flashes bright as tears,
I lift it to the lonely lips that knew
Its slow creation, and the wheel of sorrow turning.
Take it with hands like faded petals,
White as the moonlight of our garden;
And for the long years when I could not love you
Drink from its amber-colored night.

Eda Lou Walton

COMMENT

MIDSUMMER DELITE

THE poets should companion us in midsummer—poets old and new, so they be good ones. And we shall like them the better if we give way to their moods a little instead of imposing on them our own. “In this time of our despair we should turn to the poets for guidance and inspiration toward manhood, rather than sink into the degradation of utter unbelief in anything outside our small selves”—so wrote the *Chicago Post's* London correspondent not long ago. Yes, guidance and inspiration, no doubt, but why be so solemn about it? We turn to the poet for delight, and of delight even guidance and inspiration are mere corollaries.

Delight, let us remind ourselves, is no cheap or vulgar emotion. What says our faithful guide, the *Century Dictionary*? First, we are told that our modern spelling is “wrong”—we should return to the earlier *delite*, for there is no etymological reason for linking up this Old-French word with the Anglo-Saxon *light* and its extinct guttural. *Delite*, then (let us, for a midsummer moment, resume the old spelling) comes from the Latin *delicere*, to allure—the same root which gives us *delicate*, *delectable*, *delicious*; and the verb transitive means, we are told, “to affect with great pleasure or rapture.”

I will delite myself in thy statutes,
sings the Psalmist to God himself.

Midsummer Delite

Man delites not me—no, nor woman either, cries Hamlet. And in *Macbeth* we are reminded that
The labor we delite in physics pain.

No, delite is too rare to be cheap, and too richly fine to be vulgar. Guidance and inspiration spring from under its wings, but so do gayety and all the keen little joys of sense. Are few of us heirs of delite?—Do we take our little joys and big ones merely as fact-ridden pleasures and without this finer imaginative zest? Then surely we are cheated of our share of man's universal inheritance; then surely we have a grievance against the world, whose misguiding civilization has locked us away from nature and the other high original sources of delite; then surely we must turn to the poets, the artists, the seers, and take them out with us under the sky, into the woods, the plains, the mountains—set them against the play of winds and waves, of sunshine and dark storms. Somehow we must restore the connection, regain and develop our souls' capacity for delite. It is a stark, sometimes a bitter business; it implies the stripping away of "fold on fold of flesh and fabrics and mockeries." It implies the strict sincerities of nature and of art.

Perhaps the poets would be of more assistance in this business if we could trust them more—if, as I said above, we could give way to their moods a little instead of inposing on them our own. The man in search of guidance and inspiration resents a sense of humor in a poet, criticizes a grotesque as if it were intended for a god.

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The tame man resents a wild fling of free verse; the violent man resents the sonnet's rounded mold of sentiment. The average man looks for peace in art, resents its call to war; looks for his own image in a poet, and a flattering image at that. Our standardized fellow-citizens—wearing their clothes, doing their jobs, thinking their thoughts all too much alike—would standardize that incarnation of the untamable, the poet. As *The Nation* puts it:

We do not banish poets from the Republic, but try to make them over into the image of congressmen. "Is it necessary," we ask, "to be so wild and passionate and heedless? How are we to know that the fellow is a poet and not a *poseur*?"

And the paper advises:

Let us be content not to know. Better that ten thousand *poseurs* should have their little fling and fun than that one Shelley, or one far less than Shelley, should be wounded or restrained or silenced. Can we not be liberated from this spirit of miserable thrift? . . . Let us admit the noble madness of poets and allow for it. Our verse will be less cool and humble and diluted, and more simple, sensuous and passionate. . . . We stand in bitter need of a glow, however faint, of the Dionysian, the unsubdued. The universe, as William James finely said, is wild as a hawk's wing.

So, in our summer wanderings of body or spirit, it may be well to practice a little spiritual lavishness. Only by giving ourselves away to our poet-companions can we explore their kingdom of delite. It should be a proud companionship of the free—on equal terms of challenge and retort, of daring, unflinching sympathy. Almost any poet worthy of the name, thus treated, has much to give.

H. M.

Brazilian Dance Songs

BRAZILIAN DANCE SONGS

It may be worth while if I set down for the readers of POETRY some of the songs which I learned on a *fazenda* twenty-seven miles from a railway in the state of Bahia, in Brazil. "White people" did not come to this place, and I think it very improbable that any Brazilian has taken the trouble to note either the words or the music of these songs, so full of atmosphere, which are known to the *vaqueiros* (Brazilian *gauchos*) and to the country people in general who dance—sometimes to the sound of a guitar, sometimes to the combined stimulus of an accordion and a bean-rattle, but again to the simply rhythmic accompaniment of the latter instrument alone, an affair made from a gourd and gaily decorated.

This dance, or *samba*, may be varied, but frequently it consists of no more than monotonous movements of the hips and an uninterrupted stamping of the feet. The men, usually heated to the proper pitch of enthusiasm by a copious indulgence in rum, move in a hesitating circle, each man with a hand on the shoulder of the dancer before him; approaching and retreating as they face the women who make a similar approach and retreat, the groups joining in the song which is half recitative. The dance sometimes constitutes a method of lightening labor; for when a hut is to be constructed the prospective owner invites a sufficient number of friends, who dig the large pit in which the mud is to be mixed for chinking the frail walls of the palm-thatched dwelling. Here, appro-

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privately intoxicated by their appreciative host, the male visitors, in the dancing attitude described above, churn the mud with their feet, while the women pass to and from the nearest water supply, carrying and emptying large earthen jars, to the encouragement of the singers who stamp and sway with a hypnotic motion, an expression of mingled stupidity and exaltation upon their tan-complexioned faces. I give you a very literal translation of a song which I heard on one of these occasions. In the original there is a marked regular beat, but the singers interpret the music very freely with an unduplicatable variety of minor quavers and resultant accidentals that show the African influence dominant over the Portuguese.

I was a seven-months child.
I did not drink milk from the breast of my mother.
Yet now they send me to the stream to pound their clothes.

In my father's corral were a hundred cows
From which the milk was taken to feed me.
Yet today they send me to the stream to beat the clothes.

Ei! Take the leaves from the poisonous corana, little Bahian half-breed!

I have no heart, Yaya;
But I go to wash your clothes!

In regard to this one must recall that there is a traditional distinction in being a seven-months child, and that only mothers of the common people suckle their children. Yaya and Yoyo are feminine and masculine terms of respectful address introduced by the Negroes.

Brazilian Dance Songs

Another song begins:

In my land there are palm trees, little half breed,
Where the *sabia* sings.

Ei, lei-lei, Yaya!

Come here, my pretty little lady.

The birds in this place
Can not sing like my birds.

Ei, lei-lei, Yaya!

Come here, my little miss!

The songs one hears in more populous districts are many of them entirely Portuguese in origin, and have the Latin religious naiveté. One, known I think from one end of Brazil to the other, is called *Noiva Morta* (*The Dead Bride*), and the lines are as follows:

When I die I shall be dressed like a bride,
With my hair flowing free under my veil.
They will say to each other,
"Already she resembles one of the angels of heaven."

My dress will be woven of jealousy
And marked with cruel passion.
My wreath will be of the flowers of white longing,
And my sepulchre shall be in your heart.

A lullaby, which was often sung to my baby, says:

Hush, hush, hush!
Open the door!
Turn the lamp high—
Little Manoel Jose wants to nurse,
Little Manoel Jose wants to sleep.
He will not sleep in a bed,
But in a hammock of boughs
Under the leaves.

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This little baby can not sleep in a bed
Because he is accustomed to lie between the feet of Our Lady, Saint Anna.
And another favorite of the same nurse-maid of extremely
unpoetical exterior has the charmingly unconsidered
verse:

I will come to you singing
In a cart filled with roses and pinks.
Our Lady will stand in the centre
And she will select for me the one of you who is most beautiful.

And again:

I saw the sea fringed with gold,
And I thought it was a cushion of blue velvet.
I saw the sea wound with streamers of white ribbon.
No—I was mistaken.
There is nothing there,
But I see white faces rising up at me out of the water.

Here is a bit which is particularly characteristic of an
ingratiatingly elastic ethical consciousness:

Negress Laurencia, who gave you the lace?
It was the shopkeeper, senhora.
He is called Senhor Chico.
He is called Senhor Chico.

*Lace of silk threads,
Skirt of coarse cotton!*
O lady, strike me!—
Don't lock me up!
If I stole the lace
It was because I needed it very much
To make me a skirt
For the procession of my saint!

I think I can not end this reminiscence better than by

Brazilian Dance Songs

giving you the first two verses of the *Fado de Hylario*. A *fado* is properly a song of the people, and the one noted here is of Portuguese inspiration and as well known in both Portugal and Brazil as *Suwanee River* or *My Old Kentucky Home* among us:

Go away ashamed, moon!—
Get out of the heavens!
The eyes of my beloved
Are far brighter than yours!

Our Lady is knitting a pair of stockings
With yarn made of light.
The points of Her needles are the stars,
And the stockings are for the baby Jesus.

The above translations are from memory, and in spite of the defect of ignoring the rhythm will, I think, give some idea of the temperamental qualities of the Brazilian people.

Evelyn Scott

ABORIGINAL TASMANIAN POETRY

The extinct Tasmanians are interesting in that they were the most primitive race that we have any knowledge of. They wore no clothes, and their only shelters were a few pieces of bark propped up for a break-wind; yet they decked themselves with shell-necklets and had quite elaborate poetry. Does not this prove that art, if it does not come before utility, at least comes directly after food, before clothes and shelter? In singing their songs two or three would take up the burden, always at intervals of a

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third. Some listeners have likened them to the songs of the Arabs; one (I don't know whether he was a Scotchman) compared them to the bagpipes. Around their fire at night they sang of the doings of the day, and very often some striking scene would be enacted. If the acted scene was a success, a corollary was born which passed on from tribe to tribe all over the island.

Their language, full of vowel sounds and liquid consonants, was almost as musical as Italian. Here is a song sung by the women, with a rough translation following it:

Nikkeh ningeh tribneh nickeh mollyga pollyla.
Namu rykemmeb treganna mabeh thinninneb treganna
Nehmane, kehgreuna, nynaby thinneh, tringeh gugerra tyathinneb,
Nynabythinneh koobryneh, mareh terrennet.
Pypatehinneh pungtinneh, loocootherinneb.

The women hunt the kangaroo and wallaby.

The emu runs in the bush, the kangaroo runs in the bush.

The young emu, the wallaby, the joey-kangaroo, the bandicoot, the kangaroo-rat,

The little kangaroo-rat and the little opossum, the ring-tail opossum,
etc.

And so on, enumerating all the animals that are hunted. There were endless repetitions, some lines being repeated two or three times. Time was kept by beating sticks together and beating with the hands on skins rolled up tight to form a drum.

A narrative called *The Legend of Fire* is the only fraction of their mythology which has been preserved. The two stars Castor and Pollox are associated with its heroes' adventures.

H. W. Stewart

REVIEWS

ROBINSON'S DOUBLE HARVEST

The Three Taverns, and *Avon's Harvest*, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co.

It is a relief to some of Mr. Robinson's admirers to find him once more in the U. S. A. instead of in Camelot; for, to tell the truth, he is much more at home here, and the figures he presents are much more convincing. Although there are in *The Three Taverns* certain studies of historic or legendary characters—Hamilton and Burr, Rahel Robert, John Brown, Paul of Tarsus, Lazarus—both books are mainly in this poet's most characteristic vein, mainly studies of his gnarled and weather-beaten neighbors; of incomplete, unrounded characters in tragically ill-fitting human relationships.

Of these monologue or dialogue narratives *Avon's Harvest*, the longest, is perhaps the most distinguished. With true New England frugality, it weaves a closely knit, formidable tragedy out of meagre materials—a college antagonism, a blow, a long worm-eating revenge; and its creeping emotion of horror is all the more powerful, perhaps, because of the poet's restraint. Probably a psychoanalyst would diagnose Avon's case as insanity—delusions induced by fear of the serpentine, ruthless being whose offensive love had changed into consuming hatred. But such a gradual burrowing insanity was never more sharply and powerfully presented. The thing is done with a kind

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of cold thrift, as effective in its way as Poe's lush and shadowed eloquence; the music in the one case being slow and stern, and in the other rich and full of sombre color. *Avon* has a tonal, almost monotonous beauty:

You need not ask
What undulating reptile he was like,
For such a worm as I discerned in him
Was never yet on earth or in the ocean
Or anywhere else than in my sense of him.

Again:

And having had one mordacious glimpse of him
That filled my eyes and was to fill my life,
I have known Peace only as one more word
Among the many others we say over
That have an airy credit of no meaning.

Last year's book, *The Three Taverns*, is mostly also dramatic narratives. I confess that certain ones interest me intellectually but bring little emotional thrill. The Hamilton-Burr dialogue, the monologues by Saint Paul and Rahel Robert and John Brown, are searching essays in character analysis, but they leave one cold. There is more of John Brown's flaming personality in a few lines of Lindsay's poem—

And there he sits
To judge the world;
His hunting ogs
At his feet are curled—

than in these pages of farewell to his wife and the world, fine as many passages are:

Robinson's Double Harvest

Could I have known, I say, before I left you
That summer morning, all there was to know—
Even unto the last consuming word
That would have blasted every mortal answer
As lightning would annihilate a leaf,
I might have trembled on that summer morning;
I might have wavered; and I might have failed.

The best line in the poem is fortunately the last:

I shall have more to say when I am dead.

There is no lack of fire in *London Bridge*, a case of ill-assorted marriage in which the pair hurl swathed rocks of hatred at each other—these two are terribly alive. Also, in a marriage-case less violent but more perplexing, one is deeply moved by Nimmo of the “velvet eyes”,

At his bewildered and unfruitful task
Of being what he was born to be—a man.

And one “gets” completely “the inextinguishable grace” of the vagabond in *Peace on Earth*, and the nothingness of Taskar Norcross,

a dusty worm so dry
That even the early bird would shake his head
And fly on farther for another breakfast.

But it is in Mr. Robinson's meditative poems that one tastes most keenly the sharp and bitter savor of his high aloof philosophy. He is not for Demos:

Having all,
See not the great among you for the small,
But hear their silence; for the few shall save

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The many, or the many are to fall—
Still to be wrangling in a noisy grave.

He offers no solution of the problem of creation, either in general or in detail, but he presents it in vivid lines:

There were seekers after darkness in the Valley of the Shadow,
And they alone were there to find what they were looking for.

He insists—

That earth has not a school where we may go
For wisdom, or for more than we may know.

But meantime,

Say what you feel, while you have time to say it—
Eternity will answer for itself.

H. M.

THE POET OF THE WAR

Poems, by Wilfred Owen; with an introduction by Siegfried Sassoon. B. W. Huebsch.

English critics have been giving high praise to Wilfred Owen's poems. Now that he has achieved an American edition, we are enabled to ratify their choice of him as the most distinguished poet of the War, and join in their sorrow over his early death as one of its heaviest losses.

Personally I find his work very fine indeed. I don't think the much-discussed *Strange Meeting* stands out far, if any, above the others—*Apologia Pro Poemate Meo*, or *The Show*, for instance; or the three lyrics, *Greater Love*, *Arms and the Boy*, *Anthem for Doomed Youth*. The experi-

ment with assonance in *Strange Meeting* arouses interest, but this is not the only poem by any means in which he uses alliterative assonance skilfully, although here the scheme is more definite and obvious.

Certainly there is nothing cheap about Wilfred Owen, and if he was making propaganda against war in his verse, as he might very justly, he was consciously making poetry also; which is what some of the other war-poets forgot or failed to do. In one or two of the poems in the latter part of the book one comes upon the vein made popular by Siegfried Sassoon and Gibson and others—the sort of “bloomin’ ” character-sketch or satiric incident, as in *Chances* or *S. I. W.*, in which someone wrote the mother of the soldier who had kissed the muzzle of his gun and shot himself, “Tim died smiling.” But these are below the level of Wilfred Owen’s other poems, although certainly not below this type of poem by Sassoon or Gibson.

The trouble with these poems, if one considers them as propaganda, is that they do not propagandize! They have a piquant flair for the easy-chair reader—quite as much as that first emotional reaction to war which was Rupert Brooke’s. For the fact is, they represent war as adventure; and on the page it matters not whether a man is killed in a trench or in a gun-fight in Arizona—the zest for the reader is the same. And the result, so far as propaganda against war is concerned, is quite the opposite of the effect intended.

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But when it comes to the slow horror of such a poem as *The Show*, or the subtle satire of *Arms and the Boy*, or the pitiful hopelessness of *Strange Meeting*, there you have the deep personal experience and revelation which is the only sort of propaganda (and one might say of poetry) that counts. These poems are indeed at the opposite pole from Rupert Brooke's gesture of sacrifice and renunciation. And yet the sacrifice is made no less, with a marvelously cool restraint and clear perception. This is what makes *Greater Love* such a fine poem—fine also in sheer poetic quality; with a certain seventeenth-century perfection, like George Herbert or Donne.

To go back for a moment to the sort of satiric graphic sketches noted above, what I mean about these is what Wilfred Owen meant:

Nevertheless, except you share
With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,
Whose mould is but the trembling of a flare,
And Heaven but as the highway for a shell,
You shall not hear their mirth;
You shall not come to think them well content,
By any jest of mine. These men are worth
Your tears: you are not worth their merriment.

Neither are we, I have sometimes thought, worth their stark tragedies, or these trench paradoxes which furnish incidents for the poetic cinema, so to speak—so that poets also may become war profiteers! It is this that I have resented in many of the war-poems which, like the war to end war, were supposed to rid war of its glamour. The

best of Owen's poems are far indeed from this; and that is their virtue.

Wilfred Owen evidently belonged to a later generation than Rupert Brooke, in spite of the few years between them; this not only in respect to his attitude about war, in which change Brooke would undoubtedly have shared had he lived, but in respect to his verse as well. It is nervous, sinewy, closely packed. His is a hardness and a precision that—could it have been preserved past the Sambre Canal, where he fell only a few days before the Armistice—would certainly have achieved much. He could not, one feels sure, have degenerated into any "Georgian" looseness of thought or structure. There is too much aloofness in his poems for that, and too much clear vision.

A. C. H.

MR. MASEFIELD'S RACER

Right Royal, by John Masefield. Macmillan Co.

The poem *Right Royal*, by John Masefield, is undoubtedly a splendid realistic description of a steeplechase; written, I should judge, by one who has never ridden over a course, but who, being a good horseman, has painstakingly covered every point in the race. Particularly good is his description of the London betting commissioner's representative who visits the racing stables, and his picture of the race crowds on their way vividly recalls Charles Lever's description of those making their annual pilgrimage to the Punchestown steeplechases.

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But whether Right Royal could really have won this race, as he does in Mr. Masefield's poem, is another matter.

After the most grueling race, of some four miles, to which a horse can be subjected, it seems unreasonable to suppose this super-horse capable, in a run of four furlongs on the flat, of making up thirty lengths lost by his mishap at the jump known as Lost Lady.

Let me make this quite clear: Compton Course, on which the race was run, was four-and-a-quarter miles in length. The first time around the course Right Royal lost thirty lengths at the hurdle and ditch. Eighteen lengths he seems to have made up by the time he came to his Lost Lady jump on the second time around the course. This of course took a great deal out of the horse.

Now, at the average speed at which steeplechases of this distance are run, the horses were covering approximately forty-eight feet a second—about four and a half lengths. Right Royal, in pecking at the Lost Lady jump, thereby coming almost to a standstill, recovering himself and again getting into his stride, must have lost some four seconds, or eighteen lengths. As he was twelve lengths behind when taking the jump, he had thirty lengths to recover before overtaking his field, in half a mile. This is obviously impossible.

Conceding a steeplechase to be the chanciest of races, the poem nevertheless seems to convey the impression that the rider of Right Royal rather expected all the other

Mr. Masefield's Racer

horses to meet with mishaps, thereby enabling his mount to win. A number of stanzas, being entirely irrelevant, should have been omitted: for a four-mile effort it carries too much hay. But the poem as a whole is delightful, and takes every lover of a thoroughbred well over the jumps with him and holds the interest from post to finish.

N. Howard Thorp

NOTE. Because of the controversy as to whether Mr. Masefield's hero is a real horse or a super-steed of the poet's invention, the editor submitted the book to a cowboy poet whose horsemanship is as famous throughout the West as his poetry.

SONGS AND SPLASHES

Morning, Noon and Night, by Glenn Ward Dresbach.
Four Seas Co.

One may find a few fine lyrics in this book, as in the two earlier ones which this poet has put out—songs simple almost to obviousness, but deftly and musically turned. Such are three or four in the *Burro Mountains* and *Apple-blossoms* groups which open the volume, numbers three and four of the *Fruit-growing* group, the longer poem *To One Beloved*, and the first of the *Songs after the War*. These, all but the last, our readers have seen; here is a shapely new one, with a wistful ending.

I heard a thrush when twilight came
Sing of the woes it had not known—
Of hearts that burned in rainbow flame,
Of barren fields where seeds were sown.

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And then it sang of happy trees
Where fruit is golden in the sun,
Of raptures and of mysteries
Through which the songs of seasons run.
And I was sadder for the song
Of rapture than the song of pain—
For one lost gladness, gone so long,
Came back and could not hurt again!

Of the longer poems *The Nest of the Bluebird* has a softly flowing dreaminess, the dreamer recalling the many human lives of his wandering soul. If only there were more magic in its tunefulness, more invention in its phrasing and epithets, more white alchemic fire in its motive power—the creative zest behind it—we should have a memorable poem, somewhat in the mood of Tennyson's *Lotus-eaters* but bearing a different spiritual inference.

Sometimes one is more irritated; sometimes it seems absurd that a poet who has studiously trained himself should do the obvious or banal thing with such an innocent air. Certain of the narrative poems are too cheaply journalistic, one would think—*The Colonel's Lady*, for example—to be allowed typewriter privileges, not to speak of printer's ink. And how can an accredited poet commit such a crime as the second of these two lines:

I cannot dine with you today
And hear how all your wealth does good—

or close a war-song with such a meagre rhyme-compromise as

But, Lord of Nations, tell us
That Wars no more remain.

A few of the songs remind us that the poet has lived in New Mexico and Panama, but the impress of the wilderness, of strange places, is not very strong on a temperament perhaps too hospitable to the lighter and more facile emotions.

H. M.

MODERN AND ELIZABETHAN

The Poet in the Desert, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood.
(New revised ed.) Privately printed, Portland, Ore.

Maia—a Sonnet Sequence, by Charles Erskine Scott Wood,
with two sonnets by Sara Bard Field. Portland, Ore.

Some years ago—in September, 1915—POETRY reviewed the first of these two books, then just published. Let us reaffirm the opinion then expressed, which referred especially to the *Prologue*, now the poem's first section:

Mr. Wood proves himself a poet not only by the sweep and power of his vision, but by the rich imagery and rhythmic beauty of his free verse at its best. His special distinction is that he really "enters into the desert," that his poetry really presents something of the color and glory, the desolation and tragedy, of this western wonderland.

The new edition of the poem is almost a re-writing of much of it; and for the better, as it is relieved of a good deal of social and political propaganda.

It may be difficult to judge impartially *Maia*, coming as it does in all the luxury of Gothic type on hand-made large-paper, with decorative illustrations singularly personal (at least the frontispiece is confessedly by the author), and of a beauty a bit amateurish perhaps, but delicate and rare. But one may safely record astonish-

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ment that the same man should achieve, when well along in the dangerous middle years of life, these two poems of different moods and modes—the challenging radical modernism of the one, and the old-world freshness and acceptance-of-joy of the other.

It goes without saying that Mr. Wood is a more arresting poet in the western desert than in the Elizabethan garden. The sonnets are, perhaps inevitably, imitative of Sidney or Spenser; while *The Poet in the Desert* is the intensely personal work of a modern observer and thinker, an impassioned challenge to civilization, containing passages of beauty and power. H. M.

CLASSICS IN ENGLISH

Sappho, by Henry Thornton Wharton. Brentano's.
The Golden Treasury of the Greeks, by Alexander Lothian.
Basil Blackwell, Oxford, England.
Medallions in Clay, by Richard Aldington. Alfred A. Knopf.

The Poets' Translation Series: Second Set. The Egoist.
Translators put one under no obligation to consider their work in relation to original texts not included in their books. I shall assume no familiarity with the classic works involved, but shall consider these books principally as English poems upon foreign and antique subjects.

Wharton is the standard Sappho. This new edition outdoes the former, containing useful literal translations,

a useless and elaborate "life," metrical versions from various hands, and disastrous attempts at paraphrasis by Miss Anne Bunner. He is not content with a single notion of the shifty poet-pedagogue; he must have them all—an encyclopedia of Sapphos.

Mr. Lothian, who has "rendered" the Greek *Anthology*, has worked hard. His neat rhymed verse is no more Greek, or at least no less English, than Herrick; the comparison which he invites could not be fair to him. At his worst he contrives an embarrassed jig-rhythm. At his best there are elegant stanzas like this:

Yet there, your nightingales as clear
Sing as they sang of old.
The clutch of death is wide; but here
Is what he cannot hold.

Medallions in Clay contains the translations from Anyte, Meleager, the Anacreontea, and the Latin poets of the Renaissance which Mr. Aldington prepared for the *Poets' Translation Series* published some time ago in England. A writer dealing with a past age must decide whether frankly to outfit it in historical trappings, "costume," etc.; or to transpose it into the idiom of his race and day, which produces an effect consistent if bizarre (see Synge's Villon and Petrarch). Mr. Aldington has done neither the one nor the other.

All traces of period have disappeared. He might have preserved the aroma of these verses more successfully if he had kept the original line-divisions, leaving the

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words more or less in their original order. This would not of course indicate the original tune, but it might create another; as in Miss Densmore's Chippewa translations, or Arthur Waley's *Uta*. Such rhythms are at least jagged, and clash upon the ear; whereas the sort of cadence Mr. Aldington writes lulls the mind to sleep. Contemporary poetic prose seems to be a variety of metrical molasses.

Mr. Aldington, however, is earnest and scholarly, his translations are infinitely to be preferred to the hackwork of professors, and they doubtless contribute much to the general culture of Anglo-Saxons. To do so may have been the aim of the various imagists whose zeal and study carried out the scheme.

Except H. D., they share his shortcomings, as well as some of his excellences. They all have reverent and bland dispositions toward the holy classics, they seem to have worked in a cloud of "sweetness and light." But I feel an absence of outline, clear light, sensuous precision, and a corresponding tendency to the sweet and discreetly sentimental. This is true of Mr. Storer's translations of Sappho, Poseidippus, and Asklepiades; and it may be said also of the work of Mr. Flint and Mr. Whitall in the *First Set*.

The Pound-Fenollosa Chinese had faces, manners, garments, dreams, tangibles. Most of these Greeks and Romans have none. The archaic energy which must have animated their exploits, military or imaginative, is

nowhere to be found. No race of men ever subsisted on sweet rhetorical distinction. This absence of vitality is an effect of diction, of sound, of rhythm; as in this, from one of Mr. Aldington's Anacreontea:

I would drink, stretched upon delicate myrtle boughs and lotus grass.
And Love, with his robe fastened about his throat with papyrus, should
serve me wine.

The solitary exception, naturally enough, is the work of H. D. She writes English as hard as Anglo-Saxon, and cultivates no continental suavities. She has had the discretion to select for her contribution Euripides—*Choruses from the Iphigenia in Aulis and the Hippolytus*, which remained impassioned even in the swathings of Professor Murray's Swinburnian verse.

T. S. Eliot, in reviewing the *First Set* in POETRY some years ago, noted that in avoiding such an English cliché as "Achilles ran like the wind," her version, "Achilles had strapped the wind about his ankles," is contrary to Euripides. I agree with H. D., who seems to feel that a modern poet need not reproduce with exactness phrases redundant or over-familiar. She explains thus in a note in the *Egoist* (vol. II, No. II):

While the sense of the Greek has been strictly kept, it is necessary to point out that the repetition of useless, ornamental adjectives . . . is a heavy strain on the translator's ingenuity . . . the Homeric epithet degenerates into what the French call a *remplissage*—an expression to fill up a line. Such phrases have been paraphrased or omitted.

Even Greek rhetoric evidently had its false notes.

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What if these warriors and women of hers are not Greek? The Greeks are dead. We cannot put the mask beside the face to measure it. It is enough if the mask moves and speaks. He who knows no Greek has the right to say: I will call these Greek; for they are surely men and women, they have substance, they move with passion.

They will lift their shields,
Riveted with brass,
As they enter Simois
In their painted ships.

Phaedra cries out on her sick-bed:

Take me to the mountains!
Oh for woods, pine tracts,
Where hounds athirst for death
Leap on the bright stags!
God, how I would shout to the beasts
With my gold hair torn loose!

The individual talent cannot develop richly without an historic sense. One need not know all periods of the past, but some consciousness of Time's moods one must have—one must feel Time strangely garbed, with unfamiliar talk or metric. H. D.'s Greeks, at least for the moment, are my Greeks. It does not matter whether they, any more than Shakespeare's Romans from Plutarch, correspond with the latest or best findings of scientific historians. They live, are entities in the mind, with alien behavior and curious looks; and in the contemplation of them the poet may truly see himself in his own time.

Glenway Wescott

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

THE DIAL'S ANNUAL AWARD

Our much esteemed contemporary *The Dial* is setting a new pace for literary prizes by offering an annual two-thousand-dollar purse to some one of its contributors. This is, we believe, the largest literary award ever made in this country—may it be a hint to others capable of being moved by a generous sense of justice!

POETRY, from its first number, has been urging prizes and scholarships for poets, believing such awards to be as rightfully due in this art as in painting, sculpture or music. But we have not yet made much headway. Meantime count the scholarships in art schools! In this year's graduating exercises at the Chicago Art Institute art school, one young girl sculptor received a thousand-dollar scholarship, and another an award half as large, for the two best designs on the subject *Harvest*—fifteen hundred dollars handed out as a matter of course, just like that, for a couple of nice little academic bas-reliefs (I saw them), not to be compared for a moment with many poems we have printed by gifted but impecunious boys and girls who scarcely know where their next meal is coming from! Why are new scholarships and prizes founded every year in art exhibitions and schools, while it remains impossible to convince our men and women of wealth, however liberally disposed they may be, that the poets have much more need of such awards, and at

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present more right to them? How shall we wake people up to the bitter injustice of the poet's meagre earnings, to the lack of all financial recognition of his service?

The Dial is doing well to make a generous move in the right direction.

NEW MAGAZINES

New organs of this art are appearing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep track of them. *The Measure* is now nearly half a year old, with Padraic Colum and Carolyn Hall as its editors for the summer quarter. *Tempo*, published at Danvers, Mass., with Oliver Jenkins as editor and R. Ellsworth Larsson as associate, appeared in June. And *Voices—A Journal of Verse*, is to begin next autumn as a quarterly, with Harold Vinal as editor and Fiswoode Tarleton as associate; issuing from Steinert Hall, Boston.

Besides these along the Atlantic, we welcome also *The Lyric West—A Magazine of Verse*, which began in April at Los Angeles, under the editorship of Grace Atherton Dennen, 1139 West Twenty-seventh Street. It is "designed to foster the poetic development of the expanding West, though it will be an open market for the work of all verse writers of all places."

Mr. Vinal may not be aware that there is an English *Voices*—an interesting magazine of progressive modern spirit, devoted chiefly to poetry but including some imaginative prose, a few drawings and a section of reviews and notes. In the latest *Summer Number*, which

is No. III of Vol. V, we find poems by certain of our own friends—John Gould Fletcher, Louis Golding, Isaac Rosenberg—as well as an article on Rosenberg by Samuel Roth, formerly editor of *The Lyric*, who is now in England. The editor of *Voices* is Thomas Moulton, whose poem of last summer, *Here for a Time*, our readers will remember; and the publishers are Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

The use of a title already pre-empted by another magazine, however far away, is of course unfortunate. POETRY is nearly nine years old, but we received recently a copy of a monthly published by Cornish Bros., Ltd., in Birmingham, England, under the title *Poetry*; with the sub-title *A Magazine of Verse, Comment and Criticism*. Somewhat intrigued, we inquired of the editor, Mr. S. Fowler Wright, whether he was ignorant of POETRY's existence when he adopted the same title. Mr. Wright promised to pass the query on to his predecessor, the founder, but we have never received an answer. As POETRY is fairly well known in England, the duplication of titles is hardly to the advantage of either magazine.

NOTES

Mr. Charles R. Murphy, a Philadelphian and a graduate of Harvard, has contributed to various magazines, and published, through John Lane Co., translations of Verhaeren.

Florence Kilpatrick Mixter (Mrs. Geo. W. M.), who has recently removed to Buffalo from Moline, Ill., will soon publish, through Boni & Liveright, her first book of verse.

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson (Mrs. T. de Hoge P.), of Philadelphia,

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is the author of three books of verse, the latest being *The Son of Merope and Other Poems* (H. W. Fisher & Co.).

Nancy Campbell (Mrs. Joseph C.) of Wicklow, Ireland, is the author of *Agnus Dei* (Four Seas Co.).

Miss Eda Lou Walton, a native of New Mexico, was one of Witter Bynner's class in poetry at Berkeley three years ago. More recently she has been living in New York.

Mr. DuBose Heyward, of Charleston, is one of the founders and officers of the Poetry Society of South Carolina.

Louise Townsend Nicholl (Mrs. Marshall Don Bewick) is on the staff of the New York *Evening Post*.

Of the poets who have not hitherto appeared in POETRY:

Mr. David Osborne Hamilton, of New York, is the author of *Four Gardens*, published last year in the *Yale Series of Younger Poets*.

Mr. Richard Hughes, of Talsarnau, North Wales, is a student at Oxford, and a contributor of verse and prose to the *Athenaeum*, *Manchester Guardian*, and other papers. Our readers will remember his recent article on *The Winter's Publishing in England*.

Miss Gladys Edgerton, of New York, has contributed to magazines, and translated certain French authors.

Mr. Mason A. Freeman, Jr. "manufactures vinegar in Huntington, W. Va." He is a member of the N. Y. Society of Independent Artists.

Miss Margaret DeLaughter is a very young poet of St. Louis, Mo.

Margaret Belle Houston (Mrs. M. L. Kauffman), who lives in Bristol, Va., has written for various magazines.

Miss Grace Hodsdon Boutelle lives in Minneapolis. Her poem is in honor of her father, for many years a congressman from Maine.

Manuscripts submitted to POETRY in mid-summer are subject to long delay.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

There and Here, by Allen Tucker. Duffield & Co.

The Marble House and Other Poems, by Ellen M. H. Gates. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Hills of Arcetri, by Leolyn Louise Everett. John Lane Co.

Lincoln Life Sketches in Verse and Prose, by Garrett Newkirk. Duffield & Co.

292 a

Your June number renewed me wonderfully—an absolutely joyous thing! Go to it, hammer and tongs! Infuse a little beauty, joy, spirit, pain into the life of today. Did I say a little?—Oceans of them!—*A Canadian subscriber*

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 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

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NO. VI

SEPTEMBER 1921

POEMS BY PAUL FORT

LOUIS ELEVENTH, CURIOUS MAN

L OUIS ELEVENTH, for trifles fain, I love you, curious man. Dear chafferer in chestnuts, discreetly did you plan to pluck the chestnuts of fair Burgundy! You seemed all friendliness and courtesy. Your hood was hung with images of lead and copper medals. Watchers would have said your pious thoughts were fixed on things above. Sudden you stooped, your long arms outward drove. Gently, not even ruffling your sleek glove, you filched a chestnut, another, half a dozen, beneath the menacing gauntlet of your cousin.

But if by chance he let his great fists fall upon your back, your scrawny back, you roared with laughter and his stolen goods restored. 'Twas but an empty shell.

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Void were the chestnuts all. Your gentle industry served your fortunes well.

So I, good singer, sage of little worth, pilfer both heaven and earth, provinces of my brain, under the hands of the Lord, all light. I deftly pull from His fingers the roses of the dawn, the rings of the storm, the lilies of starry nights, and gain little ineffable images, a heap of shining things stored up beneath my skull.

To filch by slow degrees but sure, sweet Louis Eleventh, O man most rare! May God, good politician, O rare among the Louis, have you in His good care; and as, in days of old, when you were pleased, your favorite greyhound stretched beneath your breeches, mildly to judge by that grateful warmth appeased, beneath his golden slippers in Paradise may you be, blest little king at rest, his most fervent counsellor.

And, for having praised you, counter to my teachers, and with all candor having kept your law, when the day of my doom is at hand, when I, in my turn, shall stand awaiting judgment at the bar above, pluck at God's robe that he place me in His love.

THE MIRACULOUS CATCH

The tidings seemed so Heaven-sent—an uncle dead so apropos—my dear little Louis Eleventh was fain to prop-

erly express his glee and gain additional content with a modest fête; but intimately, in pleasant society.

Master Tristan, all imagination, counseled a picnic in the plain, and as he blinked with his sly red eyes, "I consent," said the king. "'Tis good advice. You're an old villain, though, just the same."

Next day, 'neath skies of celestial blue, gay and content, my sweet little king, Louis Eleventh, with Tristan L'Ermite and their fair, frail friends, Simonne of the Chains and Perrette of the Treasure, together came to fish for the gudgeon that swim in the Seine, at the reedy foot of the tower of Nesle.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's black abyss, no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

Simonne of the Chains, soul and heart fast bound to the heart and soul of her well-loved king, like a dainty water-lily bent above an ancient nenuphar, on her lover's threadbare shoulder leant her bosom's snows, her brow of milk, her little nose of swan-white silk; and, now and then, the gracious king, Louis of France, with a tender look, would bid his lovely handmaid bring a squirming maggot to bait his hook. Then 'twas with such a melting charm that into a small green box she poured one,

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'twas with such a sweet and profound appeal that she gave the creature, all quivering, to that reclining king, her adored one, that Louis the impulse no more restrains, but kisses an ear (not the ear of the maggot but that of Simonne of the Chains) amorously whispering into its hollow meekly bent, "You shall be present when I call the Three Estates to Parliament."

Perrette of the Treasure (formerly King Louis' light-o'-love, your pardon!—now bequeathed, a charming guerdon, to Tristan by royal clemency) was plump and fresh as a Rambler rose, cheeks like a peach, ample bosom bare, where in duplicate glows the rising sun, each breast an orb but a pointed one, starred with grains of beauty ambulant (fleas I would say), whereon the gaunt Tristan from underneath his hood full often lets his glances brood. And when good Tristan, his line drawn taut, a fresher maggot would fain acquire, 'twas with a manner so languor-fraught the plump dame granted this slight desire, that, quite transported with Cupid's blisses, he dropped his line her side to gain! The line, released, went flic, flac, floc, and sank beneath the Seine, while Perrette received on her neck, all warm, two or three hearty headsman's kisses.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's

black abyss, no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

He saw with inattentive eyes, like a flower beside the river's brim, a certain Master Villon skim the reeds in chase of dragonflies. From eyes ablaze with anarchy a side-long glance he sometimes sends towards the place where those boon-companions ply the angler's art with their gentle friends. Master Oliver, still a virgin, having other fish to fry, that advent scarcely heeds. Vaguely he saw Master Villon disrobe among the reeds, but merely murmured in slumbrous tone, like one who speaks in dreams, "That naked gentleman is not unknown to me, it seems."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. The maggots spun in vain, in vain. And Master François Villon, now swimming in mid-Seine, as he floated whispered to his brother fish: "Liberty forever! Don't let yourselves be caught!"

"Gossip," said Tristan, "if you are good, and sage withal, I here engage to give you a pass, wherewith to break the cordon of the Scottish guard when I hang and when I decapitate." Quoth Perrette of the Treasure, "A neat reward." "And," continued Tristan in merry vein, "if your heart does not bid you the fatal view shun, some fine spring morning you shall see the rapid and joyous execution of the virgin Oliver le Dain." "I'll be there,

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I'll be there," responded Perrette, clapping her hands with glee.

"Peace!" cried the king, "or this turbot I miss."

"A turbot, seigneur, is a fish of the sea," timidly ventured the tender Simonne. "With my mother I've sold full many a one in the market-place of Saint-Honoré in the time of my virginity." "A fish of the sea, eh? Then that was why I missed him!" The monarch made reply, not disconcerted in the least!

"Days that are o'er will return no more," hummed Perrette, on her hose intent. "Yes, youth has only a single time," Tristan intoned in hearty assent. Thereat the timid, the tender Simonne cooed to an air that is little known, "Twas twenty years ago my mother died." It needed only that—Tristan dissolved in tears. While the king, as he fished the wind, chanted stentorianly, "No, no, my friends, I do not wish a thing of naught to be."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. In vain the tempting maggot spins. The esthetic gudgeons loud applaud, clapping their frantic fins. Applaud, no doubt, is figurative, but who knows what fantastic dream is truth—in the depths, where fishes live at the bottom of the stream?

At the reedy foot of the tower of Nesle, those cronies good, headsman and king, in chorus sing like birds of the

wood. And about their floats the little fish waltz as sweetly as heart could wish.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin.

Then suddenly Perrette smothered a laugh in her skirt. My sweet little Louis Eleventh, feeling his line drawn taut and heaving it up with ardor, a king-fisher had caught. "A wager," Tristan said. Simonne, "A winged gudgeon," cried. And Master Oliver halted dead in the middle of his stride.

"On my word, the judgment was too empiric," mused Villon, swimming beneath the stream. "To fish for a gudgeon and catch a bird . . . in the bourgeois soul of that curmudgeon mean somewhere survives the germ of a lyric!"

And about their floats the little fish waltzed as sweetly as heart could wish.

THE LAMENT OF THE SOLDIERS

When they were come back from the wars, their heads were seamed with bleeding scars;

Their hearts betwixt clenched teeth they gripped, in rivulets their blood had dripped.

When they were come back from the wars—the blue, the red, the sons of Mars—

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They sought their snuff-boxes so fine, their chests, their sheets all spotless showing;

They sought their kine, their grunting swine, their wives and sweethearts at their sewing,

Their roguish children, like as not crowned with a shining copper pot:

They even sought their homes, poor souls . . . they only found the worms and moles.

The carrion raven clamored o'er them. They spat their broken hearts before them!

THE RETURN

Ivy has covered all the wall. How many hours, how many tears, since last we loved? How many years?

No roses now. Ivy has crushed the vine. Soul, whither didst thou go? Climbing across the nests of nightingales, ivy has stifled the whole chateau.

Wind, the deep wells are choked with the roses of yesterday. Is that your hiding-place, O my dead wife?

No one replies? Who would reply? Is it not best to listen to the wind that sighs through the grasses, "my sweet love"?

Flush with the roof, the ancient, crimson sun is cut through the midst so mournfully.

Paul Fort, translated by John Strong Newberry

Shall I bid the gardener come? The gardener? No.
It would be better to summon Death to reap the long
grass:

So many memories and so much love, and the setting
sun at the level of the earth.

THE LITTLE SILENT STREET

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none
that this way comes?

Cobblestones count geraniums. Geraniums count the
cobblestones.

Dream, young girl, at your casement high. Shelled
green peas before you lie.

They plump the apron white you try with rosy finger-
tips to tie.

I pass, in black from head to feet. Is it forked light-
ning troubles thee,

Young maiden, or the sight of me? The peas have
fallen in the street.

Sombre I pass. Behind I see cobblestones count each
fallen pea.

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none
that this way comes?

ETERNITY

One does not need to credit death. The human heart to rest is fain. O'er sleeping fields the evening's breath dreams, and I hear eternity chime in the bending ears of grain.

"Hark!—an angelus dies in heaven's blue height." Be comforted. Hours pass away. Hushed is the belfry? God doth wake. The nightingale salutes the day hid in the turret's rose-tree brake, and in its turn will mourn the night.

"Hark!—once again the hour doth swell." But the bell's already fast asleep. Eternity is chiming deep, borne by the sweet, tormented breath of zephyr and of Philomel.

One does not need to credit death.

*Translated from the French of Paul Fort
by John Strong Newberry*

STILL-HUNT

OMINOUS CONCORD

As if I were Jeanne d'Arc,
But wearier, I prepare
Answer and return
To the prophetic air;

My voice answering
Voices of the unearthly nation
With autumnal melody
Of my own creation:

Melody of alarm lest my
So long-imagined love retreat
Into despair as sharp and fine
As the print of sea-gull's feet.

They sing, stilling my response
With silvery indifference;
And what they mean or know
Is, like the falling of first snow,
An indecipherable cadence.

WITHOUT SLEEP

He earns the oblivion of book and shelf
Who will have for muse a Beatrice

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Sitting content by the hearth
To whisper his history and thought.

Poet uncuckolded, he hears
No mad ethereal crying
For merciless cloud and ridge
Tormented by the golden horn.

Ah, she will never lift
Her intolerant head like a stag
And scorn him, thinking of wind
And naked hunter and his hallooing hound.

THE CHASTE LOVERS

Siberia is a land
Drops from a cloud.
The shackles click,
Yet never loud,

Upon a pavement
Of the frost—
A road we know,
Yet still are lost

Within the semblance
Of its cold
Mile after mile
Till we are old.

You and I, man and maid,
Together form
Procession or cavalcade
Minute as a worm.

Prisoners to each other,
And to these even less kind—
The bottomless beauty of body,
The bottomless pomp of mind.

And perpetually discontent,
We eye the crows,
Or watch the weasel where it went,
Or hail the wind that blows.

TO L. S.

I

O you
Wing-of-the-wind,
Why do you chant
Ree, ree, with the mourning-dove,
And dee, dee, with the male gannet—

When you may live forever
In the fray of her feathers,
And in the tumult of the dark wave
Where he pillows
In all weathers?

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II

Why the perpetual sway
Of the air?
Why the rift of the heaven
Into light and dark,
Into black and white of division?

Women are deeper than sound.
They are the storm, which continues
In quiet, in peace, in sunshine,
Healing and building
In the air the airy sinews.

THE POET AT NIGHT-FALL

I see no equivalents
For that which I see,
Among words.

And sounds are nowhere repeated,
Vowel for vocal wind
Or shaking leaf.

Ah me, beauty does not enclose life,
But blows through it—
Like that idea, the wind,

Which is unseen and useless,
Even superseded upon
The scarred sea;

Glenway Wescott

Which goes and comes
Altering every aspect—
The poplar, the splashing crest—

Altering all, in that moment
When it is not
Because we see it not.

But who would hang
Like a wind-bell
On a porch where no wind ever blows?

THE HUNTER

You asked me what I did
In peaked New Mexico,
Where lives the most wild beauty
To which a man may go.

And I answer that I pursued
Content that would go in a song
Upon its silvery mountains
So vainly and so long

That if it were bear or lion
Which I had hunted there
I should now be like Orion,
Fixed hungry in the air.

Glenway Wescott

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NIGHT

NADIR

I am part of lonely things
Of this lonely city. . .

.

A gold fish in a bowl,
Lowered into a lake,
Would feel the sleeping presence of fish
Even as I
Feel life withdrawn, suspended. . . .

An immanence of life,
Like a remembered song of violins
And oboes
After a dance.

.

Even the sound of my footsteps
Dies in the snow.

SUMACH

An old monk is my night. . . .

Long ago he was young . . .
Song shone between his lips,
And a necklace of round white arms
Fulfilled his throat. . . .

Dried fruit of trees
That blossom in bitterness
Rustle on his bent shoulders . . .
Wry grey flesh festoons his yellow teeth. . . .
My night is old. . . .

BRACKISH WELL

If I were less than the sum of what I am
I wonder—

My eyes seek yours
Coaxing the flame—

If I were blind?

If I were dumb
And had no song?

Say you would love me
Blind and dumb—
Nothing to hold you,
Nothing to bind you to me.
Say you would love
My spirit . . .

I will say to you:
Go and love some puff of wind
From a graveyard.

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ENDYMION

The universe
Crumbles away,
Crawls away . . .

A simoon
Keyed down,
Hushed away
To whispers. . . .

(Trickling, trickling—
Bare legs—
Impacts of sand-grains—
Impacts of girls' eyes—)

Up to my knees . . .

(Isolation
Of flesh from flesh—
Slippery, gritty,
Hands grip and slide,
Fingers roll
On my face—)

Knee deep,
Waist deep,
Eyes prickling . . .

(It was my gift
To catch their eyes,
Catch and hold their eyes:

John Crawford

She knew that,
But She could not blind
All their eyes—)

Waist-deep—
Up to my arm-pits. . . .

(She found one
Could keep my arms knit—
Body like a panther,
That one—)

Up to my eyes—
Sleep slides
Grain by grain. . . .

(What She did to you
No one knows. . . .
She'll never kill the feel of you
With Her sand—)

Crumbling,
Crawling,
Creeping—
Ring about my neck . . .

(Yours—
Your hands at my throat—
Your lips—)

John Crawford

DESCENT

It is large life to sit on the door-log
Of the Hill Tavern,
Among the distinguished birches
Standing in groups,
And look beyond the monotonous green floor
Of the matted tree-tops of the lower land
To the high horizon and the barges,
And the purple island in a ring of gold.

But I am of the lowland,
Of the undistinguished trees and juniper,
And must go down the deliberate trail
Of the undistinguished dead—
And no noon.

Below the bluff-rim—
The trees now are more separate
And individual of pattern;
But the dusk marries them to one another,
And their top branches intertwine,
Like parasols in a crowded park of listeners,
As far as the path leads to the valley terrace.
Then the black belt of tamarack
And tangled bittersweet
Is like the Lower Ten, leaning on brothers
To make stand against the uncertain winds,
And dying in the smother of a brief day.

Ivan Swift

Out of this and on the far side, I knew—
And the stranger would scarce surmise
And rarely venture—
The sun dances in golden tack-points
On the near, cool shallows of the sea.
The gray islands have gone down
Over the world's rim,
And the freight barges are companion buoys
Floating in pairs under thin smoke fans.
The ring of gold is at my feet, glistening!—
Washed clean by the white surf-reefs
Broken by the blue shadow of a gull.
A single tiger-lily
Flames in a whorl of beach-juniper.

Ivan Swift

AT NIGHT

Sometimes at night I hear the dark,
Wide and wind-shaken, calling me.
I should get up, and flying high
Above the tree-tops to the sea,
Scream till the waves scream back at me.

Marian Thanhouser

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SPINNERS

SHE LONGS FOR THE COUNTRY

It is the May-time now,
And in a place I know
Some girl God will allow
To see the cowslips blow;

And the hyacinths, the fern
That grow by the riversides;
Narcissi, white and stern
Like sad unwilling brides.

Some other girl will run
And, dancing through the grass,
Will laugh in the wholesome sun,
And feel the sweet hours pass.

Laugh and be merry—oh,
Laugh! Laugh, and play for me!
Go where the sweet flowers grow,
And see what I cannot see!

THE SPINNERS AT WILLOWSLEIGH

The young girl passes by

The old women sit at Willowsleigh. They spin,
And shriek and sing above the humming din.

Marya Zaturensky

They are so very old and brown and wise,
One is afraid to look them in the eyes.

Their bony fingers make a chilly sound,
Like dead bones shaking six feet underground!

Their toothless singing mocks—they seem to say:
“What I was yesterday you are today;

Stars kissed my eyes, the sunlight loved my brow—
You’ll be tomorrow what I am now.”

They dream and talk—they are so old and lean;
And the whole world is young and fresh and green.

Once they were flowers, and flame, and living bread;
Now they are old and strange, and almost dead!

The old women spin at Willowsleigh; they fool
And scold, and sleep. Once they were beautiful.

SONG OF A FACTORY GIRL

It’s hard to breathe in a tenement hall
So I ran to the little park,
As a lover runs from a crowded ball
To the moonlit dark.

I drank in clear air as one will
Who is doomed to die,

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Wistfully watching from a hill
The unmarred sky.

And the great trees bowed in their gold and red
Till my heart caught flame;
And my soul, that I thought was crushed or dead,
Uttered a name.

I hadn't called the name of God
For a long time;
But it stirred in me as the seed in sod,
Or a broken rhyme.

A SONG FOR VANISHED BEAUTY

The house is desolate and bare—
So long ago young Honora left
Her quiet chair!

Through the rose-bordered gardens, reft
Of all her pretty, tender care—
The silent hall, the lonely stair—

No one can see her anywhere.
Here is her shawl, her fan, her book—
She is not there.

No one remembers her bright hair,
Or how she looked, or when Death came.
Few can recall her name.

Where shall we turn to hope or look
For beauty vanished like an air?—
In what forgotten tomb or nook?

AN OLD TALE

What shall we say of her,
Who went the path we knew of? She is dead—
What shall we say of her?

Men who are very old
Still speak of her. They say
That she was far too beautiful; they say
Her beauty wrought her ruin. But they
Are very old.

The old wives break their threads, they shake their
heads.

They shake their heads when men will speak of her;
They say she was too beautiful.

I must not think of her, I must
Not speak of her! My mother says
One should not think of her.

She went the path we knew of; she is dead.
They say few knew her truly while she lived,
Though men will speak of her.

It really does not matter she is dead.
One need not think of her, although one night

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Folks heard her weeping yet beside a pool
One moonlit springtime I could swear she sang!
But she is dead—one must not think of her.

MEMORIES

Lower New York City at noon hour

There is a noise, and then the crowded herd
Of noon-time workers flows into the street.
My soul, bewildered and without retreat,
Closes its wings and shrinks, a frightened bird.

Oh, I have known a peace, once I have known
The joy that could have touched a heart of stone—
The heart of holy Russia beating still,
Over a snow-cold steppe and on a hill:
One day in Kiev I heard a great church-bell
Crying a strange farewell.

And once in a great field, the reapers sowing
Barley and wheat, I saw a great light growing
Over the weary bowed heads of the reapers;
As growing sweeter, stranger, ever deeper,
From the long waters sorrowfully strong,
Came the last echoes of the River Song!

Here in this alien crowd I walk apart
Clasping remembered beauty to my heart!

Marya Zaturensky

CHARLES THE TWELFTH OF SWEDEN
RIDES IN THE UKRAINE

*Kings in old legends seem
Like mountains rising in the evening light.
They blind all with their gleam,
Their loins encircled are by girdles bright,
Their robes are edged with bands
Of precious stones, the rarest earth affords.
With richly jeweled hands
They hold their slender, shining, naked swords.*

A young king from the North did fare,
Defeated in the Ukraine.
He hated springtime and women's hair
And the sound of the harps' refrain.
Upon a steel grey horse he rode,
And like steel was his grey eyes' glance;
Never for woman had they glowed,
And to none had he lowered his lance.
Never a woman his colors claimed,
And none to kiss him would dare;
For at times, when his quick wrath flamed,
A moon of pearls he would tear
From a coil of wondrous hair.
When seized by melancholy mood
He wreaked his will of a maid as he would,
And the bridegroom, whose ring she wore, pursued

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Through the glade and across the heath
With a hundred hounds for many a rood,
Till he hunted him to his death.

He left his grey land dim and far,
Whose voice to him never spake;
And rode out under the thrall of war
And fought for danger's sake.
Now he seemed under a spell to ride,
Dreamily slipping his steel-gloved hand
Over his armor from band to band;
But found no sword at his side.
And then a miracle occurred—
A glorious vision of battle stirred
And fired his kindling pride.
He sat on his horse and glanced around—
No movement escaped him and no sound.
Steel unto steel in silver spoke,
Voices were now in everything;
Like many bells they seemed to ring
As the soul of each thing awoke.
The wind, too, stealthily onward crept
And suddenly into the flags it sprang—
Lean like a panther breathless leapt;
Reeling as blasts from the trumpets rang,
It wrestled and laughed and sang.
Then again it would softly hum,
As by some bleeding boy it would dart,

Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Jessie Lemont

Beating a rally upon his drum,
Carried with uplifted head
Into the grave, borne like his heart
Before his battalions dead.
Many a mountain upward reared,
As though the earth not yet old had grown
But in the making still appeared.
And now the iron stood still as stone,
And then like a forest at evening swayed,
And ever the rising shape still neared
The army's mightily moving shade.
The dust rose up like vapors veiled;
Darkness, not of time, enveloped all,
And everything grew grey and paled,
And smoke rose up and fell like a pall;
Again flame broadened and grew bright,
And all was festively in light.
They attacked: the exotic colors reeled,
On swarms of fantastic provinces rode;
All iron with laughter suddenly pealed;
From a prince in luminous silver flowed
The gleam of the evening battle-field.
Like fluttering joys flags seemed to thrill,
Each gesture now showed the desire
To regally waste, to wantonly spill—
The flames leapt on far buildings, till
The stars themselves caught fire.

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Night came. And the battle's surging range
Receded like a tired sea
That brought with it many dead and strange;
And all the dead lay there heavily.
The grey horse cautiously picked its way
Past great fists starkly warning it back;
In a foreign land the dead men lay
Where it stepped over grass that was matted and black.
And he who upon the grey horse sat,
Looked down on the colors moist and frayed,
Saw silver like shivered glass ground flat,
Saw iron wither, and helmets drink,
And swords stand stiff in the armor's chink;
Saw dying hands waving tattered brocade . . .
And saw them not.

After the tumult of battle he rode
Onward as though in a trance, alone;
And as with passion his warm cheeks glowed,
Like those of a lover his grey eyes shone.

*Translated from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke
by Fessie Lemont*

COMMENT

DANTE—AND TODAY

ON the fourteenth of this month Dante Alighieri will have been dead six hundred years. Therefore the whole world is thinking of him, and his spirit seems to be questioning the changes of six centuries, challenging modern civilization. Aristocrat and monarchist that he was, he was of too immense stature not to have deeply humane sympathies; his work was not for the elect—in his day the classically educated, but for the people of his time and tongue; and thus for the people of all times and tongues. Indeed, it is symbolically significant that the three greatest men in Italian literature—Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio—wrote in the dawn of that literature, in what was called *il volgare*, the language spoken by the *volgo*, the people. Although this does not make of Dante a person of democratic tendencies, still it points out again that all great things have their foundations in the *volgo*, as all buildings in the earth.

Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio: they embody the three traditions. Boccaccio was the artist who works to entertain and amuse his public. Among the thousands who follow this tradition are the buffoons, as Papini calls them, the souls sold to the public which the public buys with large sums. Petrarca is the delicate artist for whom only the inner world exists, in whose trail a thousand outcasts, egocentrics, morphinomaniacs, came; for whom

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delicacy is not a luxury, as it is for the strong, but rather an incurable idiosyncrasy. Dante embodies the greatest tradition—that of those who through literature judge men and the times; besides being representative of that sturdy healthy beauty which has a greater claim on longevity.

Dante gathered, into what is perhaps the most powerful work of all literatures, all the history and philosophy, and part of the science of his time. He classified men and judged them; but his judgment is, like the history contained in the *Commedia*, essentially and terrifically mediaeval. A fierce god is this "merciful god" who gets a vengeance a thousandfold more terrible than the crime, than any crime. And a fierce little man it was who went wandering into hell, cursing each and all of the Italian cities, and several of the foreign ones, and their unfortunate inhabitants, for some slight reason or other. Today his ethics are dead: they are at best the skeleton around which the beautiful immortal flesh of Dante's words was cast. Dante's words—only an Italian, and a good Italian, may know the magical beauty of them! The poignant dramatic beauty of his *Conte Ugolino*, and the sweetness of his *Francesca*, and the marvelous images scattered throughout his work like pearls and diamonds over a gorgeous gown!

But, as I say, his ethics, like the history in his work, are past and dead. We know now that hell is not necessary—there is nothing so horrible that it may not be

found, at one time or another, upon the face of our earth. We have developed a philosophy which is more apt to give life all the credit due to life. We are waiting for the poet who will give us a *Divina Commedia* of our own times, but it is something entirely different from Dante's that we expect. A hell more terrific than the hell of Dante is the hell of modern warfare—an immense, eyeless, stupid machine that batters, mangles, crushes, distorts, tortures, crazes men. And, as if this were not terrible enough, men are studying how to contrive more terrible means to kill; and the next war, it is said, will be mostly a war of gas and germs! Henri Barbusse and Andreas Latzko gave us some horrible glimpses of the War. But they left still a great area unmeasured, an area perhaps immeasurable, perhaps impenetrable.

The world has become overcrowded: human beings are lost in it and nobody knows. This twentieth-century world erects horrible structures that look like skeletons—skeletons of a thing already dead, living now in hell. The mechanical cities loom like the menace of the future over our rivers: over and under them the continual uproar of locomotives, soul-rending, passes. Railways hold the earth in a terrible embrace. And the makers of these are business men who do not see, and workers whom a whirlwind sweeps into this modern tremendous factory, and leaves there like fledglings caught in the blast of an immense furnace. Out of this factory the human soul comes crushed—out of this factory of neurosis, the modern world. Ma-

chines and neurosis, out of this factory! The last trees are pushed farther and farther away by the oncoming cities. And there isn't a breeze but brings to them the feverish breath of the cities. Paradise might be the peace and the happiness that man has in spite of the world he himself builds.

This is Dante's challenge to a poet of today. Who will tune down this noise, arrange this turmoil, find one voice in this chaos of voices? His task will be a hundred times more arduous than Dante's. Dante's conception of his narrow world was centered around two main hypotheses—that of the absolute monarchy and that of the Roman Catholic power, the Pope. A modern poet would require, besides Dante's great genius, the energy to gather together in his thought a world which facility of transportation, and science in general, have made enormous.

The question as to whether a poet should be concerned in this great outer world, as opposed to the petty inner world of daily moods, cares, worries and affection, is a ridiculous question. And ridiculous is the thesis of the esthetic critic when he proposes that the individual who accomplishes the feat of expressing himself ably has thereby attained art: implying that a mole's observation of life is as valid as that of a soaring eagle who sees the world from above the horizons.

But there are still eagles: Walt Whitman, the multitudinous man, for whom the world was a purgatory of striving joy and self-redeeming pain—he enumerated, at

least, the modern world. And Verhaeren, with his *Villes Tentaculaires*, put down some of the horror of it. But it is either an *Inferno* only, or a *Purgatorio* or a *Paradiso* only, that the poets of the six centuries since Dante have accomplished. No one has attained Dante's completeness.

Emanuel Carnevali

JOHN ADAMS' PROPHECY

Not long ago *The Freeman* reminded us of a penetrating remark of old John Adams, first grand chief of the Adams clan and second president of the United States. Nay, not old; for he was only forty-five, and still seventeen years from the seat of Washington, when he wrote to his wife in 1780:

I must study politics and war, that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation and commerce and agriculture; in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.

In 1780 America was quite innocent of art; or rather, such art as it had—colonial architecture, a few imported paintings, plays, poems—it took quite innocently, with abstemious discretion. And Adams, if not himself a thorough Puritan, was only four generations from that Henry Adams who, according to his tombstone in Quincy, “took his flight from the Dragon Persecution in Devonshire, England, and landed with eight sons near Wolleston.” And the Puritan hostility to art and all its works—

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was it not attested by the closing of theaters, the destruction of old churches, the sale of Charles I's collection to Spain, and other temporarily convincing devices to crush out the universal human instinct for creating beauty?

Therefore it is surprising to find this eighteenth-century wise man bequeathing the arts as a glorious heritage to his grandsons yet unborn, and feeling his own hard labors in the founding of a nation to be a mere preliminary to that end. Probably he never asked the much reiterated modern question, "What is art?"—never debated whether it was an iridescent rust of the mind, the beginning of disintegration; or a white-heat of creative energy, the fulmination of spiritual planets and moons, new dwellings for the soul of man.

The nation John Adams helped to found has passed on to the third or fourth generation beyond him without yet getting its machinery into such perfect running order as to free its citizens for the active and creative life of the spirit. There is plenty of machinery, but it proves cumbersome, it clogs. For few descendants of those nation-makers are capable of freedom; they are bound—hand, foot and spirit—to the machine; and their unconscious effort is to bind in the same fashion those who could and would be free, and thereby to conceal the evidence of their own slavery.

Probably each age has its due proportion of artists, actual or potential—that is, its due proportion of creatively imaginative minds. Even John Adams' time, though

barren in artistic product, was probably no more barren than any other in artistic impulse. Certain square-minded historians and critics are always talking of "great artistic periods" as if the artists who illuminate them were necessarily born in clusters; as if, between these clusters, nature must hold her breath in barrenness. There *are* great artistic periods, of course; but they arrive when the creative impulse in the few meets a sympathetic impulse in the many, when all things conspire to bring the artists together into emulative clusters, and make them freely expressive and productive. The great artistic periods come when the creatively imaginative mind finds all conditions urging him, compelling him indeed, to produce temples, songs, tales, murals, carvings of men and gods, rather than "politics and war", or even "mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history" and the rest.

The artist can not be born to order, nor ordered after he is born. Yet it is paradoxically true that only by the will of the people, his contemporaries and neighbors, can he come into his own.

When will the sons of John Adams will it?

H. M.

REVIEWS

GERARD HOPKINS

Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins (now first published)

Edited, with notes, by Robert Bridges, Poet Laureate
Humphrey Milford, London.

When the author's preface and the editor's notes are eliminated, we have here but a small volume of some eighty-five pages of poetry, and of these only a scant sixty-three consist of complete poems, the rest being fragments assembled from manuscripts in the Poet Laureate's possession. The majority of them date from the years 1876 to 1889; only three earlier poems are included. Hopkins is long in coming into his own; but it is not too much to say that his own will be secure, among the few that know, if not among the crowd, when many a Georgian name that completely overshadows him for the moment shall have become food for the curious.

For Hopkins' poetry is of the most precious. His voice is easily one of the half dozen most individual voices in the whole course of English nineteenth-century poetry. One may be repelled by his mannerisms, but he cannot be denied that overwhelming authenticity, that almost terrible immediacy of utterance, that distinguishes the genius from the man of talent. I would compare him to D. H. Lawrence but for his far greater sensitiveness to the music of words, to the rhythms and ever-changing speeds of syllables. In a note published in *POETRY* in 1914,

Joyce Kilmer speaks of his mysticism and of his gloriously original imagery. This mysticism of the Jesuit poet is not a poetic manner, it is the very breath of his soul. Hopkins simply could not help comparing the Holy Virgin to the air we breathe; he was magnificently in earnest about the Holy Ghost that

over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

As for imagery, there is hardly a line in these eighty-odd pages that does not glow with some strange new flower, divinely picked from his imagination.

Undeniably this poet is difficult. He strives for no innocuous Victorian smoothness. I have referred to his mannerisms, which are numerous and not always readily assimilable. They have an obsessive, turbulent quality about them—these repeated and trebly repeated words, the poignantly or rapturously interrupting *oh's* and *ah's*, the headlong omission of articles and relatives, the sometimes violent word order, the strange yet how often so lovely compounds, the plays on words, and, most of all, his wild joy in the sheer sound of words. This phonetic passion of Hopkins rushes him into a perfect maze of rhymes, half-rhymes, assonances, alliterations:

Tatter-tassel-tangled and dingle-a-dangled
Dandy-hung dainty head.

These clangs are not like the nicely calculated jingling lovelinesses of Poe or Swinburne. They, no less than the impatient ruggednesses of his diction, are the foam-

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flakes and eddies of a passionate, swift-streaming expression. To a certain extent Hopkins undoubtedly loved difficulty, even obscurity, for its own sake. He may have found in it a symbolic reflection of the tumult that raged in his soul. Yet we must beware of exaggerating the external difficulties; they yield with unexpected ease to the modicum of good will that Hopkins has a right to expect of us.

Hopkins' prosody, concerning which he has something to say in his preface, is worthy of careful study. In his most distinctive pieces he abandons the "running" verse of traditional English poetry and substitutes for it his own "sprung" rhythms. This new verse of his is not based on the smooth flow of regularly recurring stresses. The stresses are carefully grouped into line and stanza patterns, but the movement of the verse is wholly free. The iambic or trochaic foot yields at any moment to a spondee or a dactyl or a foot of one stressed and three or more unstressed syllables. There is, however, no blind groping in this irregular movement. It is nicely adjusted to the constantly shifting speed of the verse. Hopkins' effects, with a few exceptions, are in the highest degree successful. Read with the ear, never with the eye, his verse flows with an entirely new vigor and lightness, while the stanzaic form gives it a powerful compactness and drive. It is doubtful if the freest verse of our day is more sensitive in its rhythmic pulsations than the "sprung" verse of Hopkins. How unexpectedly he has

enlarged the possibilities of the sonnet, his favorite form, will be obvious from the two examples that I am going to quote. Meanwhile, here are two specimens of his more smoothly flowing verse. The first is from *The Leaden Echo*, a maiden's song:

How to keep—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known
 some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key
 to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . . from vanishing away?
Oh is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles deep,
Down? no waving-off of these most mournful messengers, still messen-
 gers, sad and stealing messengers of grey?
No there's none, there's none—oh no, there's none!
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair—
Do what you may do, what, do what you may,
And wisdom is early to despair:
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done
To keep at bay
Age and age's evils—hoar hair,
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding sheets, tombs
 and worms and tumbling to decay;
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.
Oh there's none—no no no, there's none:
Be beginning to despair, to despair,
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

This is as free as it can be with its irregular line-lengths and its extreme changes of tempo, yet at no point is there hesitation as the curve of the poem rounds out to definite form. For long-breathed, impetuous rhythms, wind-like and sea-like, such verse as this of Hopkins' has nothing to learn from the best of Carl Sandburg. My second quotation is from *The Wood-lark*, a precious fragment:

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Teevo cheevo cheevio chee:

Oh where, where can that be?

Weedio-weedio: there again!

So tiny a trickle of song-strain;

And all round not to be found

For brier, bough, furrow, or green ground

Before or behind or far or at hand

Either left, either right,

Anywhere in the sunlight.

Well, after all! Ah, but hark—

“I am the little wood-lark.”

This is sheer music. The stresses fall into place with an altogether lovely freshness.

Yet neither mannerisms of diction and style nor prosody define the essential Hopkins. The real Hopkins is a passionate soul unendingly in conflict. The consuming mysticism, the intense religious faith are unreconciled with a basic sensuality that leaves the poet no peace. He is longing to give up the loveliness of the world for that greater loveliness of the spirit that all but descends to envelop him like a mother; but he is too poignantly aware of all sensuous beauty, too insistently haunted by the allurements of the flesh. A Freudian psychologist might call him an imperfectly sex-sublimated mystic. Girlish tenderness is masked by ruggedness. And his fuming self-torment is exteriorized by a diction that strains, and by a rhythmic flow that leaps or runs or stamps but never walks.

Here is *The Starlight Night*, one of his most characteristic sonnets—white-heat mysticism forged out of what pathos of sense-ecstasy!

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
Oh look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-heat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!—
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; within doors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

“Ah well! it is all a purchase.” You cannot have it
for the asking.

And, finally, this other sonnet, addressed to his own
restless soul, “with this tormented mind tormenting yet:”

My own heart let me have more pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.
I cast for comfort I can no more get
By groping round my comfortless, than blind
Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

Soul, self; come, poor Jackself, I do advise
You, jaded, let be; call off thoughts awhile
Elsewhere; leave comfort root-room; let joy size
At God knows when to God knows what; whose smile
's not wrung, see you; unforeseen times rather—as skies
Betweenpie mountains—lights a lovely mile.

But how many “lovely miles” could there have been

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on the long, rocky road traversed by this unhappy spirit?

In face of this agonising poem one can only marvel at the Poet Laureate's imperturbable exegesis of the word "betweenpie":—"This word might have delighted William Barnes if the verb 'to pie' existed. It seems not to exist, and to be forbidden by homophonic absurdities." From our best friends deliver us, O Lord!

Edward Sapir

UNITY MADE VITAL

New Poems, by D. H. Lawrence. B. W. Huebsch.

The unimaginative person divides life, art, science, anything he is dealing with. He analyzes it, classifies it, puts it into compartments. The poet, on the other hand, is not interested in divisions so much as in unity, because unity is the aspect under which life presents itself naturally to any unbound creative spirit.

Probably there is no living poet whose perception of the unity of all things is keener and more profound than D. H. Lawrence. He goes further than Wordsworth and the romantic school. He goes further than the symbolists. His books give not only new pleasure, but, more than this, new light to the understanding.

Saturated with Pauline theology—as all of us who have studied English literature at all are bound to be—we are prone to draw distinctions between body and spirit, or even between mind and spirit, and to set one up as above the others. The lesser poet may as well accept the

distinctions: an artist like Mr. Lawrence abandons these. He sees all experiences fused into the indissoluble whole which is life.

Nay, I persist, and very faith shall keep
You integral to me. Each door, each mystic port
Of egress from you I will seal and steep
In perfect chrim.

So you shall feel
Ensheathed invulnerable with me, with seven
Great seals upon your outgoing, and woven
Chain of my mystic will wrapped perfectly
Upon you, wrapped in indomitable me.

The utter unity of art is brilliantly revealed in such a poem as *Flapper*, which cannot fail to suggest architectural method in its structure, and in its keeping of all ornament in inherent harmony with the line of structure.

Love has crept out of her sealed heart
As a field-bee, black and amber,
Breaks from the winter-cell, to clamber
Up the warm grass where the sunbeams start.

Mischief has come in her dawning eyes,
And a glint of colored iris brings,
Such as lies along the folded wings
Of the bee before he flies.

Who, with a ruffling, careful breath
Has opened the wings of the wild young sprite?
Has fluttered her spirit to stumbling flight
In her eyes, as a young bee stumbleth?

Love makes the burden of her voice.
The hum of his heavy, staggering wings
Sets quivering with wisdom the common things
That she says, and her words rejoice.

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The ten-page preface to Mr. Lawrence's present volume is another witness to unity—a unity perhaps more far-reaching, more comprehensive, more marvelous, than has been suggested by the previous examples. In this preface the author points out that there are two types of poetry, that it is either "the voice of the far future, exquisite and ethereal, or the voice of the past, rich, magnificent". Both types possess an "exquisite finality, perfection which belongs to all that is far off".

The poet then turns to "the unrestful, ungraspable poetry of the sheer present, poetry whose very permanency lies in its wind-like transit". As the best example of this, he points to Whitman. Free verse, he says, is the norm of this "seething poetry of the incarnate Now", which is "supreme, beyond even the everlasting gems of the before and after".

In his discussion Mr. Lawrence uses with great effectiveness biologic and physical examples. Science and art may be popularly regarded as enemies. Mr. Lawrence does not attack science, he puts science into his pocket and walks off with it—a distinct achievement in the direction of unity.

So much has been written about Lawrence, intelligent readers know his work so well, that detailed discussion of his poems seems hardly in place. His *New Poems* has much the same qualities as his earlier volumes of poems. There is the same passion-filled, deep-running ardor, the same exactness of phrasing, the same fulness of conno-

tation, the same subtle rhythms. Places are much more extensively used as subject matter than in his previous books. The volume has not the emotional completeness of *Look! We Have Come Through*, but that is due to the plan of organic development followed in that work.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

YOUTH AND THE DESERT

The Bitterns, by Glenway Wescott. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.

The Immobile Wind, by Yvor Winters. Monroe Wheeler.

These brief first books of two friends may naturally be reviewed together, since they are the product of sympathetic, though quite different, minds and temperaments working in the same tradition—the ultra-modern tradition of Ezra Pound, H. D., perhaps Carlos Williams and one or two others, and above all Wallace Stevens. The two young poets are both seekers of austere beauty in her remote cool haunts; and their Pegasus is reined in by a taut technique, which gives him order and direction but possibly too little freedom of movement.

Youth is so prone to prolixities and sentimentalities that the opposite excess is something of a relief—at any rate it may prove good discipline for young poets keenly strung and not less sensitive because they abhor facility. The temptations inherent in this compression are obvious—self-consciousness and what one might call a mannerism of tightness. In both these books one feels this strain

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—one wishes that each poet would be less reluctant to speak out, to let himself go, to reveal his meaning with a less mystical air.

Mr. Winters' poem, *The Priesthood*, suggests the kind of austere beauty both these poets are aiming at:

We stand apart
That men may see
The lines about our eyes.

We perish, we
Who die in art,
With that surprise

Of one who speaks
To us and knows
Wherein he lies.

And Mr. Wescott, veiling a similar theme, says in his initial poem, *After-image*:

Oh I have never sought
This image of remembered fear
Which clings to the eye of thought.

I have desired rather to create
A balance of beauty as direct
As the hills above the cruel farms,
Or the two eyes of a fawn—

In ecstasy to separate
Wheat of memory from rust.
But trees by night lift heavy arms,
Or a hawk screams at dawn:

And my sight turns gray as dust.

Residence of a year or two in New Mexico has confirmed this austerity by adding its own stark discipline

of deserts, mountain spaces, and the art of primitive races. These poets may be cryptic, secretive; but they can not rival the desert in either of these qualities, nor yet in a certain harshness streaked with color. Mr. Winters' book has the feel of the desert in its title, *The Immobile Wind*, which no one who has been in those still spaces can question as paradoxical. This poet has experienced their gift of solitude; he is

I, one who never speaks.

Again:

On the desert, between pale mountains, our cries—
Far whispers creeping through an ancient shell.

Indeed, the whole book is a voice from the desert, the expression of a spirit in intimate communion with it—a spirit proud and separate, who can say:

I paved a sky
With days.
I crept beyond the Lie.

The reader may be left to his own interpretation of the more cryptic poems, including the *Two Dramatic Interludes for Puppets*. But even one who lives "in the greatest of our valleys" can hardly fail to get from this one, with its beautiful last line, a hint of desert grandeur and silence:

Death goes before me on his hands and knees,
And we go down among the bending trees.
Weeping I go, and no man gives me ease—
I am that strange thing that each strange eye sees.

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Eyes of the silence, and all life an eye,
Turn in the wind, and always I walk by.
Too still I go, and all things go from me—
As down far autumn beaches a man runs to the sea.
My hands are cold, my lips are thin and dumb.
Stillness is like the beating of a drum.

Mr. Wescott's experience of the desert is less intimate and static. He has followed the trail—for him the desert moves:

The sun slides down:
I have not healed
My lame leprous day;
I am not swift enough to walk
From May to May.

Desert flows beneath my feet,
Drips out of the sky.
But I lie down beside content,
For victory is imminent.
Night opens her deep eye.

Indeed, the desert does not pervade this brochure of twelve poems. There is a hint of softer places and more personal emotions. Mostly however, it expresses youth's loneliness—perhaps the following poem is typical, in both mood and movement:

These are the subtle rhythms, rhythms of sloth:
Mountains which fall in the green swirls
Of twilight as petals, fallen and languid,
Bud in the dawn, and fall again
In the green swirls of twilight, a little
Nearer the stars and the flickering final fires.
These are the rhythms of sloth:
Mountains, my feet on the trails.

Enough has been quoted from these two poets to show with what studious insistence they work out their closely packed thoughts in rhythms of original and delicate beauty. If the effect is sometimes too tight, too squeezed, this may be the ardor of youth, which will yield its over-emphasis to time. Meantime these poets have struck out, each one, a new and personal tune. As Mr. Wescott sings,

I, in my pitiful flesh
Transfigured, have woven
Music of wilderness.

H. M.

TWO ENGLISH POETS

The Waggoner, by Edmund Blunden. Alfred A. Knopf.
The Kaleidoscope, by Sherard Vines. C. W. Daniel, Ltd.,
London.

If these two English poets were dancing, I am sure one would do the foxtrot and the other the waltz. And I do not imply any lack of deference in using this analogy of another art.

Mr. Sherard Vines, the foxtrotter, would be playfully pagan with shoulders and feet; and Mr. Edmund Blunden, the waltzer, would glide smoothly and turn slowly: both with propriety. And just as the waltz is a more finished dance than the foxtrot, so Mr. Blunden's poetry is more polished than that of Mr. Vines.

I would recommend *The Waggoner* to all those who prefer the 1, 2, 3,—1, 2, 3 order of things. The poems are suave, smooth, and have music. They are very pleas-

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ing to the senses, and leave the emotions unruffled. They are filled with soft alliterations, and the simple panaceas of "wood-fairies" and "trysts" and "liliated lakes", as well as more original ones:

The wild-rose bush lets loll
Her sweet-breathed petals on the pearl-smooth pool—
The bream-pool overshadowed with the cool
Of oaks where myriad mumbling wings patrol.

Frequently there are lines of arresting beauty:

The feather-footed moments tiptoe past.
Some bell-like evening when the may's in bloom.

And always Mr. Blunden is a sincere follower of the old English pastoral tradition. He has the same genuine appreciation and authentic knowledge of nature which inspired Wordsworth, George Crabbe, John Clare, and the eighteenth-century poets of rural life. *Sheepbells* is characteristic:

Moon-sweet the summer evening steals
Upon the babbling day:
Mournfully, most mournfully
Light dies away.

There the yew, the solitary,
Vaults a deeper melancholy,
As from distant dells
Chance music wells
From the browsing-bells.

Thus they dingle, thus they chime,
While the woodlark's dimpling rings
In the dim air climb;
In the dim and dewy loneliness,
Where the woodlark sings.

Some of the poems are as coolly refreshing as their titles—*The Silver Bird of Herndyke Mill*, *A Waterpiece*, *Perch-fishing*, etc.—and all of them have a quiet charm. They tell of nature in her most gentle moods.

The range of Mr. Blunden's poetry is limited, but it is highly perfected.

Mr. Vines, on the other hand, springs fearlessly from one subject to another—starting with *Sunrise*, and going with breathless versatility to *The Gospel of Chimneys*, to *A Ballad of Judas*, to *Low Tide*, to *The Dying Bolsh*, and so on, concluding with *Anastasis*. He uses the direct appeal of human emotions, and hurls his observations on love, hatred, and despair with a brutal frankness:

The cold! The ghastly cold,
All colorless! The only color is
My blood, like red wax from a guttering candle—
(You know these red candles ladies use
In piano brackets).

Bitter wind,
A draught blowing so shrilly through my wound,
Blowing the life out, blowing the life out.

There are no sensuous cadences here, as in Mr. Blunden's poems; there is no beauty of wording: the effect is gained through a harsh simplicity, and the subject matter is always more unusual than the manner of expression. The poems are—to use the simile again—like the foxtrot, the modern dance: the dance that is primitive, virile, whimsical—pagan. The veneer of rhythm is strangely a part of, and at the same time incongruous to, the un-

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conventional audacity of the ideas, like the harmony of discords in modern music.

Perhaps *Little Mother of Sorrows* is as good an example as any one poem may be:

Little mother of sorrows,
What is her desire?
"Pence, to buy a drop of milk,
And a few coals for a fire.
"My baby gets no milk from me—
He's crying out for food.
I don't know who his daddy is,
But one that was no good.
"Yes, sir, I used to walk the streets
Before I got so ill;
And now I sell spring flowers or beg,
Since there's two mouths to fill."
Little mother of sorrows,
With holes in your thin shoes,
And little son of sorrows,
With bare pink toes,
No one in the whole town
Cares for you at all;
So go into the workhouse,
Or drown in the canal,

The two poets, like the two dances, have found a dissimilar, yet each a merited recognition.

Marion Strobel

CORRESPONDENCE

CONCERNING AWARDS

My Dear Miss Monroe: Your comment on *The Dial's* generous offer of prizes, and your suggestion, repeatedly made, that poetry should be seriously recognized as a serious art in our country and encouraged and rewarded, as such, are interesting.

Let me first, however, correct your statement about the recently won prizes offered for students in the Chicago Art Institute school. The prizes are larger than you stated. The French Memorial Prize is, I think, about \$1,200, and the Bryan Lathrop Memorial Prize represents \$800. They were not awarded to the two students, as you suggest, "for a couple of nice little academic bas-reliefs," but rather on the basis of these and all their school work during the past year plus their personal qualities; and the prizes are for definite study abroad. In these particular cases they were undoubtedly the culmination of three or four years of ardent work.

There is, so far as I know, no school for poetry excepting as your magazine, and perhaps to a less extent some others, afford an intelligent and discriminating outlet and opportunity to the young poets.

Could you devise and suggest some plan by which prizes would not be awarded for an individual poem, but based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need? An outline for such

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a prize might be worth publishing in POETRY on the chance of its attracting the generous sympathy of some well-to-do reader. In the meantime let me repeat that POETRY is itself the best school and reward, so far as I know, which exists at the present time for young poets.

Arthur T. Aldis

Note by the Editor: One of POETRY's annual prizes conforms to our correspondent's suggestion—that of \$100 “for a young poet,” awarded last year and twice previously. This is not given “for an individual poem,” but is “based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need.” But we submit that there is a vast difference between this annual hundred dollars (not yet secured for this year, by the way) and those two far richer memorial prizes permanently endowed for the benefit of the Chicago Art Institute art school.

If anyone feels inclined to endow such a memorial prize in perpetuity for the benefit of young poets, the editor will engage to satisfy him as to the terms of such an endowment. Some trust company of proved reliability should be made custodian of such a fund, and a committee of prominent poets should administer it. The editor will be very glad of suggestions as to the best way of appointing and perpetuating such a committee, in order to keep it freshly authoritative and uninstitutionalized.

Those who are interested—and poets especially should be loyally interested—are requested to give this subject careful thought, and to send in their suggestions before September fifteenth, so that we may resume the subject editorially in our annual Prize-award Number in November.

NOTES

Paul Fort has been crowned *Prince des Poetes* in Paris, and has recently published, through Eugene Fasquelle, his twenty-seventh volume of verse, *Au Pays des Moulins*. Yet, though perhaps the most popular and prolific of French poets, he was little known in this country, if one may judge by slightness of sales and library circulation, until Amy

Lowell introduced him in her *Six French Poets*, to which volume the reader is referred for an intelligent presentation of the man and his art. *The Miraculous Catch* is partly quoted by Miss Lowell, and admirably translated into prose. But as she does not attempt to reproduce M. Fort's rhyme-scheme, with its chiming repetitions of sound not unlike her own polyphonic prose, we present Mr. Newberry's version in the hope that our readers will be interested to compare the two translations of a poem so deliciously and whimsically French in its mood and style—its manner of achieving a modern picture of a mediaeval scene.

M. Fort's series of Louis Eleventh poems, of which we present two, have been incorporated recently in a play which is to be produced at the Odeon in October. This autumn Mr. John Strong Newberry will publish, through Duffield & Co., his book of translations, under the title *Selected Poems and Ballads of Paul Fort*.

M. Fort was born at Rheims in 1872, directly opposite the Cathedral—now "*la Cathedrale assassinee*," as he has called it since its destruction. For years he has lived in Paris. Miss Lowell speaks of his *joie de vivre*—"I know no one," she says, "except Sam Weller, who seems to me so bubblingly alive."

M. Fort's translator, Mr. John Strong Newberry, is a resident of Cleveland, Ohio.

Rainer Maria Rilke, the distinguished Viennese poet from whom we present a translation, was discussed by Padraic Colum in POETRY for June, 1919, in a review of a volume of the Lemont translations. "A mystic poet," Mr. Colum calls him, one "lonely amid the crowd."

Mrs. Jessie Lemont Transil, Rilke's very competent translator, is a resident of New York.

Of the American poets who appear this month for the first time:

Mr. Glenway Wescott, a native of Wisconsin and recently resident in Chicago and Santa Fe,^o is the author of *The Bitterns*, published by Monroe Wheeler and reviewed in this number.

Mr. John Crawford, a native of Arkansas and a resident of New York, has written for various papers—mostly prose criticisms.

Mr. Ivan Swift, a painter as well as a poet, is the founder of Chippewa Cove Woods, an artist colony near Harbor Springs, Mich., where he lives at least part of each year. He is the author of *The Blue Crane* (James T. White & Co.).

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Miss Marian Thanouser, formerly of Milwaukee, Wis., is now studying at the University of California in Berkeley.

The only poet of this month whom our readers have met before is Miss Marya Zaturensky—born in Moscow and resident in New York since she was brought to this country ten years ago. She has contributed verse to various magazines.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Selected Poems*, by William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Co.
The Living Frieze, by Mark Turbyfill. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.
Commemoration and Other Verses, by Thomas Dwight Goodell. Yale University Press.
Poems, by Marianne Moore. The Egoist Press, London.
A Song of Faith, by Katherine Milner Peirce. Stratford Co.
Second April, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

ANTHOLOGIES:

- Modern Czech Poetry*, Selected Texts with Translations and an Introduction by P. Selver. E. P. Dutton & Co.
A Queen's College Miscellany, 1921, selected and edited by Edmund Blunden and Alan Porter. Oxford, England.
A Hundred Voices and Other Poems from the Second Part of Life Immobile, by Kostas Palamas. Translated with an Introduction and notes by Aristides E. Phontrides. Harvard University Press.
An Anthology of New English Verse, edited by Makoto Sangu. Osaka, Suzuya, Japan.

PROSE:

- Paul Verlaine*, by Harold Nicholson. Houghton Mifflin Co.
The Hound of Heaven: An Interpretation, by Francis P. La Buffe, S. J. Macmillan Co.
The Story of a Poet: Madison Cawein, by Otto A. Rothert. (Filson Club Publication No. 30.) John P. Morton & Co., Louisville, Ky.

DRAMA:

- Body and Soul*, by Elizabeth H. Marsh. Cornhill Co.

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III

Doetry

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Others besides these guarantors who testify to their appreciation of the magazine by generous gifts are:

Mr. Edward L. Ryerson, Miss Amy Lowell, Mrs. Edgar Speyer and Mr. Edward C. Wentworth.

Three annual prizes will be awarded as usual next November for good work of the current year. To the donors of these prizes, as well as to the above list of guarantors, the editor wishes to express the appreciation of the staff and the poets:

To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the ninth time; to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the eighth time, a prize of one hundred dollars; and to the Friday Club of Chicago, which has donated fifty dollars for a prize to a young poet.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.

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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XIX

1

1

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Your June number renewed me wonderfully—an absolutely joyous thing! Go to it, hammer and tongs! Infuse a little beauty, joy, spirit, pain into the life of today. Did I say a little?—Oceans of them!—A *Canadian subscriber*

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No. I

POETRY for OCTOBER, 1921

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 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX

NO. I

OCTOBER 1921

SUR MA GUZZLA GRACILE

PALACE OF THE BABIES

THE disbeliever walked the moonlit place,
Outside of gates of hammered serafin,
Observing the moon-blotches on the walls.

The yellow rocked across the still façades,
Or else sat spinning on the pinnacles,
While he imagined humming sounds and sleep.

The walker in the moonlight walked alone,
And each black window of the building balked
His loneliness and what was in his mind:

[1]

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If in a shimmering room the babies came,
Drawn close by dreams of fledgling wing,
It was because night nursed them in its fold.

Night nursed not him in whose dark mind
The clambering wings of birds of black revolved,
Making harsh torment of the solitude.

The walker in the moonlight walked alone,
And in his heart his disbelief lay cold.
His broad-brimmed hat came close upon his eyes.

FROM THE MISERY OF DON JOOST

I have finished my combat with the sun;
And my body, the old animal,
Knows nothing more.

The powerful seasons bred and killed,
And were themselves the genii
Of their own ends.

Oh, but the very self of the storm
Of sun and slaves, breeding and death,
The old animal—

The senses and feeling, the very sound
And sight, and all there was of the storm—
Knows nothing more..

THE DOCTOR OF GENEVA

The doctor of Geneva stamped the sand
That lay impounding the Pacific swell,
Patted his stove-pipe hat and tugged his shawl.

Lacustrine man had never been assailed
By such long-rolling opulent cataracts,
Unless Racine or Bossuet held the like.

He did not quail. A man so used to plumb
The multifarious heavens felt no awe
Before these visible, voluble delugings,

Which yet found means to set his simmering mind
Spinning and hissing with oracular
Notations of the wild, the ruinous waste,

Until the steeples of his city clanked and sprang
In an unburgherly apocalypse.
The doctor used his handkerchief and sighed.

GUBBINAL

That strange flower, the sun,
Is just what you say.
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad.

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That tuft of jungle feathers,
That animal eye,
Is just what you say.

That savage of fire,
That seed—
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad.

THE SNOW MAN

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

TEA AT THE PALAZ OF HOON

Not less because in purple I descended
The western day through what you called
The loneliest air, not less was I myself.

What was the ointment sprinkled on my beard?
What were the hymns that buzzed beside my ears?
What was the sea whose tide swept through me there?

Out of my mind the golden ointment rained,
And my ears made the blowing hymns they heard.
I was myself the compass of that sea:

I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw
Or heard or felt came not but from myself;
And there I found myself more truly and more strange.

THE CUBAN DOCTOR

I went to Egypt to escape
The Indian, but the Indian struck
Out of his cloud and from his sky.

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This was no worm bred in the moon,
Wriggling far down the phantom air,
And on a comfortable sofa dreamed.

The Indian struck and disappeared.
I knew my enemy was near—I,
Drowsing in summer's sleepest horn.

ANOTHER WEeping WOMAN

Pour the unhappiness out
From your too bitter heart,
Which grieving will not sweeten.

Poison grows in this dark.
It is in the water of tears
Its black blooms rise.

The magnificent cause of being—
The imagination, the one reality
In this imagined world—

Leaves you
With him for whom no phantasy moves,
And you are pierced by a death.

OF THE MANNER OF ADDRESSING CLOUDS

Gloomy grammarians in golden gowns,
Meekly you keep the mortal rendezvous,
Eliciting the still sustaining pomps
Of speech which are like music so profound
They seem an exaltation without sound.
Funest philosophers and ponderers,
Their evocations are the speech of clouds.
So speech of your processions returns
In the casual evocations of your tread
Across the stale, mysterious seasons. These
Are the music of meet resignation; these
The responsive, still sustaining pomps for you
To magnify, if in that drifting waste
You are to be accompanied by more
Than mute bare splendors of the sun and moon.

OF HEAVEN CONSIDERED AS A TOMB

What word have you, interpreters, of men
Who in the tomb of heaven walk by night,
The darkened ghosts of our old comedy?
Do they believe they range the gusty cold,
With lanterns borne aloft to light the way,
Freemen of death, about and still about
To find whatever it is they seek? Or does

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That burial, pillared up each day as porte
And spiritous passage into nothingness,
Foretell each night the one abysmal night,
When the host shall no more wander, nor the light
Of the steadfast lanterns creep across the dark?
Make hùe among the dark comedians,
Halloo them in the topmost distances
For answer from their icy Elysée.

THE LOAD OF SUGAR-CANE

The going of the glade-boat
Is like water flowing;

Like water flowing
Through the green saw-grass,
Under the rainbows;

Under the rainbows
That are like birds,
Turning, bedizened,

While the wind still whistles
As kildeer do,

When they rise
At the red turban
Of the boatman.

Wallace Stevens

HIBISCUS ON THE SLEEPING SHORES

I say now, Fernandø, that on that day
The mind roamed as a moth roams,
Among the blooms beyond the open sand;

And that whatever noise the motion of the waves
Made on the sea-weeds and the covered stones
Disturbed not even the most idle ear.

Then it was that that monstered moth
Which had lain folded against the blue
And the colored purple of the lazy sea,

And which had drowsed along the bony shores,
Shut to the blather that the water made,
Rose up besprent and sought the flaming red

Dabbled with yellow pollen—red as red
As the flag above the old café—
And roamed there all the stupid afternoon.

Wallace Stevens

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FROM CITY LANES

*The dawn comes to me sweetly, as a soft new child
Leans with its soul to drain a bit of milk.*

And I am new.

O gray old city,

Lift your head a moment from the pots and streets—

Wash over me your meaning as a flask of fire

Tipped and spilled over at the altar's base.

There are new augurings that go in blue-gray smoke

Up from your shops,

New lips that rain a torrent in me as of words.

Be still a moment, city, while the dawn tells tales.

CITY WED

I lie by the bricks at night—

Do you think I am lying by you,

And this is your breast I lean against?

No. Bricks are my lord—

With them I shall procreate,

Until I wake some morning with my litter of stone.

Not that I want to lie with bricks,

O beloved of the white limbs and strong neck!

But how can I help it when they come tumbling—

These bricks that come fumbling

At my breast?

IF

If it were not for this dream upon me,
I should make my coin;
I should grind my way to fortune with the little wheels,
I should count the flying heels my slaves to bind,
I should count the eardrums and the fingers mine. . . .
But I keep thinking I can touch the sky
With my lips.

ELEVATOR MAN

You in your little cage and I in mine,
Elevator man,
We will pierce the wide world's heaven
Far as we can:
You to go up and down, beating up and down;
I to brush my wings off
On the walls of Merchant Town.

BEREFT

O my country,
I am crying to you piteously as a hungry bird,
I am crying to you for your beautiful ports
And harbors,
For the slow beauty of your Statue and its silent hope.
O my country, I would slink into the crevices of your
egoism,
And squat on the doormat of your excellences.

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But what shall I do when mad spring comes,
And blossoms come,
And wild sap comes—
But my lover comes not?

O my country, I might be a thin thread in your flag,
Or the little wind blowing your ships to sea;
But what shall I do when the spring comes in,
And flowers shoot up in me?

OLD MAN

Dawn sprang wildly to her lips,
And the little hard breasts burst as a waterfall over the
rocks.

I, the dark pine at the precipice edge,
Lunged and was still;
Then swiftly, as wild birds go to the kill,
Topped, and ran with her youth to the sea.

They said I was wanton and cruel
To have taken her youth at the height,
To have matched the great might
Of my years
With her slender beauty and tremulous fears.

I tell you, I lunged and was still;
Then swiftly, as wild birds go to the kill,

Loureine Aber

Topped, and ran with her youth to the sea. . . .
Pity *me!*

GIRL

Dreamily, girl—
Duskily, night,
Cover your dead.
Make a plot by the old stream's head,
Plant him and pray
Till worlds make way
And the blooms come.

Duskily, night—
Dreamily, girl.

DEATH

I am waiting for the white winds to come,
White with the long-whispering dust,
Withered under hoofs and feet,
White with the mountains that blow their sleep
Into the sea.
I am waiting for the white winds to come,
Lifting their hands as beautiful women clad for the moon;
And soon, ah soon,
Lifting my heart to be ashes and wind.

Loureine Aber

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POEMS

JOY

Joy, Joy, run over me
Like water over a shining stone;
And I beneath your sweet shall be
No longer hungry and alone.
The light at my heart's gate is lit—
My love, my love is tending it!

CEREMONY

The unpeopled conventional rose garden
Is where I shall take my heart
With this new pain.
Clipped hedge and winter-covered beds
Shall ease its hurt.
When it has grown quiet,
I shall mount the steps, slowly,
And put three sorrows in the terra-cotta urn
On that low gate-pillar,
And leave them there, to sleep,
Beneath the brooding stillness of a twisted pine.

FIRST COMER

Gold bee,
You cling too still and drowsily

Maurine Smith

In the frosty noon.
Think you
The dandelion is a sun
To warm your body through?

WIND

Gulls take veering way
Through the fresh day;
Crisp brown oak-leaves whirl and rise.
Though my heart flies,
I must go
Carefully and slow.

Eager is the wind, shy
As any butterfly—
I'll not blur life with my frosty breath,
Nor think again of death!

SWALLOWS BRUSH A POOL

Let there be end of talk of good and evil,
Thirst, hunger and the rest . . . Beauty has given
The white gift of a cherry petal
To brood upon.

Maurine Smith

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

THREE SMALL POEMS

TO GET WISDOM

I will spread out my mind
As the wind spreads the skies;
I will make my heart Argus,
Full of love's eyes:
So shall I grow
Abysmally wise.

MEEKNESS AND PRIDE

Meekness and Pride
Are fruits of one tree;
Eat of them both
For mastery:
Take one of Pride—
Of the other, three.

COURAGE

Courage is armor
A blind man wears,
The calloused scar
Of outlived despairs:
Courage is Fear
That has said its prayers.

Karle Wilson Baker

NOT IN THE WHIRLWIND

Do I speak soft and little—
Do I offer you a drop of honey in a bent brown leaf?
Yet I too have been rent by the whirlwind:
I have lain trembling under its bellowings;
I have endured its fangs;
I have heard it hiss and groan, "Bitterness, bitterness!"
But all I have left,
After its searchings and its rendings,
May be told in a soft voice
And is sweet—
Sweet,
Like a drop of thick honey in a bent brown leaf.

Karle Wilson Baker

KEEP MY HAND

Keep my hand, because I am afraid
 To be alone—
I am afraid of all the dreams I made.
 If you were shown
Dream after little dream that I made gay
To keep my spirit strong upon the way,
You would hold my hand closer than you do
 Within your own!

Louise Driscoll

UNDER THE CLIFF

SHADOW CANYON

The earth has carved a hollow cup,
In which, most delicately set,
Tall redwood boughs are lifted up,
To form a sky-enlacing net.

There, on the ground made green with fern,
The sunshine lies in pools of light;
And iris holds a fragile urn,
With morning's gems of dew bedight.

There is no sound but water going,
And sunlight thrilling through the air.
There is no breath but breezes blowing,
And wild quail rustling to their lair.

Here is a deep and drowsing haven,
That woven sun-rays pierce and cross;
And on the peaceful trees are graven
The little footprints of the moss.

Sweet dreaming canyon, shadow-bound
Yet sunshine-stippled all the day,
The calm skies circle you around,
But you lie deeper hushed than they!

THEMES

“I remember” and “I wish”—
Of such stuff are poems fashioned;
Poems lyric with regret,
Vibrant poems, dream-impassioned.

In your honor and your praise
I would strike a richer chord,
Sing: “I have you and am yours,
O adorer and adored!”

WILL IT BE LIKE THIS?

Will it be like this?—
Climbing the hill at midnight,
While the rain seeps from the plumaged pepper-trees,
And the damp air is rank with eucalyptus;
And our little house black and untenanted,
Soundless, where your hurrying footsteps
Used to run to the door to greet me;
Black, and cold, and I alone there?
Will that be the way of it,
On that silent day when I shall begin waiting
For Death to release me to you?

Miriam Allen deFord

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SIC PASSIM

The Angel. Now here's the road to Allencourt,
And here's the road to Tyre.
And he who goes to Allencourt
Is purged of all desire.

The Youth. But what of him who goes to Tyre,
Among the cedar trees?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please.

While he who goes to Allencourt
Across the Hills of Pain
Must love his fellow very well,
And count no thing as gain

That wounds another. He must keep
His eyes upon the crest
Of that high hill, where he at last
Through virtue shall find rest.

The Youth. But what of him who goes to Tyre,
Along the road of ease?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please;

While he who goes to Allencourt,
And does not lose his way
Among the thorns and brambles, comes
To rich reward some day.

Joseph Andrew Galahad

The Old Man. Ah, why are thorns and brambles set
To make the road a care?

The Angel. Why, man himself, most carelessly,
Has placed the brambles there.

The Youth. But what of him who goes to Tyre
Beside the sunny seas?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please.

The Old Man. And what's the toll to Allencourt?

The Youth. And what's the toll to Tyre?

The Angel. Why, he who goes to Allencourt
Is purged of all desire.

The toll is love—a brother's love—
For man in full sincerity.
And all the peace that God has willed
Is the reward—eternally.

But toll upon the other road
Is crucible of burn and freeze:
For he who goes to Tyre has none
But just himself to please.

While he who goes to Allencourt
Is purged of all desire . . .

The Old Man. Lord, lead me on to Allencourt!

The Youth. For me, I go to Tyre.

RECALLED

You see it not . . . ? This Rose of Rhone
Has something of the flow
Of light—like a liquid lacquer on the wall.
And old Madrid—I swear, it shone
More with your light, your glow,
Than that of the sun. Why do your eyelids fall?

You hear it not . . . ? The Prado was
A sweeping meadow then:
The swing of the tunes of time was in your tone.
No dream comes to you now because
You hear my voice again—
No dream of a youth you passed at dusk alone?

Three hundred years . . . ! you mark them not?
And yet—you loved me then,
Who now in the light of mullioned windows stand.
And it is you who have forgot
That once, O sought of men!—
When I was the king of Spain I kissed your hand.

Joseph Andrew Galahad

SEA QUATRAINS

I

Too fast the silly white-caps run
Their helter-skelter races;
They stumble when the goal is won
And fall upon their faces.

II

A purple light is shaken over
The greener ocean shadows,
Like clover on the cooler depths
Of grass in upland meadows.

III

The sea hangs kelp upon the sand
Like garlands on a grave,
Mourning the dead and silent land
With every living wave.

IV

The breakers thunder in the night
With which the sea is drenched.
Only one plunging line is white;
Even the stars are quenched.

V

The fairest ship ever a wreck
Had not so white a sail
As this fair wave cast up to break,
Driven before the gale.

Grant H. Code

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FRAGILITIES

SONG

These are the words of the wind:
 Over your white body shall pass
 Whorls of water, whorls of light,
 Of the lustre of blown glass.
These are the words of the wind.

You are beloved of the silence
 And the grey still rain.
Once the sun loved you utterly,
 And shall love you again.

These are the words of the wind:
 Over your white body shall pass
 Whorls of water, whorls of light,
 Of the lustre of blown glass.
These are the words of the wind.

LAKE

You are a broad white lake,
Silent.
On your surface people launch their brown sun-warmed
 souls.
Reflected in you, they see themselves
Tall, profound, mystical.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

COMPANIONSHIP

In the intertwirling smoke of our cigarettes
Is a caressing sense of intricate congruity.
There is sea-blue in this quiet place,
And infinite crisp echoes of music,
Bound together with cords of uttermost fragility.

IMPOTENCE

While you lived
I could make you neither glad nor unhappy.
Now you are dead
I can neither lull nor awaken you.
Always I am impotent.

BRANCHES

Pierre Gris,
When an old man,
Saw winter branches
Brown, grey, dulled silver.

These, he said, are the no longer green
Hopes of my youth.
They seem to interlace,
But I remember that that is
Illusion.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

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HESPERIDES

FRAGMENT XXXVI

*I know not what to do:
My mind is divided.*

Sappho

I know not what to do—
My mind is reft.
Is song's gift best?
Is love's gift loveliest?
I know not what to do,
Now sleep has pressed
Weight on your eyelids.
Shall I break your rest,
Devouring, eager?
Is love's gift best?—
Nay, song's the loveliest.
Yet, were you lost,
What rapture could I take from song?—
What song were left?
I know not what to do:
To turn and slake
The rage that burns,
With my breath burn
And trouble your cool breath—
So shall I turn and take
Snow in my arms,
(Is love's gift best?)

Yet flake on flake
Of snow were comfortless,
Did you lie wondering,
Wakened yet unawake.

Shall I turn and take
Comfortless snow within my arms,
Press lips to lips that answer not,
Press lips to flesh
That shudders not nor breaks?

Is love's gift best?—
Shall I turn and slake
All the wild longing?
Oh, I am eager for you!
As the Pleiads shake
White light in whiter water,
So shall I take you?

My mind is quite divided;
My minds hesitate,
So perfect matched
I know not what to do.
Each strives with each:
As two white wrestlers,
Standing for a match,
Ready to turn and clutch,
Yet never shake
Muscle or nerve or tendon;
So my mind waits

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To grapple with my mind—
Yet I am quiet,
I would seem at rest.

I know not what to do.
Strain upon strain,
Sound surging upon sound,
Makes my brain blind;
As a wave line may wait to fall,
Yet waiting for its falling
Still the wind may take,
From off its crest,
White flake on flake of foam,
That rises
Seeming to dart and pulse
And rend the light,
So my mind hesitates
Above the passion
Quivering yet to break,
So my mind hesitates above my mind
Listening to song's delight.

I know not what to do.
Will the sound break,
Rending the night
With rift on rift of rose
And scattered light?
Will the sound break at last
As the wave hesitant,

Or will the whole night pass
And I lie listening awake?

SONG

You are as gold
As the half-ripe grain
That merges to gold again,
As white as the white rain
That beats through
The half-opened flowers
Of the great flower tufts
Thick on the black limbs
Of an Illyrian apple bough.

Can honey distil such fragrance
As your bright hair?—
For your face is as fair as rain,
Yet as rain that lies clear
On white honey-comb
Lends radiance to the white wax,
So your hair on your brow
Casts light for a shadow.

AT BAIA

I should have thought
In a dream you would have brought
Some lovely perilous thing:
Orchids piled in a great sheath,

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As who would say, in a dream,
"I send you this,
Who left the blue veins
Of your throat unknissed."

Why was it that your hands,
That never took mine—
Your hands that I could see
Drift over the orchid heads
So carefully;
Your hands, so fragile, sure to lift
So gently, the fragile flower stuff—
Ah, ah, how was it

You never sent, in a dream,
The very form, the very scent,
Not heavy, not sensuous,
But perilous—perilous!—
Of orchids, piled in a great sheath,
And folded underneath on a bright scroll,
Some word:

*Flower sent to flower;
For white hands the lesser white,
Less lovely, of flower leaf.*

Or,

*Lover to lover—no kiss,
No touch, but forever and ever this!*

H. D.

COMMENT

POETRY AND THE ALLIED ARTS

POETRY would like to celebrate its ninth birthday by inaugurating a closer affiliation with the allied arts of music and the drama—perhaps also the dance. If the movies, and the scarcely less photographic commercial plays, are banishing poetry from one end of the stage, it must needs go around to the other door, and re-enter hand in hand with the opera and lyric song, with the ballet, and perhaps, paradoxically, symbolic pantomime. Times are changing, and the arts with them—the poet, the composer, the dancer should prove their pliancy, their mobility. They should not—indeed, they cannot—stay apart; they must get together and co-operate, and accept each other's influence.

At present our poets and composers move in different orbits, have scarcely a bowing acquaintance with each other either personally or professionally. POETRY would be grateful for suggestions as to the best available method of establishing closer relations.

Not long ago *Musical America* published an article by Charles Albert Case, a well-known tenor, entitled *The Quest of the American Song*, and sub-titled *A Challenge to Poets rather than Composers*. Mr. Case thinks that the American public wants American songs, and that the singers are eager for this change from the usual polyglot programs, but that it is impossible to make up

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a sufficiently interesting and varied recital without foreign aid. And for this condition he thinks our poets are more to blame than our musicians. He says:

The fact that there are few American songs which are truly great is a challenge to American poets rather than to American composers. The question "what to sing" is the most vital and the most persistently intrusive one that a busy song recitalist has to face. Naturally American singers want very much to sing American songs, and most of us do sing them, but in building our recital programs we invariably find ourselves limited in the number of such songs we can use; for we must avoid singing a succession of songs in the same humor, and when one is face to face with the assembled material one finds that the contrasting elements which make for essential variety in the "group unit" are astonishingly lacking.

Mr. Case then contrasts our meagreness with German and French richness, and continues:

Being a loyal American, I admit it reluctantly, but there is far less variety in American songs, even when one plans to choose a group from several different composers, than one can find in any single one of the greater German song-writers. . . .

We have some splendid American songs and some of them are truly noble, but most of them are not good enough. Many of the most successful of them are settings by other than American poets. Some of the best of them are not even in English!

Mr. Case then reminds us that a good song must unite two arts—a fundamental truth which both singers and auditors too often forget. He inquires, "What constitutes a good song?" and answers his query thus:

A good poem adequately set to music. There is the whole matter in a nutshell.

The many bad American songs are bad either because the text was trivial to begin with, or else was carelessly read and consequently inadequately interpreted in music. In some cases the text was even

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"adapted"—distorted, pinched and pulled into the approximate shape of a ready-made melody. Ready-made melodies are like ready-made clothes. They fit nobody because they were made to fit everybody.

Schubert read Mueller, Goethe, Heine, Rueckert, Uhland, Shakespeare. Schumann read Rueckert, Geibel, Uhland, Eichendorff, Moerike. Chausson read DeLisle and Gautier. These men read the best poetry of their time, and they read it with true understanding and genuine respect. What greatness there was in them lay largely in their power to discriminate, to select fine poetry from the mediocre, and then to bend to the task of making worthy musical settings. Too often our young Americans write as though they thought the lyrics of which they try to make songs were not good enough for them. . . .

I have frequently been asked by young aspiring composers to help them find words to set to music. They say: "You know—something you consider singable. I haven't time to read." This is rank impudence. I never offer such people much sympathy. I do not think they should be encouraged. It seems to me that one must read much poetry to understand a little. Reading, and reading with unusual intelligence, is part of a song-writer's job.

Thus far Mr. Case's indictment accuses the composers, but he concludes with a fling at the poets:

I have real sympathy for the trained, educated, honest-intentioned American composer who reads native poets and finds so little to inspire him to exercise his genius. Surely his material is limited. Eventually we shall have truly noble American songs. But first there must be noble American poetry. From the mass of it the song-writer must choose with a fine exercise of discrimination. We have many Americans who have the taste to choose and the ability adequately to set beautiful poetry to music. But American song-writing is at the same stage of development as American poetry. Let us hope that some of the lyrically gifted will start soon to write about something besides the sunset and the skyline from the Jersey shore, or the sensation of ascending Woolworth tower in a modern elevator!

Now, with all due deference to Mr. Case and his "trained, educated, honest-intentioned American com-

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poser," we doubt whether either one of them has sympathetically investigated the extraordinary range and variety of modern American poetry. We doubt whether either one of them, having discovered a poet suggestive for his purpose, has ever tried to get acquainted with him, even if he was a neighbor, and discuss this highly interesting esthetic problem on which the future of American song depends.

There is among American artists—poets, musicians, and all the others—a curious professional aloofness which fights against co-operation. The architect makes his design, the sculptor models his isolated figure, the painter paints his easel picture, all separate and alone—they do not get together, as in the Phidian or the Gothic age, or the Renaissance, to pool their energies and make a grand, complete and monumental building. In the same infertile way the poet writes his poem apart in his traditional garret; and the musician, seeking a song poem, or a ballet motive, or an opera libretto, reads in his library uncharted seas of poetry, history and romance instead of going where modern poetry is created and swinging into its current, so that the two arts may move along together and mutually inspire each other.

Among themselves poets—and doubtless musicians, painters, and the rest—are free-and-easy enough in intercourse and criticism. But this professional aloofness, this shyness, comes in the way of attempts at co-operation. A distinguished Chicago composer says he

is "very familiar" with the work of certain equally distinguished Illinois poets, though, to his regret, he has never succeeded in harnessing up their poetry to his music; but we doubt if he has ever attempted to work *together with* any modern poet, in the frank give-and-take of such a partnership, toward the production of a wholly modern and American work of art. When I protest against his going back to the nineties for a pseudo-romantic motive for a ballet, when I suggest Stevens or Kreymborg, H. D. or Edna Millay, he answers by what might be called a flank attack:

I am very grateful to you for the copies of POETRY which you sent to me containing the Stevens and Kreymborg pieces. I like particularly the *Three Travelers*, although I doubt whether I could improve it any with music.

It seems to me that the thing we must all remember in talking about an opera libretto is the fact that we must depend for our effect on the poetry or the drama of the *action* rather than on the poetry or drama of the *words*. Therefore, the ideal opera librettist would be the poet gone dumb who, by his simple gesture, could make us jump through any hoop he pleases.

But even if this composer and others are turning toward pantomime and ballet rather than opera, preferring the orchestra to the human voice, even so they cannot eliminate the poet; for though no word be said, no song sung, the imaginative invention of some poet, dead or living, must furnish the motive, the story, the plot. And no doubt the ballet of the future will include the poem either as an introductory recitative or a series of lyric, perhaps choral, interludes; as in Rimsky-Kor-

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sakov's ballet-opera, *The Golden Cockerel*. Thus it is for the composer to choose whether he will be true to his own age and race by linking up with modern poets and deriving his stimulus from imaginations now actively functioning; or go back to dead poets for his motive, and thereby run the risk of endangering the vitality of his own art, of not connecting it up with either the present or the past.

But however important ballet and pantomime may prove as motives for modern music, it is safe to predict that the human voice will not lose its prestige. And it must be safe to predict that the sooner our composers look to their poet-neighbors for the texts of opera, oratorio, cantata, song-cycle, ballad, madrigal, song, instead of searching all ages, myths and languages of the past, the sooner will our musical art become as up-to-date and as racially expressive as the musical art of Russia.

Something has been done, no doubt. The present writer would be ungrateful not to recall Mr. Chadwick's fine choral and orchestral setting of the lyrics in *The Columbian Ode*. Another effective instance is John Carpenter's beautiful setting of Tagore's lyrics from an early number of POETRY. And we are permitted to announce an oratorio, which is to be the joint creation of Louise Ayres Garnett and Henry Hadley, the text of which will appear, under the title *Resurgam*, in POETRY for December. But such instances are isolated cases; they do not yet represent a general tendency.

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If POETRY can do anything toward such a tendency by making poets and composers more aware of each other, bringing them more in contact personal and spiritual, we should be most happy to offer to the utmost any service in our power. And we shall be very glad of discussion and suggestions.

H. M.

INFLUENCE OF THE ART-THEATRE ON POETIC DRAMA

If the new movement in the theatre had accomplished nothing else, it would nevertheless be justified by the release it has brought to poetic drama and to the poetic mood in drama. The new movement, long since established in continental Europe, still struggles precariously in the virgin soil of America. It exists, however; and having existed thus far, it probably will continue to exist until in time it flourishes.

Meanwhile, by the creation of a modern technique, it offers poetic drama in English the first justifiable hope of escape from the senile lethargy into which three centuries of imitation had plunged it. Strictly speaking, there had been no poetic drama since the Puritans stopped the rich stream of Elizabethan eloquence by closing the theatres in 1642. Occasionally a dramatist, deriving his method from a compromise between the continentals, the Greeks and Shakespeare, had made a play in verse; or, more stagnantly, had built a romantic hodge-podge, verbose and rhetorical, around the pseudo-realistic

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formula of the days of gas-lamp illumination. But there had been no impetus, no technical incentive, towards a renaissance of poetic drama until the new movement cleansed the theatre by challenging theatric values.

"To save the theatre," said Eleanora Duse, "the theatre must first be destroyed." And the younger men, the revolutionists, set themselves to destroy it in theory, and to recreate it in practice and theory both, by the simple but incisive idea of *re-theatralization*. No better proof could be offered of the sterility of poetic drama than the fact that these men were all, without exception, men of the theatre—directors, scenic artists, actors—none of them playwrights. In other words, the new movement differed from any earlier developments of the kind, so far as I know, in being almost wholly independent of the drama. The emphasis was shifted decisively from the drama to the theatre as the dominant art form.

Now, that habit of mind which insists that the theatre shall be the handmaid of the arts, and particularly of the art of writing, is apt to view such a transfer of emphasis with alarm. For the theatre to assert its own inherent vitality is permissible so long as it does not intrude this vitality into the sacred traditions of the drama. But the new movement involves an esthetic too fundamental not to re-open the entire problem of dramatic construction. Concerned chiefly with the production of the play in the theatre, it uncovers an esthetic resource that touches the very definition of poetic drama.

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The reform in stagecraft is a protest against the fallacy of a realistic technique, against that ineptitude of the *mise en scène* which has made "theatrical" a synonym for the imitation of beauty by tinsel and exaggeration. It is toward a simplified and therefore an allusive and poetic decoration, toward an emotional and therefore a poetic use of light, toward a rhythmic and therefore a poetic movement. In synthesizing these visual elements into an organic whole, the new stagecraft has released in them a dramatic value entirely apart from representation. Just as poetry is the rhythmic expression of a theme to be developed by words, so these visual elements in the theatre serve both the purpose of representation and of rhythmic beauty. Thus, the background may be both a statement of locality, and a design holding the production in key. Movement may be utilized not only for its obvious and objective purpose, but also for the intrinsic beauty of motion. Light, treated emotionally, is capable of following, emphasizing, or even leading the mood of the action.

I have attempted briefly to indicate the trend of the new stagecraft because in this discovery of an independent esthetic resource in the visual elements of the theatre originates the essential difference between the new technique and the old, as it affects the dramatist. The central rhythm of the play, instead of being developed through words only, is developed through all the media of production—through light, stage decoration and movement

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as well as through the spoken word. These visual elements become a part of the inner structure of the play; and because of their poetic quality they bind the theatre inseparably to poetry, to poetic drama, making the theatre a place well fitted for the renascence of poetic drama.

But with these additional factors of expression, it is no longer necessary for the dramatist to trust so exclusively, and cling so tenaciously, to words. In the Elizabethan drama even the locality of the scene was often stated in words: every mood, every emotion was projected verbally. It was a drama of eloquence; and as such it suited, as no other form could, the torrential flood of Elizabethan poetry. But modern poetry, irrespective of the drama, is more restrained; it tends to leave much unsaid, to project the meaning by ellipsis and overtones. Unless I am mistaken, though I know little of the technique of poetry, this brevity is sometimes carried to extreme lengths, in which the imagination of the reader supplies much more at the poet's instigation than the poet himself expresses. It is a subtle technique; and it is pre-eminently the technique of the dramatist.

With this distinction: that, instead of restraining verbal expression to stimulate the imagination of the reader, the dramatist uses words cautiously in adjustment to the other media of his expression. To take an obvious, and well understood, example: a gesture is sometimes equal in effectiveness to many words. In the theatre, where

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economy of expression is imperative, gesture and words will often complement each other without duplication. And what is true of gesture becomes true in the art-theatre of all phases in movement, of stage decoration, of light; and on occasion of music.

The effect of this upon the poetry of the poetic drama, and especially upon verse structure, is significant and far-reaching. It necessitates the development of a verse form that will admit of distortions, interruptions and irregularities. These are more apparent than real. As soon as the poetic drama is conceived as a fusion of many arts into an organic whole, the rhythm of the play becomes an inclusive rhythm to the progression of which all the media are contributory and in a sense subordinate. The irregularities in such a drama would be due to the separation of the verse from its theatric context. When the play came into being in the theatre these irregularities would disappear, merging into the larger current of rhythmic beauty. To the dramatist this may seem the weakness or the strength of the new poetic drama—that it comes to fulfilment only in the theatre, as a symphony lives only in the orchestra.

Blank verse, which alone of the standard forms has been accepted as a proper medium for the poetic drama in English, depends for acceptance upon an insidious flexibility. This flexibility serves the purpose of the theatre so long as the characters keep talking. But talk they must; and the terrified volubility of the poetic drama is,

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I think, one of the reasons why it has been in general a form displeasing to modern audiences. This is no fault of blank verse, which has been deflected from its original and legitimate intention to serve as best it might an art that lacks its own form. It has thus created a compromise between the printed page and the theatre which has made the poetic drama neither fish nor flesh, neither wholly satisfactory for reading nor wholly satisfactory for acting.

Moreover, the need for well-rounded periods has reacted upon the dramatist by giving him a false sense of untroubled leisure. The time element, which scarcely exists in the printed page, is in the theatre of the utmost importance. The reader may take his own pace: the auditor must listen; he must accept the pace of the actor. The verse is spoken apparently with a retarded movement, and must therefore be quantitatively less, and more compact for the purpose. Such a compactness is hostile, one would say, judging by examples, to the mood of blank verse. One need only refer, among many instances, to the plays of Stephen Phillips or Zoë Akins, each of whom has a keen dramatic instinct; or to that parody of Elizabethan grandeur, that *reductio ad absurdum* of rhetoric in a theme not without power, *Caius Gracchus*, to note the clogging result of the intrusion of the stricter verse forms into the theatre. It may almost be stated as a generality that, other things being equal, the more smoothly a play reads the worse it will act.

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A new verse form that will be native to the theatre, that will be an inseparable component of the flow of the complex rhythm of the play, cannot be created out of hand. It too, like the modification of painting for stage decoration, of illumination for emotional lighting, must develop through knowledge of the exigencies of the medium. To understand the poetic theatre is to understand the use of poetry in that theatre. In America the dramatist has grasped neither the technique nor the possibilities in expression that it offers him. Toy plays, Columbine plays, gay and adolescent trifles, thin tragedies—all superficial experiments in the externals of the new stagecraft—follow one another in an almost (but fortunately not quite) unbroken succession.

In a recent article the most brilliant director that the new movement has produced this side the Atlantic, Maurice Browne, summarizes thus the situation in respect of finding a drama for the art-theatre:

A fight which has hardly begun: the fight for *the play*. That is where the Chicago Little Theatre failed, and where all the artist-groups in America have failed, except perhaps the Provincetown Players.

But it may be true that out of a clearer understanding will come the dramatist who will evolve the form which his medium demands. And after him—the deluge.

Cloyd Head

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REVIEWS

MUSEUM SHIPS

Ships in Harbor, by David Morton. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

What is there in David Morton's verse that seems to save it, that intervenes in moments of irritation with its punctual urbanity? There is not an original line in it. Not one cry, one intense expression comes from it; one vision, that the poet has kept from his privileged dreaming, which can draw the mind an inch out of even the shallowest rut.

Is it its cleanly manufacture, its unstraying measures and kempt familiar figurines? To me its charm has been a charm too soon worn out—the charm that sometimes attracts us to a diffident guest when we are overborne by the intrusions and ineptitudes of the vivacious, when the quiet and subdued deceptively appear to be powerful and profound.

It is fatal, however, to turn closely to the poems themselves for verification. They are demure enough, but thin and fragile; and made with earnest and helpless plagiarism. Never the robust piracies of a Shakespeare or Sterne, but a pallid imitativeness that paints the past more ruinous with perfunctory restorations, and blows about it feeble ghosts—pale, mute, and not recognizable as ghosts should be, of any of the shapes of destiny.

The book is called *Ships in Harbor*—there is such a poem in the book, and other occasional verses on ships. But

the reader who expects salt and storm, or anything authentically of the sea, should look elsewhere—in the dubious prose of Joseph Conrad, for instance. There are some conventionally nautical words and phrases, and the tidy thoughtfulness about mystical things that gives to diffident, cornered people their misleading impressiveness. It makes David Morton talk twice, on successive pages, of “weightless cargoes”—and one might add lifeless crews, and meaningless uses, and tinsel. The sea is brought in because it is on the same wall with Greece and Rome, spring and patriotism; and not being so bent with overuse, is more convenient to hang poems upon. Sonnets—for David Morton writes mostly in sonnets.

We agree that grammar is spoken language, stagnant; out of which nevertheless speech drips and sometimes splashes. We agree that rhetoric is literature, stagnant; that as there can be limitless variations of the correct sentences, phrases, clauses and what-nots of grammar, so there can be a limitless variation of forms of rhetoric. These verses are rhetoric, often skilful and surprising, often mildly intricate; but never poetry.

There should be a word bearing the same relation to subject matter which grammar and rhetoric bear to language. Pageant, perhaps; but pageant is free, ringing, and dramatic. Pageant is play, and this other thing pretends solemnly to poetry; but uses pageant properties. It rounds up all the popular places and heroes, the story-book locales and personae, and treats them with apologetic

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sophistication, and with a snuffling sentimentality very wide of the crude romantics of the pageant crowd.

The favorite property is the Past. After reading this book through (a Spartan exercise) I turned the pages casually at various places to see whether the Past appeared as often as I thought. I read, in *On Hearing a Bird at Night*:

Out of what ancient summers of soft airs.

Christ, Dante, Athens, Time, Roman, pyramid, Phidias, are all in one sonnet called *Moments*; Pan and the Gods are in *Redemption*; and in *Encore*,

This old slow music . . . with dancers who were graceful long ago.

Does Mr. Morton make a confession in *Inviolate*?

For present loveliness there is no speech:
A word may wrong a flower or face,
And stars that swim beyond our stuttering reach
Are safer in some golden, silent place.
Only when these are broken, or pass by,
Wonder and worship speak . . . or sing . . . or cry.

The thought seems more penetrating than it is. If the present and the future are inviolate to the pen of the poet, the past is equally so, and Mr. Morton should quietly take to other things. He knows that the past is beautiful only through the poets who recorded its beauty—and ugliness. The Past is a convention; time is a unity, and no fragment of it is less alive than another, unless one wittingly puts on blinders.

To continue our census, this from *Transfiguration*:

Museum Ships

What old historic dust gives back the rose!
What crumbled empires yield the creeping vine!

And these from *Survival* and *Ruins*:

Lead back the tragic chariots of Troy!
The spring comes in to me like spring in Rome.

I might add, and so on and so on, because Mr. Morton's obsession is the Past, and it stalks him like a shadow everywhere he goes; although the other commonplaces of poetry, the ready-rapture articles of every variety, are not neglected, and although he succeeds as little in vitalizing the past as the sea. Perhaps for him the sea has run out, and the past has been neatly embalmed in a general history. There is even a curious indifference about them, as if they were a poetaster's shop-talk.

And, oh yes, the sonnets are very carefully made. They are trim, rhythmic, proper sonnets in every respect.

Isidor Schneider

NEW FIRE

A Canopic Jar, by Leonora Speyer. E. P. Dutton & Co.

This is the first book of a mature woman too intelligent to be content with gifts already fulfilled and creations accomplished. The book, hiding "the hidden thing, making protection for Hapi, who is within," indicates careful research into the forms of verse, and contains poems in various forms. The task of the reviewer is somewhat to disentangle the set of perceptions for which

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the development of appropriate rhetoric will yield most to her ambition.

Mrs. Speyer's ambition is neither historical, evangelical nor journalistic, but esthetic. This in itself is noteworthy. It is often said that pursuits and ideas must now be estimated upon their contribution to the war problem, the food problem, or the proletariat problem. If this were true, every healthy-minded man should strive in a chemical laboratory to find the secret lair of energy, which men will control in the good day coming, so that drudgery will cease, and food and power become so cheap that they will not be worth fighting for.

But in the meantime, if conviction fails us, or an unscientific education has forever limited our activities, there is a phase of thought in which a gifted woman may participate as well as a chemist or war-correspondent: these speculative adventures and flashes of interpretive insight, which, when fixed in pattern or rhythmic utterance, we call art. And if art is to remain as vital as protozoology, or, for that matter, as prize-fighting, its principal concern must be the search for new form, its own lairs of energy, however useless in the end.

In this search Mrs. Speyer is engaged. For convenient examination of the book, I shall take up certain qualities in more or less arbitrary order. In the construction of phrase which shall convey precisely a precise idea or impression, not a matter of verse-technique alone, her imagination is deft. Occasionally her abstraction is as

sharp-edged as a tangible object: "O pompous cry, O puny sin!" These are even stronger, and cling to the memory:

I am the path that my own feet tread.

Gulls flap unevenly through the muffled hours;
Spaces listen in hiding.

Rhythm is of course the special problem of verse. Two divisions of it may be dissociated: The first indicates an inner logic not otherwise shown, or an emotion not otherwise evoked, as in traditional or imposed forms. The other fuses with the rhythm of the fact, as that the old man walked amid the green rye, so that the old man may seem to walk. Movement is duplicated by movement-of-words. Coleridge is full of examples of this:

The moving moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside.

Of this rhythm, Leonora Speyer may become a distinguished exponent. The lovely after-battle poem, *April on the Battlefield*—

And birds sit close for comfort
On broken boughs—

Squall, and *First Snow on the Hills*, indicate this ability. Curiously, although an excellent musician, she does not invent musical schemes which are interesting in themselves.

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The American genius has taken up satire. The axe, which has rusted since Swift, but for such bourgeois holidays as Thackeray afforded, is used with new intent and no reformatory zeal. The bias given to perceptions by scorn, not spleen, is recognized to be as true an emotional bias as another; and perhaps, in a world of newspapers and languid religions, the most pertinent of all. In her speech, Leonora Speyer may capture the most mordant and bewildering humor of her time. It is not negative wit, and may not be completely conscious; but it strips away all hoakum, however sweet, leaving our intent and passion like a shell crusted with salt. There are traces of this trenchancy in her verse:

O bottled widow's woe,
Standing in ostentatious row
Within the gloom
Of dear departed's tomb!
Evaporated lover's grief!

A Canopic Jar has unpretentious beauty and clear thought, and no earmarks of vulgar success or sacrosanct largeness. She seems able to endure the inward conflict and sedentary work required even to commence art. And one may be sure that she will not rest upon the achievement of this book, or repeat it in her second, betraying those who have faith in her. Already her Magdalene ballad in a recent issue of the *Nation* is a finer episodic lyric than any in this book. She is able to create passages of such intransient beauty as this:

Does the heart grieve on
After its grief is gone,
Like a slow ship moving
Across its own oblivion?

Who shall say that her fire in the rushes, which gives so fair a light, may not come to burn gold?

Glenway Wescott

PAGEANTRY AND RHETORIC

Rip Van Winkle, by Percy Mackaye. Alfred A. Knopf.
Two Mothers (Eight Hundred Rubles and Agrippina), by John G. Neihardt. Macmillan Co.

The talent of Percy Mackaye lies in the field of pageantry; and it is no mean talent, as he proved in his St. Louis masque. In pageantry the picture must speak louder than words, and Mr. Mackaye unquestionably speaks louder with pictures than with words. For years he has been laboring to find his medium through poetry. The sensibilities of an artist, and a laudable ambition, have led him to fake poetry; but his words fail to augment or enhance his pictures. Until he practically discards the use of words, he will not be a free artist.

Rip Van Winkle has pageant values rather than poetic. Written as light opera, it is patterned in the usual manner—dialogues, lyrics, comedy, dance. It lacks the snap of light opera, but its pictures and ensembles are distinctly valuable as sublimated extravaganza, and poetically effective as pageant material. The author has a vision for pictorial symbolism in broad compositions filling large

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canvases, for extravagant effects to be put across great distances and to register in the conglomerate comprehension of fifteen thousand people.

The story of *Rip Van Winkle* is a tradition. It is material for a drama if the protagonist, Rip—light-hearted, humorous, pathetic, tragic—is sincerely and profoundly characterized. Playing, drinking, dreaming—the outcast—we want it all to the bitter end, not a sugar-coated substitute. Mr. Mackaye's more palatable arrangement of the story lacks the original tang. His tampering with the legend is like changing the theme of a play which has made the play. Washington Irving, Thomas Jefferson, Tony Sarg's puppets, all retain the old flavor. Mr. Mackaye's version is flat, lacks the old richness.

In the beginning of *Act III*, Rip for the first time takes the characterization familiar to us—a fantastic figure without locale. Later in the act he assumes the dialect of a New England farmer, and at the close he is suddenly transformed by the magic flask into a romantic youth.

Something of a fakir and something of an artist, Mr. Mackaye paints living pictures on an enormous canvas in a public park.

Eight Hundred Rubles, by John G. Neihardt, is a tragic episode compact in scenario but unbalanced in its development. The long speeches, the digressions, and the song at the beginning of the episode, hamper the progression at the start. They do not, to any extent, promote suspense

nor establish the exposition. In so short a play, the exposition must be precipitated into the drama immediately. Without premonition the tragedy is revealed, and the play is over before we know it has begun. The verse lacks ease, and the flow of line into line; it jolts over a corduroy road.

In *Agrippina* he again indulges in long speeches, and they in turn indulge themselves to the point of licentiousness in rhetorical luxury. The licentiousness of Nero pales by comparison, and the delayed story grows dull.

The stories of these two plays seem far removed, as does the verse; but it is possible that Mr. Neihardt's spirit lives and breathes and has its being in the far removed. All a poet can do, and all that one can demand of a poet, is to react honestly. The sincerity of Mr. Neihardt is generally acknowledged, but Bacchus cannot be revived by filling his cup with grape-juice.

Laura Sherry

THE NOVELIST AS POET

As the Wind Blows, by Eden Philpotts. Macmillan Co.

Not a few novelists try their hand at poetry. Apparently it seems to them somehow the fitting thing to do. Commonly they write poetry which shows taste and literary craftsmanship rather than emotional impulse.

Mr. Philpotts' book is of this kind. It manifests skill in the handling of rhyme and conventional rhythms. It has the sense of fitness which has characterized the

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English literary tradition for generations. It has also the "poetic" vocabulary and attitude which have been a part of the same tradition. For example:

For June must joy though joy departs,
And life must laugh though sorrow smarts,
And buds must break as well as hearts.

Most of the author's work, of course, is better than this, though still lacking in intensity and originality of expression. His lighter verse, such as *Gaffer's Song* and *Scandal*, possesses humor and charm. As would be expected in the work of a novelist, however, the narrative poems carry most entertainingly the rather boyish naiveté of subject and style—*Tiger*, for example; or *The Fruit of the Tree*, which solemnly offers the suggestion that if ape or sloth had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge it might have ruled the kingdoms of the world "with kinder wit than man." In *Tiger* there is a good deal of spirit and vividness, suggested by the rattling rhythm of the opening lines:

To the barking of the monkeys, to the shrieking of the birds;
To the bellow of the bison and stampeding of the herds;
At fiery edge of sunset, from the jungle to the wold,
Death stalks in shining ebony and orange-tawny gold.

N. A. C.

THE PROFESSOR AS CRITIC

The Function of the Poet and Other Essays, by James Russell Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Kinds of Poetry and Other Essays, by John Erskine. Duffield & Co.

The Professor as Critic

James Russell Lowell, during his Harvard period, was the leading professor of English literature in the United States. John Erskine, now professor of English in Columbia, has a distinguished position in academic circles of the present day. The earliest essay in the Lowell volume was originally published in 1845, the latest in 1894. The earliest paper in Dr. Erskine's book first appeared in 1912, the most recent in 1920. The two books therefore afford opportunity to compare academic critical opinion of two quite distinct periods.

Few persons nowadays read Lowell's criticism. The preface to the present volume, contributed by Albert Mordell, admits that some of Lowell's literary opinions "are old-fashioned to us", though the learned commentator characteristically claims that "Lowell, before Freud, understood the psychoanalytic theory of genius in its connection with childhood memories." Whether or not Lowell realized the influence of childish repressions, it is certain that he is old-fashioned. He speaks a language that we of today are not quite at home in and are not interested enough to learn. His classifications, his reduction of criticism to scientific laws, his rhetorical style, belong to the journalism of an earlier day. We shall not again attire our thought in this sort of raiment, any more than we shall wear the kind of clothes that Mr. Lowell wore.

This does not mean that Lowell's critical work was valueless. It was not. He contributed to American criticism a degree of scholarship and fairness; and, except

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when puzzled by the intrusion of a man of genius like Poe, he welcomed, sometimes very cordially, the new writer. He did much to turn criticism away from the personal blind alleys into which it had previously been so often led. He is a figure of interest in the history of criticism, but we do not turn to him for guidance today.

Dr. Erskine's book belongs to its own time as much as Dr. Lowell's. The difference is that Dr. Erskine's day is ours. His four essays make an interesting book, with a flavor of sly humor now and then which adds a zest to its solid value. I think the universities should require every student who expects to teach English literature to read it, not because it is the best book on poetry of the present day, but because it is the best on the subject for the sort of person who usually teaches literature. But the publishers will probably not get out an extra edition on the prospect of orders from the universities. They doubtless know that Lowell's book is more likely to get the academic orders than is Erskine's. Dr. Erskine has the quality, never forgiven by the true academician, of not being interested in what everybody else has forgotten.

The Erskine book is also suggestive for the poet; especially the closing essay, *Scholarship and Poetry*, in which the author shows the value to the poet of an unpedantic literary background. The essay on *The New Poetry* is hospitable to the new, but contains little material which the ordinary student of the movement does not already know. I must, however, quote one delicious sentence:

“Many of the new poems do look at first a bit outrageous, especially to old-fashioned readers who have not read widely in old-fashioned literature.”

Lowell was in tune with his time, and Erskine is with his. It is unfortunate that much academic criticism of today is living in Lowell's time instead of Erskine's.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

NOTES

Mr. Wallace Stevens, of Hartford, Conn., has appeared often in POETRY since 1914. Two years ago his *Pecksniffiana* received the Levinson Prize. Mr. Stevens has been a frequent and valued contributor to the special magazines, but he has not yet yielded to the solicitation of his admirers so far as to publish a volume.

H. D. (Mrs. Richard Aldington), originally of Philadelphia but now usually resident in England, is also a familiar contributor since her first appearance in POETRY's fourth number. Her book, *Sea Garden*, is published in America by the Houghton Mifflin Co.; and her translations from Euripides have been issued in pamphlet form by *The Egoist*.

Karle Wilson Baker (Mrs. Thos. E.), of Nacogdoches, Texas, is the author of *Blue Smoke* (Yale University Press).

Miss Loureine Aber, of Chicago, will issue her first book before Christmas through Ralph Fletcher Seymour.

Miss Louise Driscoll, of Catskill, N. Y., has contributed often to this magazine and others. Her tragic dialogue, *Metal Checks*, received a prize from POETRY as the best poem printed in its War Number—Nov. 1914, and it remains one of the finest poems suggested by the great catastrophe.

Mr. Nelson Antrim Crawford, of the faculty of the Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, received last year a prize in a Kansas contest for the best poem published during the year by a resident of that state. The prize was awarded to *The Carrying of the Ghost*, which our readers will remember.

Miriam Allen deFord, who recently married Mr. Maynard Shipley, is

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now a resident of San Francisco. She has written verse and prose for the radical papers.

Other contributors appear for the first time in this issue. Of these:

Maurine Smith was a highly gifted student at the University of Chicago, and a valued member of its Poetry Club, when she died about three years ago. Her friends have collected her best poems with the intention of publishing a small volume to perpetuate her memory.

Mr. Joseph Andrew Galahad, of Portland, Oregon, has contributed to various magazines.

Mr. Grant H. Code, of Cambridge, Mass., is in the faculty of Boston University.

Perhaps we should also remind our readers that Mr. Cloyd Head, of Chicago, who contributes the art-theatre article to our prose section, is the author of that powerful modern one-act tragedy, *Grotesques*, which received the Levinson Prize in 1916; and that Mrs. Laura Sherry, of Milwaukee, is the director of the Wisconsin Players, an organization which has been for years one of the most efficient and enlightened of the art-theatre companies in this country.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

The Blue Ship, by Herbert Jones. John Lane.

Eyes of Vigilance, by Furnley Maurice. Sydney J. Endacott, Melbourne, Australia.

Ways and Means, by Furnley Maurice. Sydney J. Endacott.

The Contemplative Quarry and The Man with a Hammer, by Anna Wickham. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Sonnets to B. B. R., by Laban Lacy Rice. Richard G. Badger.

Poems, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield & Co.

The Journey—Odes and Sonnets, by Gerald Gould. Yale Univ. Press.

The Captive Lion and Other Poems, by William Henry Davies. Yale University Press.

Curtains, by Hazel Hall. John Lane Co.

Ireland Unfreed—Poems of 1921, by Sir William Watson. John Lane Co.

Wampum and Old Gold, by Hervey Allen. Yale University Press.

Second April, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

In Gossamer Gray, by Oscar Williams. The Bookfellows, Chicago.

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I think your July number is, not only the best issue you have ever printed, but the best issue of any poetry magazine that I have ever seen.

William Stanley Braithwaite

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A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX

NO. II

NOVEMBER 1921

THE LIONS

THE jungle glistens like a cloud—
Purple-cool, tree-deep, lake-pearled;
Where lions lurk and thrash and crowd,
Like lands that battle for the world.
Behold, one lion leaps for his prey,
Trotting like a saffron mist,
As savage nations in our day
Pounce on some weak antagonist.

Across the jungle-painted grass
His roar breaks through the tropic air;
And he runs like a tawny flame—
Swift yellow stroke of lightning there.
His cry is like the thunder's sound,
Shaking leaf and bough and bole;

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And he is part of Africa—
The yellow monarch in her soul.

Painted birds fly through the trees
And stain the sky with brown on blue,
Hammering with their wings the breeze,
Hitting songs across the dew.

Parrots gaudy as a star
Tap their bells and chatter sound.
Each insect sweeps his dim guitar
Like music hidden in the ground.

The tawny lion goes like a shot—
A daub of gold against the green,
Scenting a wounded bleeding doe
That he is following unseen.
A spangled serpent lights a tree,
A coiling flame around it, curled;
But the old lion goes great and free,
The master of his jungle world.

Bravely born and bravely bred,
Proud as a diamond of his fire,
This yellow monarch of the south
Goes like the hosts that swarmed to Tyre.
Hungry to kill, he scents the air,
And roars into beginning night,
His blond mane tossing up its hair,
His eyes two pools of blazing light.

He stops and lips the evening gale,
 Reading the wind across the trees;
Giant cat in his tawny mail,
 Spelling out the trail-warm breeze.
Then on he darts as though with wings,
 To find his prey and drink the blood
And feast upon the harmless things
 That God has put into the wood.

A gorilla slouches through the bush;
 A leopard's eyes shoot stars of light;
The deep luxuriant forest hush
 Hides serpents beetle-colored, bright.
The crane nods sleeping, spindle-shanked;
 Gray monkeys troop and clack and peer;
A jungle stream goes emerald-banked,
 Purring like a wild-cat near.

The cinnamon-colored land awakes
 Around the lion fold on fold;
Yellowing with fruit, blue with lakes,
 Stuck with fireflies burnished gold.
Gray monkeys watch the lion and talk,
 Lassoing trees with leather tails;
Some far palms by the seaside walk,
 And near-by sing the nightingales.

The moon hangs like a petal of gold
 Broken upon the western sky.

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The blue dusk deepens fold on fold,
The shattered day lies down to die.
Here in this wild primeval place,
Savage, wooded, poisonous, still,
Far from mankind and human face,
The old lion goes to hunt and kill.

His prey is near, the scent is strong,
He roars out in his ghastly mirth.
There, bleeding like a shattered song,
His wounded doe is run to earth.
But as he leaps to take its throat
A younger lion leaps up and cries;
And there the two lions stand like stone,
The fires of ages in their eyes.

It took the centuries to make
These lions' sun-colored bodies bright,
These great-teethed felines from the brake,
Tawny, crouching, cruel as night.
Their eyes turn red—these cats of brown
Swift as wind, lithe as air,
Savage-maned and monarch-crowned,
With blazing eyes and yellow hair.

The painted snake makes not a sound;
The frightened birds shake in the tree:
Like two great russet clouds they bound,
These monarchs, for the mastery.

The teak-tree groans, the gum is still,
The coffee-tree nods to the duel;
An elephant calf stares from a hill,
A lizard watches from a pool.

White silver moon, an eye of snow,
Looks from the dusk with beauty hung,
Her pale lids open and aglow
Where starry ladders are far-flung.
The lions' steel sinews knot in cords;
There is a crash of yellow forms;
The zebu and chimpanzee run;
The jungle with the battle storms.

A roar that rocks the ground is heard,
And monkeys chatter, parrots flee.
The coiled snake and the gaudy bird
Slink from their everlasting tree.
The colors of the painted land
All disappear as quick as light;
The great palms tremble, and the hand
Of God draws over all the night.

The dotted turtles hunt the ground,
Now rocking with the battling pair;
The night birds, startled, make no sound,
The vultures scent the bloody air.
Hyenas wait to eat the dead
And pick the polished bones and wail;

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A python crawls with silken tread
On silver plates of sliding mail.

The wild things of the jungle know
A battle of the kings is on;
The zebras cry, the tree-cats yell;
The tall giraffe has swiftly flown;
The spiders hang on polished webs—
Greenish discs of jeweled light;
A frog is croaking in his well,
The fireflies shower through the night.

The two huge cats are at their duel—
Two yellow whirlwinds, hard as stones;
Snapping, biting, wild and cruel,
Tearing flesh and crunching bones.
Jaws upraised and crashing shut,
Lifting, sinking, slashing there;
Paws like razors slitting skin,
Teeth like knives of white that tear.

The painted flowers drip with blood,
The hiding snake is crushed below;
The lizard stamps into the ground;
The trees shake as when whirlwinds blow.
The monkeys swing away and run;
The wildcat looks and leaps away;
The leopard, spotted with the sun,
Slides by into the mist of gray.

The poisonous flies have scented blood,
And elephants have come to peer;
Ant-eaters look into the wood
To see the battle of the year.
The scorpion squirms into the view,
And things unspeakable, to see—
Speared and horned and crusted blue,
The toad and reptile infantry.

The jungle sees the battle rage
Intense, ferocious, swift and fast—
A terrible and an awful sight,
So horrible toward the last
The lions have cowed the very night,
And stunned the shadows and the trees:
A scuffle like the break of worlds,
The shattering of centuries.

But the old lion shows greater skill,
With harder blows and mastery;
His teeth were longer trained to kill,
His strength upholds his majesty.
Yet the young lion is quick and strong—
So wiry lithe he seems to float;
He worries the old lion for long—
Till the old lion leaps at his throat.

They wave in battle, spinning round
Together, snarling, thundering, bright,

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Thrashing through the dry dead grass;
 Until the day has turned to night,
And left the young lion dead and still—
 In ribbons, mangled on the sod,
His broken body cold and chill—
 The old lion still his lord and god.

The old master of the forest stands
 With one paw on the fallen breast—
The monarch of the jungle lands
 Whose victory challenges the best.
A king is dead—long live the king!
 He roars, his eyes like coals aglow.
He calls his mate, a lioness there,
 To come and feast and eat the doe.

He calls his lady through the night,
 And she replies and comes to him,
Where the dead doe lies still and white,
 To banquet in the shadows dim:
Like nations, when the war is done,
 Who gather at the feasting board
To dine upon the hard-won prey,
 Each like a monarch and a lord.

The snake slips back into his tree,
 The monkeys chatter now in peace;
And over the blue woods there falls
 The age-old night of centuries.

The fireflies hang their lanterns back
To star the dark; the beetles bell;
The lizards creep, and nightbirds sing;
The snail is dancing in his shell.

The yellow floods are still and quiet;
The sky is blue like trembling glass;
Beasts, birds and toads and insects riot
Beneath the stars in jungle grass.
After the battle night alone;
Moon-mist, ghostly poison-flowers;
Trumpeting of beasts that moan
Through creeping crawling crimson hours.

A shaky moon rocks in the night,
A grumbling sea, far palms, the crash
Of monkeys chattering as they fight;
Gray serpents going like a flash;
Slow turtles, swifter bats on wing;
Worms creeping back, and spiders, flies;
Lizards with poisonous following,
And fanged things in their paradise.

Slimy silken bellies squirming,
Offal-scented beasts of prey;
Hungry, lethal toads and reptiles
Who move by night and hide by day:
Tearing flesh of birds that nest,
Rending bones that drip with blood.

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So the jackals strike and quest
In the world's jungle brotherhood.

But must these creepers in their turn
Be conquered in the coming light,
As new hope rises on the world
And the old lions go with the night?
Yet who can tell what signs of death
Await the nations one by one?
Ah, what will happen in earth's dark night
Before the rising of the sun?

Edwin Curran

THE JILT

I

Let other feet go drudging
About the house he built!
A free girl, a jilted girl—
I'm glad he was a jilt.

We quarrelled till it almost
Destroyed my breath of life.
He nagged me and bullied me,
As if I'd been his wife.

II

We grew cold and bitter
The more we would explain,
And if we held our tongues
The worse it was again.

He flashed a cruel sign,
I flashed a cruel word,
And neither could forget
The blame the other heard.

III

But his eyes could be tender with love, and his voice—
how tender!

Some words he sang are with me the whole day through.

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I hang out the linen and burnish the brass and copper,
And they won't go out of my head, whatever I do.

Strange how they come when I feel alone and forsaken,
How they wake me up when the dawn in my room is
hazy,
How they drug me asleep when the night has darkened my
pillow!
Ah, a song will sing in your head when your heart is
crazy!

IV

What can I do but sit here and shake
And let the windows rattle mournfully,
While Sunday brings him never and Monday brings him
not,
And winter hides the town away from me?—

Dreaming how he drew my soul from my lips,
Seeming just to hear forevermore
What my heart tells the clock, what the clock tells my
heart,
Dreaming back the springtime at my door?

V

Why should I curl my hair for him?
He said the trouble couldn't be mended,
He said it must be good-by and go;
And he took up his hat, and all was ended.

Agnes Lee

So all was over. And I'm not dead!
And I've shed all the tears I'm going to shed!

And now he's wanting to come again?

Perhaps he's sorry, perhaps he misses
The hill-top girl. Well, let him come!

But no more love and no more kisses—
Whatever the future, gay or grim,
Why should I curl my hair for him?

VI

I shall go out in the sun today.
I don't know whether to laugh or pray,
For along the waking paths of spring
Bird calls to bird till the branches ring.

Something stirs me—spring's own will—
To wander to the edge of the hill,
Where I can see as I look down
Patches of green on the gray old town.

THE BLUNTED AGE

*[The old man sips his broth and reads his paper before
the fire. His daughters whisper at a window. One of them
holds a letter.]*

First Daughter

I dread his knowing.

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Second Daughter

She was his favorite sister—
Older than he, and very far away.
Think of it—no one with her at the last!
Better delay the telling . . . such a sorrow . . .

First Daughter

Ah, you remember how he loved our mother!
And yet, last summer, after she had died
He never seemed to take it hard at all.
He seemed too much resigned, too much himself.
It would have killed him twenty years ago!

Second Daughter

It is the age they come to. Something goes out,
Goes mercifully out. I often think
They learn to take death as they take their broth,
Their daily walk, their game of solitaire.

First Daughter

And you and I, sister? Already youth
Slips far and far behind us. Shall we, too . . . ?

Second Daughter [*Tearfully*]

How can you say it? How can you say it? Oh!

First Daughter

Here comes old Nurse Lucretia up the street,
Heavy with her dull robes, and hurrying
To be the first to bear the word to him.

Second Daughter

Sign to her, wave her away, wave her away!
He has seen her close so many dead eyes!

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FROM THE DAY-BOOK OF A FORGOTTEN
PRINCE

My father is happy or we should be poor.
His gateway is wide, and the folk of the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.

We live in a castle that's dingy and old;
The casements are broken, the corridors cold,
The larder is empty, the cook is a scold.

But father can dance, and his singing is loud.
From meadow and highway there's always a crowd
That gathers to hear him, and this makes him proud.

He roars out a song in a voice that is sweet—
Of grandeur that's gone, rare viands to eat,
And treasure that used to be laid at his feet.

He picks up his robe, faded, wrinkled and torn,
Though banded in ermine, moth-eaten and worn,
And held at the throat by a twisted old thorn.

He leaps in the air with a rickety grace,
And a kingly old smile illumines his face,
While he fondles his beard and stares off into space.

The villagers laugh, then look quickly away,
And some of them kneel in the orchard to pray.
I often hear whispers: "The old king is fey."

Jean Starr Untermeyer

But after they're gone, we shall find, if you please,
White loaves and a pigeon, and honey and cheese,
And wine that we drink while I sit on his knees.

And, while he sups, he will feed me and tell
Of Mother, whom men used to call "The Gazelle,"
And of glorious times before the curse fell.

And then he will fall, half-asleep, to the floor;
The rafters will echo his quivering snore. . . .
I go to find cook through the slack oaken door.

*My father is happy or we should be poor.
His gateway is wide, and the folk of the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.*

Jean Starr Untermeyer

A FILLET OF THORN

Tell me, how can I sing
Who have not tasted pain?—
Who, having grieved an hour,
Laugh and am glad again?

It will take a winter of frost,
Aching and storm-filled years,
Before I am lord of life,
Before I am king of tears.

Anita Grannis

THE WAGES OF SIN

God the Inscrutable
Looked on complacently
The while young Denison
Slipped all his debts by careful insolvency,
Broke his wife's heart, and ruined the serving girl.
But Lobster Salad and Iced Watermelon—
That was too much for even a godhead:
"I'll smite him for that," quoth God the Inscrutable.
And the wretch died in torment
At two in the morning.

Jessica Nelson North

FOG

The sea is a meadow, pale meadow of silence
Where flowers are blooming, white flowers of sound.
And deep in the petals, the pale listless petals,
Lost ships fumble grumbling, with blindness half crazy.
Does He muse, the Creator, as He peers in the vapor?—
"So bumble bees trouble the heart of the daisy."

Kathryn White Ryan

GEYSER

Presto!—
A crystal dancer
Shimmers into the air,
Waving veils of mist.
Stricken,
She quivers—
Sinks—
Falling upon herself,
Dead.

John R. C. Peyton

GARGOYLE

Your tongue hangs out,
You gloat
And shout,
You leer a ribald sophistry
At me,
From where,
Half goat,
You stare
And lean in horizontal glee.

Kate Buss

DON JUAN IN PORTUGAL

At every pelhourinho's ledge
Faces to set my teeth on edge—
Gray gossips, like a dusty hedge,
Whisper and crackle.

I lean at Alcobaca, dim
With fig-leaves twisted round its rim.
Pauses a slim
Tall maid. Her name?—A Latin hymn,

Gloria da Madre de Deus;
A white-rose face dipped tremulous—
A profile carved as nobly clear
As love-child of Aurelius.

White-clad, barefoot and straight she stood,
Vase-bearing nymph ripe to be wooed
In some delicious interlude.

.

What need now to remember more?—
The tiled and twisted fountain's pour,
The vase forgotten on the floor,
The white street ending in her door;

Her head, a dark flower on a stem;
Her diadem
Of heavy hair, the Moorish low *estalegem*;

Florence Wilkinson

Outside, the stillness and white glare
Of Alcobaca's noonday square;
My hands that dare—
The beauty of her loosened hair:

White shift, white door, the white still street;
Her lips, her arms, her throat, her feet;
After a while—the bread and meat,

A dewy jar of cool red wine,
Olives that glisten wet with brine.
White rose of Alcobaca—mine—
We kiss again above the wine!

.

The red wine drunk, the broken crust,
We parted as all lovers must.
Madre in gloria, be thou just
To that frail glory—
A white rose fallen into dust!

Florence Wilkinson

THE PASSERS-BY

THE PARADE

Faces, laughing and torch-lit,
Passing and passing—
Laughing and torch-lit and passing!

Voices, crying and shouting,
Dying and dying—
Crying and shouting and dying!

Drums, beating and thumping,
Retreating, retreating—
Beating and thumping, retreating!

Gone! There remains but the heat
Of the August night-wind
Blowing a leaf down the street.

TO THE HILLS AROUND NORTHAMPTON

Little New England hills,
How tenderly
You gather in this bit of world
To comfort me,
Encircling all I love
As I would do
Had arms the reach of heart!
Small hills of blue,

If, having grown to be
More tall than you,
I shall be forced to see
The farther view,
How shall I feel
The solace of your rounded form against the sky,
Unless I kneel?

A VANITY

It is a vanity to make
The little waves on my small lake
Speak from their "deep spring depths."
What can they have to say,
Blown down the winking bay
The first half of the day,
Blown back all afternoon?
See—in the early moon,
Wind-driven home, they leap
And scramble on the shore—
And sleep.

AUDIENCE

Of what account the leafing trees—
Dead leaves in autumn? What were these,
Were there no poet's heart to please?
Of you and me what can be said,
Who are not, are, and then are dead—
Without a poet overhead?

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LISTENING

Into the night I sent my call
For you, and hung my head
When there was no reply.

Tonight the singing sky
Is calling me instead—
Cry upon ringing cry.
Although I do not hear your voice,
My head is high.

MAY BASKET

I love you, dear;
And all the little world
Loves my simplicity.

For in my love
There are no passions whirled
In wild complexity.

No mystery
Of "Does she love?" and "Whom?"
Needs fathoming.

I gather love,
And ever find more room
For gathering.

Will you take this basketful today,
Of old love and new flowerets, and say,
"This much she loved me during May?"

THE TRANSIENT

Dear, take my love and do not hesitate.
You think that I shall always wait,
I am so calm.

(It is to reassure, and to inspire
New confidence in you.)

Quick, take my love before it is too late!

Here are my hands held out to give to you
Their treasures—some old, some new,
All dear to me.

Oh, do not agonize me by delay,
And musing which to take!

Quick!—say I gave them to you, passing through.

DIFFERENCE

If you will wander, so shall I—
In opposite directions ply
Our irresistible two ways
Into the nights, into the days.
The east and west shall draw apart,
Like magnets, your heart from my heart.

.

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How vain our tears now we have seen
That east and west have common lures.
You were my magnet—I was yours,
With all the world between.

PLEASE

Give me the old familiar things,
Though they be very plain:
The quaint old tune Joanna sings,
The small house in a lane,
Whose fragrance meets the open door;
The faded carpet on the floor,
The patient peace of furniture—
Familiar things I can endure.

I have been brave a long, long while,
Heard praise, and scorning afterward;
I have met eyes that did not smile,
And now I ask for my reward.
I know the panoramic strand
Of happiness, and grief's sequence.
Rough grains have scratched my venturous hand.
I beg no tribute nor defence;
I only ask familiar things—
The quaint old tune Joanna sings.

Dorothy Butts

POEMS

GARGOYLES OF NOTRE DAME

I watch them shuttle and weave and run
Like dust before a scolding wind:
Boats on the water,
Leaves on the bank,
And men on the streets and square.
Leaves and snow and leaves again,
And men.
Boats to the sea,
Leaves to the wind,
Men to gibbet and wheel—
To thrones,
To bed,
To Père Lachaise.
Muddy tracks in the snow,
And blood on the wheel,
And rotting leaves on the tiles—
The wind and rain will sweep them away
As a soft curled plume might sweep
Flecks from a silken gown.

Shuttle and weave and run—
Boats to the sea,
Leaves to the wind
And men to Père Lachaise.

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EDGES

Edges are more beautiful than anything—
Edges
Where the quiet deep shallows into loveliness,
Where the clouds feather to wavering silver,
And color kisses its brighter self.

Life is most whitely light
Where its low edge
Melts in the still pool of death,
As the sky-rim sinks
In a moon-filled sea.

LULLABY

Tears for your pink, curled hands—
They must strain to hold
The smoke-thin garments of a dream.

Tears for your still eyes—
They must be pierced
By the keen blades of beauty.

Tears for your flower feet—
They must bloom like first spring
On wintry plains.

Tears, tears for your eyes,
And pink, curled hands,
And blossom feet—tears!

PEAKS

Quiet faces,
That look in faith
On distance,
I will come to you
And gaze upon that peace.

I cannot tell
If it be wind you see
Across the summer grain,
Or the shaken agony
Of driven seas.

GOD

I often spend week-ends in heaven,
And so I know him well.
Most times he is too busy thinking things
To talk;
But then, I like his still aloofness
And superior ease.
I can't imagine him in armor, or in uniform,
Or blowing like a windy Caesar
Across the fields of Europe,
Or snooping in my mind
To find what I am thinking,
Or being jealous of the darling idols
I have made.
If ever that slim word—aristocrat—

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Belonged to anyone, it is to God.
You should see him steadying the wings
Of great thoughts starting out
On flight—

Very like a scientist trying a machine.
Patrician, cool, in a colored coat
Rather like a mandarin's;
Silver sandals—quite a picture!
I can't see him
Fluttering in wrathful haste,
Or dancing like a fool.

I don't go there often—
Only when I'm at my best.
I save up things:
Pictures of the sea wild with white foam,
Stories of engines beating through the clouds,
News of earth in storm and sun,
Some new songs—the best.

He's fond of being entertained
With what I choose to tell him of myself—
Very kind about tomorrow,
Indifferent of yesterday.

He's like that—
God in his heaven—alone.
I know, for I made him, put him there
Myself.

Henry Bellamann

THE ARTIST

What would you do—
If you had ear and brain attuned superbly
To all the iridescent humming-birds of faint
And delicate overtones
That play like spirit flames
Above the music?
Suppose your eyes could see
What mine see when a little wind passes,
And all the garden is suddenly barred and starred
With flying color.
Suppose the tilting planes of dogwood bloom,
In the green spring mist of young leaves,
Caught your breath as though a hand
Held your throat—
Or that the red haw veiling herself in May
Kept you awake at nights
Remembering her bridal look.
Oh, suppose this world of nuances,
Opal-soft and frail and swift,
Were for you a reality more hard
Than things you call reality,
And you lived always among the deaf and blind—
What would you do?

Henry Bellamann

COMMENT

FROM QUEEN ANNE TO GEORGE THE FIFTH

THE death of Austin Dobson early in September compelled us all to turn and count the milestones. Was it possible that he had lived till yesterday—this artist in triolets—lived to bridge over, with his trim little silver-silken foot-path, the depth on depth and height on height of wild and thunder-echoing change which lie between his time, his mood, and ours? Was it possible that a poet who reached backward even from Victoria to light his little candle at the wax taper of Queen Anne, that such an one could have lived through impressionists and futurists, through *fin-de-siècle* lassitude and Celtic revolt, through imagists, vers-libristes, aeroplanes, submarines, Russian revolutions and the world war—lived unper-turbed in his eighteenth-century garden, a loyal citizen of an extinct world!

However, in the seventies and eighties Austin Dobson was a "new movement." Swinburne had been showing what might be done with English rhythemics; now Dobson, only three years younger, would open a fresh chapter by following the footsteps of Théodore de Banville in adapting to modern uses the old French forms of those fifteenth-century rhymers Marot and Villon. His art was of a neatness, a nicety; and all the circumstances of his life encouraged and developed its precision, its good-mannerly grace. A comfortable little government office,

with three-fourths of his salary continuing on retirement at sixty; a comfortable pension of two hundred and fifty pounds for his services to literature; a comfortable home and family and "troops of friends"; and a comfortable by-gone period to retire into out of this troublesome modern world. Too comfortable perhaps—apparently a bit enervating; for his books of verse and prose all antedate his retirement from office at the turn of the century. Through the last twenty eventful years this poet has had little to say.

A master-miniaturist?—perhaps not quite, because his eighteenth-century portraits, ballads, dialogues are scarcely the real thing after all, any more than the "period rooms" which our master-decorators create today. They were done with zest, but not with the eighteenth-century faith—their fragile artificiality lacks the true DuBarry bloom. A master of *vers de société*?—possibly again not quite, because the master, even in that genre, always makes you believe, or at least suspect, that he is really in love, or in joy, or in grief, in some wistful corner of his gay but battered heart; whereas Dobson merely plays with pretended emotions—he is always frankly in costume. And as is the way with masqueraders, he usually makes too many bows and gestures, he slightly over-acts the role.

The poems in French forms also—the ballades, villanelles, rondeaux, though done with superlative deftness, remain literary exercises.

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Always in costume, did I say? *Before Sedan* is a poem of simplicity and sincerity, with no superfluous words to mar the sad little story. And in this briefer poem, *The Cradle*, there is a quietly restrained feeling:

How steadfastly she'd worked at it!
How lovingly had dressed
With all her would-be-mother's wit
That little rosy nest!

How longingly she'd hung on it!—
It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
Ere bleak December fled;
That rosy nest he never pressed—
Her coffin was his bed.

In the best of the gayer poems also one may find a hint of feeling, a kind of artistic sincerity, as in an idyl by Boucher or Fragonard; that is, behind the shepherdess symbol is a certain wistfulness of dream. We all remember *The Ladies of St. James*—here is the first of its seven stanzas:

The ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

This poem seems to me Dobson's high-water mark—I

From Queen Anne to George the Fifth

cannot find any other in his two volumes of quite so fine a quality. *The Ballad of Beau Brocade*, *Une Marquise*, and some of the *Proverbs in Porcelain*, are as lightly touched off, but their artificiality is less skilfully disguised.

It is interesting to note how many of the muse's gayer fashions of the last half-century were set by Dobson. First, the old French forms, which soon became a fever, a mania, until every magazine poet in two continents was writing rondels and villanelles—a trick easily learned, and tiresome unless turned off with the rarest grace. Then the library fashion of bookish poems, including the Horation fashion of light-winged tributes, imitations or free translations in the manner of the Augustan bard—fashions so effectively followed in Chicago by Eugene Field and B. L. T. of happy memory, and still pursued, often afar off, by every "colyumist" in the land. Indeed, most of the journalist-poets would confess that they had gone to school to Dobson, and that on the whole the discipline had been salutary.

The name of another venerable English poet leaps to one's mind by way of contrast—a poet also born in 1840, and now still sturdy in his eighty-second year. Thomas Hardy's mind, from youth to age, has looked forward, never back. He lit his torch at truth's camp-fire, and he has carried it ablaze toward the new age—no abyss or peak of change could find him unready or afraid.

Hardy, in his youth a man of our time or beyond; Dobson, in his old age a contemporary of Pope and Gay—

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was there ever a sharper sting of difference? The difference between a great soul and a little one, between a seer and an entertainer. However, each in his own way has been true to his vision. One may grant to each the epitaph Dobson begged for himself—

Saying, "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."

But one must grant to Hardy also some more heroic line. H. M.

REVIEWS

DRINKWATER AS POET AND PLAYWRIGHT

Pawns (four one-act plays), by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Mary Stuart, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Poems, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Does Mr. Drinkwater, poet, use his prose material for his plays? Is it not the duty of a poet to continue being a poet in the theatre? Mr. Drinkwater should suspend business temporarily, take an inventory, and separate his art material from his merchandise. Strong speeches, prompted by fearless thinking, project themselves through the mass of his work, but they are in great danger of being engulfed in heavy waves of conventional mediocrity. Indeed, the proportion of poor stuff is so great that one becomes prejudiced against the whole unless one reads carefully.

Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright

In *Pawns*, a volume of one-act plays, *The Storm* demands some consideration because of its theme and a small section of its dialogue. It is reminiscent of Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, and of course it suffers by comparison. However, in this bit of the opening dialogue he has caught the quality and rhythm of the Irishman, and it leads one to believe that Mr. Drinkwater could write if he would orientate himself:

Alice. I have prayed these hours, and now I'm tired of it.
He is caught in some grip of the rock, and crying out,
And crying, and crying; and none can hear him cry
Because of this great beastliness of noise.

Sarah. Past crying now, I think.

Joan. There, take no heed
Of what she says—it's a rusty mind she has,
Being old, and wizened with bad luck on the hills.

But he fails to sustain this simplicity of speech and the atmosphere of the storm, or to develop the tragic theme with power. The speeches drag out archaically. The Stranger, one of the characters, states:

I was a dream,
A cold monotony suddenly thrust
Into a waking world of lusty change,
A wizened death elected from the waste
To strive and mate with eager lords of tumult.
Beauty was winged about me, darkling speed
Took pressure of earth and smote against my face;
I rode upon the front of heroic hours.

And through the remainder of the volume Mr. Drinkwater does not attempt to pull himself out of archaism. In the other plays he adds rhyme, which doesn't help any.

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The title *The God of Quiet* sounds like Lord Dunsany, and it is possible that Lord Dunsany might have disguised the triteness of the theme. The theme—the return to quiet, to peace after war, the futility of war, the ineffectual result of fighting, the planting of revenge which instigates the eternal round of war, peace, war—must antagonize the artist. Weak propaganda for peace is a just cause for inciting belligerency, and this play is full of it.

Old Beggar. It is the quiet mind that keeps
The tumults of the world in poise.

Soldier. It is the angry soul that sleeps
Where the world's folly is and noise;

King. For anger blunts us and destroys.

Citizen. We are little men to be so proud.

Young Beggar. We are fools: what was so long to build
We break.

With the padding and piling of long speeches on the same theme, one feels that Mr. Drinkwater should have followed the trail of his King:

You god of quiet, some day shall men have spent
All the wild humorous blood of argument.

A Night of the Trojan War is a tragic episode and a good theme, but one is reminded of a better handling of it by Henri Barbusse in one of his short stories. *Cophetua*, the last play in the volume, must have been written in the author's salad days.

If one may continue to suggest other authors for the handling of Mr. Drinkwater's ideas, James Joyce would

Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright

be a good bet to develop the theme in *Mary Stuart*. Not that Mr. Drinkwater is incapable of handling it—the following speeches lead one to believe in him. If such speeches could grip him and control him to the end of a play, we should have something to reckon with:

Mary. My love is crazed, a turbulence, without direction. It was made to move in long deep assonance. I who should be love, may but burn and burn with the love that I am not.

Mary. Darnley, Riccio, Bothwell—there's a theme for a great heart to play! And there's so much to do. I have talent—as rare as any in Europe. It should be my broad road—that and my love. And I cannot use it, for my love is beaten up like dust, blinding me. To be troubled always in desires—that's to be cursed, not wanton. Little frustrations—and it should be the wide and ample movement of life.

Certain speeches have the depth and sweep of drama, they have the flesh and blood of drama; but they should be incorporated in another play.

The prologue is in modern dialogue, but without distinction; and it does not insinuate itself into the “dream.” The dream is lugged in on a dray. It fails to win you with its spell because there is no magic. The modern characters in the prologue argue a theme old in point of time, but modern because it has yet to be developed and established. As if afraid of its modernity, these characters thrust it back into an old story with conventional manners, dialogue, and wit. Whereas the vitality of the theme could break old molds, and precipitate itself without apology into a great, free, modern expression.

The play ends with the voices coming back out of the

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“dream.” This is handled effectively, it has the glamour of hallucination; but Mary’s spirit’s answer to Hunter’s real question breaks the spell. It would be more dramatic and in better taste to let the play end with Hunter’s “My God!—What’s that?” and leave Mary’s answer to the imagination of the audience.

We seem to be passing through the phase of “sightless thought” in the theatre—the gathering of material from history, from industrial, psychological or sociological problems, and making copybook sketches of life instead of evoking the unseen through the magic of art. Because the art-theatres are endeavoring to reserve the theatre for works of the imagination, they are branded high-brow. As a matter of truth, the recorders of facts, the chroniclers of the literal, are the high-brows, the remote ones. As Mr. Drinkwater says in his poem *History*, feeling, beauty, fancy—

Such are the things remain
Quietly and forever in the brain,
And the things that they choose for history-making pass.

The book of poems opens with *Reciprocity*, which commends itself to the reader’s good-nature. It is pleasing, and springs from feeling. The poem *History* beckons with so pleasant a smile, and is really so charming, that one trips gaily over the trite poems which follow, until one receives a nasty bump in *Reverie*. After reading—

And only beautiful can be
Because of beauty is in me—

Drinkwater as Poet and Playwright

it is hard to press on. But if one is to be a critic one must have the unflinching endurance of M. Jules Lemaitre—"What if I were perchance doing my part in killing a masterpiece!"

The book of poems has many pages. We have a large group in the folk-song manner, two sonnets (we swing into their familiar melody with indifference), a group of love-poems tempered with pastoral coolness—songs fashioned circumspectly without unchaperoned passions.

The long poem, *The Fires of God*, goes the way of too many long poems—limping, strutting and striding. Seven-league boots would compass the same journey in a few powerful steps. However, the ambling in *Travel Talk* is pleasant and restful, as ambling in relaxed moods always is. And *The Carver in Stone*, another too long poem, has beauty and an insinuating subtlety in its development. *The Building* is full of nice suggestions, and significant repetitions which give heft to its balance and harmony.

Mr. Drinkwater, in both his plays and his poems, has many moments of clear thinking, but when he summons his naked truth and meets it face to face one feels that he is inadequate. However, some of his thought digs so deep, and has such power that one hopes sincerely that his prayer will be answered—

Give us to build, above the deep intent,
The deed.

Laura Sherry

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OF DREAMS AND STITCHES

Curtains, by Hazel Hall. John Lane Co.

Comes Hazel Hall with her little book, every word and emotion of which is poignantly authentic. The usual first book of verse is conglomerate, and leaves its reader with the confused sense of having listened outside the tower of Babel. But this is the crystallization of a personality—one emerges from it as though one had sat opposite the woman sewing in her little room, plying her needle or stopping to thread it, and talking in a voice at once sad and indomitable.

Her judgment of the world is keen and impartial. She knows it by its footfalls. The step tells more than the chiselled expressionless face:

They pass so close, the people on the street!

Philosophy comes in through the open window. Inevitably,

Only one sound drifts up to me,
The blend of every tread in one,
Impersonal as the beat of the sea.

Often the poet's strength suggests itself even more in rhythm than in word, as in the three lines quoted above, and again:

The beat of life is wearing me
To an incomplete oblivion,
Yet not to the certain dignity
Of death.

In *Curtains*, which is *Part I* of the little book, a certain wistfulness pervades, something compounded half of sad-

ness and half of hope. She is never bitter—even from *Defeat* she wrenches power:

Time's soft fingers gently close
Over my outstretched hand, and in
Their certain touch I feel repose.

In *Part II: Needlework* her touch is even surer, even more deft. I know nothing more definitely and delicately of woman than this handful of pages.

Every poem in the little volume is quotable. We have selected *The Long Day*, one of the less familiar, for beauty of form as well as for its representativeness:

I am sewing out my sorrow,
Like a thread, wearing it thin;
It will be old and frayed tomorrow.
Needle, turn out; needle, turn in.

Sorrow's thread is a long thread.
Needle, one stitch; needle, two.
And sorrow's thread is a strong thread,
But I will wear it through.

Then not only will sorrow
Be old and thin and frayed;
But I shall have tomorrow
Something sorrow has made.

There is something in these poems as personal as the warm and vibrantly sympathetic touch of a hand. The poet has given of herself with generosity, and she leaves one with the sense of being near and intimate. More as a confidant than as some strange reader, one listens with wonder to her fragile fancies, so musically given forth, and weeps at her isolation.

Pearl Andelson

CORRESPONDENCE

POET AND COMPOSER AS ALLIES

Dear Miss Monroe: As a writer of both music and verse, your discussion of *Poetry and the Allied Arts* in the October issue of your magazine has an especial interest for me.

You quote Mr. Case as to the difficulty of arranging a program of American songs possessing sufficient variety of mood and treatment. I believe one reason for this; in the case of the individual composer, is that a publisher becomes accustomed to a certain style from a certain musician, and when the musician changes his idiom the publisher waggles a disapproving head. It is difficult to break away from old patterns and be received as the weaver of new, and often one's best work is a long time finding itself in print.

One of the reasons operating against poet and musician combining more freely is the scant recognition, even obliteration, often accorded the poet-member of the partnership. I am moved to a comment not pleasant to make, concerning as it does my own kinsmen. Observation has forced the conclusion that many musicians are a somewhat insular folk; or should one say indifferent? Surely not ignorant—at any rate, something that begins with I. They are apt to have a kind of unilateral art-sense, a squint-view, as it were, at creative expression, a proneness to feel not only that music's the thing, but the whole thing. It is a not uncommon experience to see the

text of a long work printed in a program headed by the name of the artist who has set it to music, the poet's name appearing not at all. Time and again song-poems are anonymously printed, singly and in groups, in the original or in translation; and the reader is left to infer—if he give it a thought—that the words had “jes' growed.” There is small doubt that the verse yoked to music is often, one may say usually, of negligible inspiration; but if it be given the dignity of program-printing, certainly the authorship should be acknowledged. I look forward to the time when the poet in his association with music will be considered worthy of his hire, be that hire nothing more than recognition of authorship; to the time when all programs shall print, between the title of a song and the name of its composer, the bracketed name of the poet; and when all music critics, not merely the distinguished few, know something of the fellow-arts as well as of music.

Music-publishers have done much to accent the value of the text by giving it separate printing in song publications. William Arms Fisher, a composer of songs and the editor of an eastern music house, takes the broad view that in a song the words are of chief import.

The creative publisher of sweeping vision and the will to dramatize those visions, can do much toward bringing together poet and musician and all allied artists. My collaboration with Henry Hadley in the writing of an oratorio, *Resurgam*; to which you referred, was originally due to the initiative of Mr. Fisher. He asked me for the

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text for a cantata, and, following his usual method of presenting his wishes infectiously and with a large measure of faith, launched the undertaking almost coincidentally with the reading of the letter. When the text was finished he invited Mr. Hadley to make the music. Thus was a happy unity established: music, poetry, opportunity—for certainly the editor or publisher stands for opportunity. After the production of the cantata and one other piece, Mr. Hadley wrote proposing that we do an oratorio together. He said he had “always wished to express in music the sombre passing of mortal life and the glory of immortality.” Upon completion of the text I urged him to make suggestions, and while he was at work on the third section he asked for the interpolation of a contrasting mood. Certainly the text was improved by the suggested addition. I was kept in touch with the music from time to time, being told for what voices in solo, chorus, etc., the various parts of the poem were scored.

There is no question in my mind that co-labor between artists increases the joy which should be the well-spring, and not a by-product, of art-creation.

Louise Ayres Garnett

REACTIONARY COMPOSERS

Dear Editor: It has occurred to me many times, and with even greater force since reading your *Comment* in October's POETRY, that the present unalliance in America

between modern poetry and modern music is primarily due to the complacency of the reactionaries of the musical world. By this I mean not only the reactionaries among the composers and critics, but those in the audiences themselves, who insist, consciously or unconsciously, that our operatic, song and orchestral compositions should remain more than a little antiquated, scented with lavender, while the contemporary arts are keeping pace with the complexities of civilization.

I am aware that the thought which must be uppermost in the convictions of the conservative-minded person is that a torrent has swept into modern art, literature, poetry, sculpture, and even into the drama; something a little ribald, lacking in dignity and beauty as he has known it. And it is perfectly proper, doubtless, for those who are so inclined to hold back a bit before plunging into the swirl of this new movement. There is, of course, always the possibility that each apparent step forward is in reality merely a mood which has taken possession of the reasoning faculties among the free spirits of the generation, and which will prove in time to be just a slight stumble, possibly in the right direction, occurring before the next legitimate step of progress is finally achieved.

On the other hand, it is quite as true that unless there is a tendency in the arts to reflect the spirit of the age—unless they are vividly interpretive, it is evident that they are without constructive value.

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From this hypothesis let X equal progress plus logical development, and behold we have those who would solve the problem! Sherwood Anderson is the forerunner of one group, Amy Lowell of another; then there are the followers of Picasso and Brancusi, of Maurice Browne, and countless others. Whether or not they gain a foothold is as much our concern as theirs, for they *are* ourselves, our explanation, the story which the future generations shall read of us. And meanwhile music stands like a Boston bas-bleu, her skirt a little shortened because of the influence of Korsakov and Dvorak, but still wearing her New England rubbers.

This, perhaps, is the explanation of the answer I have so often received in talking with American song-writers. I have asked them why they do not set such and such a poem to music, and the inevitable answer is given to me: "It isn't adaptable." Adaptable to what? Certainly not adaptable to the music of fifty or twenty-five years ago; no, even not adaptable to the song-music that we loved last year. It must be something so splendidly new that modern music will be able to touch the outstretched hand of modern poetry. *Kay Boyle*

Note by the editor: A word of encouragement comes to us from an enthusiast who has worked for years toward a closer alliance between American poetry and music—Eleanor Everest Freer, a Chicago composer who has used effectively many fine modern poems as the text for songs. Mrs. Freer has urged especially that operas and concert numbers should be sung in the English language and has inaugurated the Opera-in-our-language Foundation to that end.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS

For the ninth time the editors and advisory committee of POETRY face the agreeable but difficult duty of awarding our annual prizes. Nine years ago prizes in this art were practically unheard-of in America, although many annual prizes and scholarships in painting, sculpture, architecture and music had been liberally endowed in perpetuity—awards now ranging in value from one hundred dollars to two thousand or more, even to the richest of all, the three-year scholarship of the American Academy in Rome, which carries studio, board and lodging, and a liberal income.

From the beginning we have believed in such awards, as both a stimulus to artists and a kind of advertisement to the public; and have argued that they are as well deserved, and as effective for these purposes, in poetry as in the other arts. We rejoice that the tide is beginning to turn, and hope that it may prove strong and high. *The Dial's* announcement of an annual purse of two thousand dollars to be given to some one of its contributors is not aimed at poets exclusively, but poets at least have a chance at it; and the five hundred dollars, with which the Poetry Society of America has of late annually crowned some book of American verse, has an air of permanency although not yet permanently endowed.

In his letter *Concerning Awards* in our September number, Mr. Aldis asked the following question, which

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the editor promised to answer, or at least discuss, in November:

Could you devise and suggest some plan by which prizes would not be awarded for an individual poem, but based on broader considerations of personal production and talent, youth and need?

In reply we would suggest that magazine editors and other publishers of verse are usually so well informed as to the "talent, youth and need" of their younger contributors that they would have no difficulty in awarding on that basis as many scholarships or "encouragement prizes" as they might be entrusted with. Every year POETRY has observed this rule in awarding its young poet's prize, always wishing it had eight or ten such prizes, instead of one, wherewith to aid a little with honor and money a few young poets on their stern and rock-bound path.

The difficulty is not here—it lies not in making the award, but in getting the money for it. And patrons of the arts are not wholly to blame for omitting poets from such annual endowments, because this art has as yet few permanent institutions to which people of wealth might give or bequeath such a fund in trust. The Poetry Society of America would accept such a trust with joy, but it is too strongly localized in New York, and too academic in its present tendencies, to inspire strong hope of its exercising a progressive influence. Still less confidence could be felt in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, or its sacred inner circle the Academy, whose leadership is so

Announcement of Awards

hopelessly old-fashioned that it has not yet recognized the fellowship of women in the modern arts.

POETRY of course would rejoice to become the dispenser or initiator of such a fund, and would engage to satisfy any possible donor as to its disposition both during and after the continuance of the magazine. Some trust company of repute should be custodian, the interest to be paid annually by direction of the committee of award. In choosing this committee, the first rule should be that none but poets, poets of recognized standing and authority, should be eligible; and, second, this committee of poets should be instructed that the original and experimental work is to be honored rather than the conservative and assured.

The first committee of award might be chosen by the editor and donor, aided by such expert advice as they might call in. This committee—say of three, or possibly five poet-members, to be chosen from widely separated localities—should be self-perpetuating, but under a time restriction: that is, every three or five years one member should drop out on the election of a new one.

Such a committee of award would not derive from POETRY, and the possible discontinuance of the magazine would not interrupt it in the least. However, if the donor should happen to like POETRY and wish to endorse its policy, its editor might become *ex officio* a member of the committee.

Another method of selecting a committee of award was

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suggested by a lawyer of my acquaintance. Let the presidents of three widely separated institutions—say, the Universities of California and Illinois, and the Poetry Society of America; or Harvard, the University of Chicago, and the Poetry Society of South Carolina; or any other representative three—let such a group of colleges or societies be requested each year by the custodian of the fund (the trust company) to appoint each a member of the committee of awards, such committee-member to be a poet of high repute, one not a member of their faculty or board of officers. And let this committee bestow the award.

Either of these methods would seem to promise as much progressiveness and fluidity, and freedom from local prejudice, as any artistic endowment in perpetuity can be. It would be for the donor to decide whether his gift or bequest should be used for scholarships—that is, student awards to young poets; or for awards of honor, so to speak, to poets who have done high service in the art. If the award should be generously large, the honor would become correspondingly conspicuous, and this fact would be a strong influence toward the worthy disposal of it, as in the case of the Nobel Prize.

We strongly hope that some man or woman of sufficient wealth may be moved to follow this suggestion—someone who would like to turn out of the beaten paths with his gift or bequest, and do something original and constructive and inspiring.

Announcement of Awards

With this rather long preliminary, we now proceed to award POETRY'S three prizes for poems printed in its pages during its ninth year—October 1920 to September 1921. As usual, poems by members of the jury are withdrawn from competition—in this case *That Year*, by Marion Strobel, a group of seven poems in the February number; and Eunice Tietjens' translations, from the French of Antonin Proust, of *Modern Greek Popular Songs*, printed in November of last year. Indeed, no translations are considered for prizes.

We are enabled once more, through the liberality of Mrs. Edgar Speyer, of New York, to award the "young poet's prize," which for the past four years has been given, "as a mark of distinction and encouragement, to the young poet, comparatively unknown as yet, who, in the opinion of the jury, most deserves and needs the stimulus of such an award."

Hoping that our contributors and readers will grant to the members of the jury honesty of judgment, and will not demand infallibility, we now announce the awards:

The HELEN HAIRE LEVINSON PRIZE of two hundred dollars, for a poem or group of poems by a citizen of the United States, is awarded to

LEW SARETT

of Evanston, Illinois, for his poem, *The Box of God*, published in the April number.

This prize was founded in 1913 by Mr. Salmon O.

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Levinson of Chicago. Previous awards have been as follows:

- 1914—Carl Sandburg, for *Chicago Poems*.
- 1915—Vachel Lindsay, for *The Chinese Nightingale*.
- 1916—Edgar Lee Masters, for *All Life in a Life*.
- 1917—Cloyd Head, for *Grotesques*.
- 1918—J. C. Underwood, for *The Song of the Cheechas*.
- 1919—H. L. Davis, for *Primapara*.
- 1920—Wallace Stevens, for *Pecksniffiana*.

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by an anonymous guarantor for a poem, or group of poems, without distinction of nationality, is awarded to

FORD MADOX HUEFFER

of London, England, for his poem, *A House*, published in the March number.

This prize, or other prizes similar in intent, have been previously awarded as follows:

- 1913—Vachel Lindsay, for *General William Booth Enters into Heaven*.
- 1915—Constance Lindsay Skinner, for *Songs of the Coast-dwellers*.
- 1915—"H. D.," for *Poems*.
- 1916—John Gould Fletcher, for *Arizona Poems*.
- 1917—Robert Frost, for *Snow*.
- 1918—Ajan Syrian, for *From the Near East*.
- 1919—Marjorie Allen Seiffert, for *The Old Woman*.
- 1920—Edna St. Vincent Millay, for *The Beanstalk*.

Announcement of Awards

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by Mrs. Edgar Speyer, under conditions noted above, for good work by a young poet, is awarded to

HAZEL HALL

of Portland, Oregon, for her group of seven poems, *Repetitions*, published in the May number.

Six other special prizes, usually of one hundred dollars each, have been previously awarded: to Louise Driscoll, for *Metal Checks*, as the best poem of the war received in competition and printed in our War Number of November, 1914; to Wallace Stevens, for *Three Travellers Watch a Sunrise*, adjudged the best one-act poetic play received in a prize contest—July, 1916; and four times to young poets, viz.:

1916—Muna Lee, for *Foot-notes—III, IV, VII*.

1918—Emanuel Carnevali, for *The Splendid commonplace*.

1919—Mark Turbyfill, for poems of 1917-18-19.

1920—Maurice Lesemann, for *A Man Walks in the Wind*.

Besides the above three awards, the following poems receive honorable mention:

Boys and Girls, and *The Way Things Go*, by Genevieve Taggard (June and February).

Down the Mississippi, by John Gould Fletcher (October, 1920).

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A Hymn for the Lynchers, by Isidor Schneider (October, 1920).

Gallery of Paintings, by Marjorie Allen Seiffert (July).

Swift's Pastoral, by Padraic Colum (January).

Under the Tree, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts (July).

The Heart Knoweth its own Bitterness, by Aline Kilmer (May).

Poems, by Yvor Winters (December).

A Song for Vanished Beauty, and *An Old Tale*, by Marya Zaturensky (September).

Sappho Answers Aristotle, by Maxwell Bodenheim (May).

Twenty-four Hokku on a Modern Theme, by Amy Lowell (June).

Tanka, by Jun Fujita (June).

In Maine, by Wallace Gould (November).

Still Colors, by Elinor Wylie (April).

Advent, and *The Cornfield*, by Charles R. Murphy (August, and October 1920).

Cape Helles, by Morris Gilbert (June).

Without Sleep, and *The Poet at Nightfall*, by Glenway Wescott (September).

Communion, by Hildegard Flanner (February).

(The editor regrets that the extreme length of the poems by Mr. Sarett and Mr. Hueffer makes it impossible for us to reprint the prize poems of this year. We must refer our readers to our April, March and May numbers.)

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

A NEW "YOUTH"

We welcome the advent of a new monthly—*Youth: A Magazine of the Arts*—and wish it high inspiration and long life. The editors are H. C. Auer, Jr., and Sam Putnam, the business manager is Henry Drews, and the place of publication is 70 East Elm Street, Chicago. The first number, October, which appears as we go to press, contains prose and verse by Ben Hecht, Elsa Gidlow, Emanuel Carnevali, John McClure, Pierre Loving, Henry Bellamann, Jun Fujita, Oscar Williams and others; and pictures by Wallace Smith, Steen Hinrichsen and Frederick Dalrymple. The list of contributors, present and future, looks promising, and the size and format are convenient and in good taste.

NOTES

Mr. Edwin Curran, who is a telegrapher in Zanesville, Ohio, has published privately two small books of verse, *First Poems* and *Second Poems*, since his first appearance in POETRY in March, 1918. In spite of their modest backing and poor typography, these have attracted a good deal of notice from critics of authority.

Agnes Lee (Mrs. Otto Freer), of Chicago, is the author of several books of verse, the latest being *The Sharing* (Sherman, French & Co.)

Jean Starr Untermeyer, (Mrs. Louis U.), is the author of *Growing Pains*, published in 1918 by B. W. Huebsch; and a new book of later poems will soon appear.

Florence Wilkinson (Mrs. Wilfred Muir Evans), of New York, is the author of *The Ride Home* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), and of a number of novels and plays.

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Mr. Henry Bellamann, who is at the head of a music school in Columbia, S. C., has written verse and prose for the special magazines and music journals. His first book of verse, *A Music-Teacher's Note-book*, was issued in 1920 by the Lyric Society.

Miss Kate Buss, of New York, is the author of *Jevons Block* (McGrath-Sherrill Press, Boston).

Mr. John R. C. Peyton is a young poet of Chicago.

The other poets of this number are new to our readers.

Miss Dorothy Butts, a native of San Francisco, but now resident in New York, graduated last June from Smith College.

Kathryn White Ryan (Mrs. Edward Ryan), went to New York from Denver two years ago, and has since published a few poems and prose sketches in some of the magazines.

Miss Jessica North, who is the private secretary of President Judson of the University of Chicago, has also published poems in magazines.

Miss Anita Grannis, of New York, divides her time "between the University of New York and Richmond Hill House, an East Side settlement in the congested Italian colony."

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Out of Mist, by Florence Kilpatrick Mixer. Boni & Liveright.

The Golden Darkness, by Oscar Williams. (*The Yale Series of Younger Poets*.) Yale University Press.

Selected Poems, by Yone Noguchi. Four Seas Co.

Rhymes and Ramblings, by H. W. Stewart. Alexander McCubbin, Melbourne, Australia.

Mexican Moonlight, by Russell Meriwether Hughes. Richard G. Badger.

New England Days, by Hellyn George. Four Seas Co.

Songs for Parents, by John Farrar. Yale University Press.

Yuletide and You, by Henry E. Harman. Stone Publishing Co., Charlotte, N. C.

ANTHOLOGIES:

Irish Poets of Today, compiled by L. D'O. Walters. E. P. Dutton & Co.

New Voices (New Edition, Revised and with New Material), by Marguerite Wilkinson. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the distinguished English poet, novelist and critic, wrote us last July:

If American periodical literature has today a little peak, a little group of journals, raising it to the level of the best of European cosmopolitanism, or at any rate in that direction, it is because you and your small paper showed how, editorially and economically, it could be done.

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 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX
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DECEMBER 1921

RESURGAM*

I: BIRTH

OUT of the dust Thou hast raised me, God of the
living;
Out of the dust Thou hast raised me and brought me to
the light of morning.
My eyes are full of the wonders of creation,
And my spirit leaps within me.
I behold Thy glory lifted into mountains,
Thy kindness deepened into valleys,
Thy hospitable mercies poured unmeasured in the seas.
In plenteous ways Thou hast devised the telling of Thy
dreams,
Entreating beauty from the clay,
And quickening man from out his dusty silence.

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Thou floatest flakes of color in the air, and, breathing on
them,
Wingest them to life;
Thou callest the dazed leviathan up from the watery
reaches,
And summonest vasty creatures who come lumbering past,
Astonished at their being.
Who am I, Lord of Creation, that Thou shouldst think
upon me?
Beside a mountain or a soaring bird, what am I that Thou
shouldst give me place?

I can praise Thee, O God!
I can praise Thee to the summit of my singing;
With the flesh of me, with the breath of me, with the
height of me!
Increase my stature even as the trees,
Increase my stature till I pass the oak and glimpse the
towers of heaven!
With the waters of gratitude I brim my cup and pour it
at Thy feet;
For thou hast shared the gift of life, and my spirit sings
within me!

II: LIFE

Into the noon of labor I go forth that I may reap my
destiny.

Sorrow is my lot, and labor my achievement,
The beauty of God's handiwork my compensation.
Something within me springs like a fountain and urges me
to joy;

Sorrow is as beauty and labor as reward.
Thou art become a greater God, O God, because of my
endeavor.

Listen through my ears, Thou of my singing sanctuary,
Listen through my ears that I hear Thy silent music;
Look through my eyes that I vision the unseen;
Speak through my lips that I utter words of gladness.
Walk Thou with me, work Thou through me, rest Thou
in me,

That I may make Thee manifest in all my ways.
I will praise Thee, praise Thee with the labor of my hands
And with the bounty of my spirit!

III: DEATH

Into the valley land my feet descend, and man may not
go with me;

But Thou, O God, companion me in love that I be un-
afraid.

The dream of death has flowered in my soul and sounds of
earth fall dimly on my ears.

Slowly the sun goes westering in the hills, and the crimson
pageant of my passing hour

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Flames in their deeps and moves across the sky.
Something within me reaches back to birth and fills me
with exulting.
As the waters of a river, sweep the wonders of creation
through my being,
And life and death are so inseparate I know not each from
each.

And yet a mighty fearing falls upon me.
Shadows descend and blur the crimson hills.
A wind flung from a womb of ice
Blows from the shores of nothingness.
The shadows shed their shoes of stealth;
They run in naked swiftness from the hills
Calling the hosts of darkness.
The winds sing a song of fury,
The winds arise and shout their passion down the world.
Drained in a pitiless draught
Are the splendors of the skies.
Towers of cypress touch the heights;
Even in a battlement of gloom
The towers of cypress overwhelm the heavens.
My peace is perished,
My dreams are fallen from me.
Into the night no planet speeds its glory;
The stars are drowned.
Lonely the hulk of a broken moon
Lifts its bloody sail.

Merged into rushing torrents are the shadows and the
winds;
The shadows and the winds plunge high upon the shore
And swallow all the world.

Why hast Thou hidden Thyself, O God?
Why hast Thou turned Thy face aside
And burdened me with night?
Where is my dream of death,
And where its sanctuary?
The heat of hell assails me;
I am consumed in bitterness and pain.
Reveal Thyself, O unforgetting Spirit!
Reveal Thyself that I may be enshrined
In the beauty of Thy presence.
Drive forth this mocking counterfeit of Death,
For it is Thou who art my Death, O living God,
It is Thou who art my Death, and only Thou!

My fearing passes from me:
As a heavy mantle falling from tired shoulders,
My fearing slips away.
Candles are set at my feet that I be not lost forever.
Thou hast heard my cry, O Great Bestower!
Thou hast heard my cry, Thou hast lifted me up,
Thou hast delivered me!

Now does the hush of night lie purple on the hills.
The moon walks softly in a trance of sleep;

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Her whiteness cools the passion of the skies.
I hang my quiet lute upon her curve
And let the night winds chant my requiem.
Waters of peace arise and drift me down the spaciousness
of silence and of sleep;
God lights His solemn watch-fires overhead to keep the
vigil of man's mystery.

In the triumph of surrender I take Thy gift of sleep.
Lean low, Thou Shepherd of my dreams; lean low to meet
me as I lift on high
The chalice of my dying.

IV: RE-BIRTH

I feel my spirit stir and half awake,
Then look in bright bewilderment at dawn.
O waking past all dreaming!
O Love Imperious that hast called me forth from out my
valley's shadow!

A mighty whirlwind, breath of the living God,
Sweeps from beyond the barricades of night, and, stooping
low,
Lifts me from out my dust and sets me free.
I feel the Power that moors me to Itself;
That keeps the rhythmic pattern of the stars;
That spins, like a fiery plaything in the air,

Louise Ayres Garnett

The earth that was my home.
My hour is great with leisure;
My day is manifest.
O clamorous world!—thy wasting fires
Have burned themselves to ashes.
O foolish pomp!—thy futile stride
As an image in a glass has passed away.
Time's mystery and menace are resolved:
The Now of Man is God's Forevermore.

My heart is as a forest treed with wonder.
The cymbals of my joyance make a stirring sound,
My singing shakes the day.
I know myself at last:
Thou, glorious One, hast revealed me to myself.
As new-born planets sang in ecstasy,
So sing the voices of my thankfulness.
I praise Thee!
I glorify Thee!
Thou art the Singer, man Thy Song;
My spirit on its summit shouts Thy name!
O Singer, Who hast sent me forth,
I am returned to Thee!

Louise Ayres Garnett

THE HOSTAGE

In dead of dark to his starry North
Saint Nicholas drew near—
He had ranged the world this wintry night,
His elk-bells jangling clear.
Now bitter-worn with age was he,
And weary of mankind, for few
Had shown him love or courtesy.

His sacks lay empty—all save one;
And this to his affright
Stirred as he stooped with fingers numb,
Ablaze with hoar-frost bright.
Aghast he stood. Showed fumbling thumb,
Small shoulder, a wing—what stowaway
Was this, and whence was 't come?

And out there crept a lovely Thing—
Half angel and half child:

“I, youngest of all Heaven, am here, to be thy joy,” he
smiled.

“O Nicholas, our Master Christ thy grief hath seen;
and He

Hath bidden me come to keep His tryst, and bring His
love to thee:

To serve thee well, and sing Nowell, and thine own son
to be.”

Walter de la Mare

SUPERNAL DIALOGUE

*Two beings
Stood on the edge of things—
Their breath was space,
And their eyes were suns.*

I It was this way he passed—
I know the sound.

II More worlds—
He can not forbear—

I Look down this lane—
It was dark till he passed.
Do you see—anything?

II Seeds of light—glowing, whirling—
A handful.

I Separating now.

II Fierce fire-balls—
So many—so many. Will he get what he wants—
The perfect flower?

I Flower of delight—to bloom beside his throne?
Sometime he will.

[*A pause*]

I Look—that little one—
Burning, aching—
Trailing its tiny orbs—

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II Which one?

I See—scarlet—oh, alive!
Deep in that right-hand cluster near the dark.

II With tiny trailers—will it be one of them?
That clouded one, maybe?

I Look—it foams down.
The clouds lift—
There are seas—

II Lands—a creeping green—
Sounds of air moving.

I Hush—oh, whisper!—do you see
Dark specks that crawl?
And wings that flash in the air?

II Spawn—immeasurably minute.
What does he mean, the fecund one, creating without
reason or mercy?

I He must—life is his song.
He dreams—he wills.

II Watch now—they change, those atoms.
They stand on end—they lay stone on stone—
They go clad—they utter words.

I Proud—they take their spoil.
Kings—and slaves.

Harriet Monroe

II Oh queer—ingenious! They gather in towns,
They filch our fires to carry them over land and sea.

I They measure the stars—they love—they dream.

II But war—pain—obliterative war and pain.

I So brief—each one a tiny puff—and out.

II Grotesque!

I A few look up—salute us before they fall.
A few dare face him.

II Is it enough?
[A pause]

I It cools down—their whirling world.
It is silent—cold.

II Has he lost again? Can he fail?

I Who are we to question? Though he fail again and
again—

II Yes, who are we?

I He must go on—he must get the flower.

Two beings

Stood on the edge of things—

Their breath was space,

And their eyes were suns.

Harriet Monroe

TWO NEGRO SPIRITUALS

A DREAM

I had a dream last night, a wonderful dream.
I saw an angel riding in a chariot—
Oh, my honey, it was a lovely chariot,
Shining like the sun when noon is on the earth.
I saw his wings spreading from moon to earth;
I saw a crown of stars upon his forehead;
I saw his robes a gleaming like his chariot.
I bowed my head and let the angel pass,
Because no man can look on Glory's work;
I bowed my head and trembled in my limbs,
Because I stood on ground of holiness.
I heard the angel in the chariot singing:
 "Hallelujah early in the morning!
 I know my Redeemer liveth—
 How is it with your soul?"

I stood on ground of holiness and bowed;
The River Jordan flowed past my feet
As the angel soothed my soul with song,
A song of wonderful sweetness.
I stooped and washed my soul in Jordan's stream
Ere my Redeemer came to take me home;
I stooped and washed my soul in waters pure
As the breathing of a new-born child

Fenton Johnson

Lying on a mammy's breast at night.
I looked and saw the angel descending
And a crown of stars was in his hand:
"Be ye not amazed, good friend," he said,
"I bring a diadem of righteousness,
A covenant from the Lord of life,
That in the morning you will see
Eternal streets of gold and pearl aglow
And be with me in blessèd Paradise."

The vision faded. I awoke and heard
A mocking-bird upon my window-sill.

THE WONDERFUL MORNING

When it is morning in the cornfield
I am to go and meet my Jesus
 Riding on His white horse.
When it is morning in the cornfield
I am to be there in my glory.
 Shout, my brethren! Shout, my sisters!
I am to meet the King of Morning
 Way down in the cornfield.

Fenton Johnson

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HANDFUL OF ASHES

THE CAPTIVE

Beauty that shakes in lights,
Beauty that gleams in mists,
Loveliness of still nights,
Gold of the stars that twists,
Ribbon-like, into the sea . . .
Beauty is calling me.

Delicate crimson flames,
Jewels with long histories,
Mysterious oft-said names,
Blossoms beneath great trees,
Melodies deep and low,
Call me. I can not go.

Heliotrope, jasmine, rose;
Lovers, at crumbling gates;
Silence, when eyelids close;
Cliffs, where the sea-bird mates:
Beauty holds these for me
Whose eyes are too blind to see.

Beauty, when sunbeams blur,
Calls me again and again.
I can not answer her.
Beauty shall call me in vain,

Sadly, from year to year . . .
Passion has chained me here.

WAITING

If you should walk in the park and not find me,
Or go in the market-place and not see me,
Would you not search further?
Does not your heart tell you I am somewhere?
Go out on the long roads—I may be at the end of one.

The sea to the ship,
The river to the little boat,
The cloud to the swallow—
One for the other, always.
And I, for you, forever.

FUTILITY

The nights grow long and the days cold—
I dream of you and love.
The dead leaf, falling from the tree,
Is not more sad than memory;
Nor is the rising wind as bold
As were your lips on me. . . .
(What are you thinking of?)

The streets and trees and people pass
Like words beneath my pen;

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Symbols, below a painted sky—
I have no part in them. I lie
Futile as footsteps on the grass.
Wind-torn, storm-drenched; I long to die.
(You might remember . . . then.)

BOUND

Take away the magic
You have put on me:
I am held by whispers—
I, who would be free.

I who would be free and false,
Why must I be true?
I fear to move, for hurting
The clinging thoughts of you.

So the sunny branches
Beckon me in vain:
I, beside the hearth-fire,
Huddle to my pain.

Dorothy Dow

FROM A BAY-WINDOW

*My world is a pane of glass. These only
Of the shadowy without are mine:
They that pass;
The gray birds fluttering by;
The cloud that sometimes sails
Over the chimney-bitten sky,
When all else fails.*

AUTUMN RAIN

To eyes hollow
With the gray distress
The passing swallow
Is all but a caress.

STEEPLES

They gaily pass
Within
Who would be freed (*en masse*)
Of sin.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY

Up flutters a hand to caress—
Midway in the prayer—
Her Sabbath dress,
The frail gray of her hair.

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TO A DEAD LOVE

Why, O love,
Shall I not sing,
Who above her child
Would plant a flowering thing?

TO FELIX

Clear as water pooled in a cup
I hear your thoughts
Through all the spaciousness of my unrest.
You have no place
For the white bird at my breast,
Or the face your hands lift up.

APRIL SNOW

Oh, your words are bitter to me
As these last flakes of snow are
To the little shining buds; but no bud
That glistens like a raindrop on a tree
Is so fresh with love.

SOLACE

Knock at my pane
With your finger-tips,
O rain.

Pearl Andelson

BEACH SONG

What are they weaving under the water?
They make sheer laces and drag them down.
They ruffle a lawn with a great grieving.
What are they making—what manner of gown?

What are they weaving, caught here,
Caught there, on the thin-washed blue?
Who is to be married or who is to be buried,
Under the water, under the water?

SONG ON DEATH

Death comes inexorably. His pale deft hand
Is never still. Swift and impalpable
He comes, taking what he will. Life is a circle
Which has gone its round. He tarries
Where old women sit, peering at the ground.

OUT OF A CAVALCADE OF DUST

In such a white procession,
In such a guise,
The dead might return
With pantomime of lips and eyes.

Pearl Andelson

GREY CRUST

I am weary, unto desire of death,
Of the thought fretting in my body,
Of the body wrapped round my thought.

They go—
The curious panting creatures I would be—
Along the grey crust of the street.

I would be fused into her—
Girl going whither I know not!
I would have her shrill eager breasts—
Gusts of storm driving the sail of her blouse;
Her round polished knees, rising, moving like pendulums—
Engines urging the sail of her skirt;
Her sharp bird-like head cleaving the sail of the wind.
I would have the curious blood of her,
I would have her dream.

I would be fused into him—
Child carried in the arms of a mother,
Child carried whither he knows not!—
I would have the gurgling mirth
Emanating from gay-colored baubles;
The shiver, the sweat and the nightmare
Emanating from dark wrangling shadows:
I would have his untinted history,

Laurence Vail

And the hunger
To seize the whole world by the mouth.

I would be fused into anyone going new ways.

Laurence Vail

TWO POEMS

WILL POWER

I would rather grind my teeth to powder,
I would rather tread barefoot on thin, sharp stones,
I would rather let the blood of my veins freeze to red ice,
And the muscles of my legs stiffen to cold stone,
 Than be drawn by the warm breath
 Of transient things.

I would rather—
But . . . yet . . .
I am being drawn . . . I am being drawn . . .

PAIN

It is
The hush that falls
When screaming chords, drawn taut,
Break with a sudden snap!—and then
Recoil.

Henry Saul Zolinsky

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ARPEGGIO

September

The bamboo stalks quiver—
Only one sways toward the moon face.

October

Spider telegraph wires
Flash from oak to sage!

November

Blackbirds printed on the sky.
Quick!—erase them for another print!

December

Tumble-weeds rolling 'cross lots,
And tumble-weed clouds on the mountain!

Winifred Waldron

SEMPER EADEM

Cheeks that are sunk and ashen,
Eyes that weep in vain:
Always the same passion
In the same futile fashion,
And the same pain—
Forever begun again.

Paul Tanaquil

NEURIADE

LAKE

Sitting on a bench facing God's beautiful lake,
A poem to God beautiful.

Lake Michigan,
The love a poor sick body held
(Sifted by the sift of a hundred nights of pain),
A poor sick body gave it all to you.

Your absinthe
Has intoxicated me.

Having risen out of your waters,
In front of my great eyes now
There is a mad blur of sunlight,
And the City spread out before me calling from a great
curve:

"Come, enter, conquistador!"

The line of your horizon, pure and long, hitched to the
infinite both ways,
Where the mist lies like Peace.

Swimming, I flirted with Death;
Saw death running over the shadow-laced ripples;
And turned around, as you threw water in my eyes,
And laughed at Death, as Death's brother, the devil,
would.

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You slammed open the doors of the sky,
And there stood the tremendous sun.

Lake, gilded in the morning,
I have come out of you,
A fresh-water Neptune;
And the water rang little bells
Trickling down
Along my flesh.
Lake, garden of the colors,
Sweet-breathing mouth of Chicago,
Words die in the fingers of a sick man,
As children dying on a poor father.
Take my promise, lake.

SLEEP

At the bottom of the abyss of sleep
A black cradle rocks.
Pain, slight, with evanescent fingers
Pushes it.
Under the cradle is earth,
To cover and stifle you.

AUBADE

The morning now
Is a white corpse—
The nightmares

Killed her.
Vainly the breeze
Wafts a terrible sadness
Over her body.

ENCOUNTER

Little grey lady sitting by the roadside in the cold,
My fire is to warm you, not to burn you up.

Little grey lady in your little grey house in the warmth,
Your warmth is to loosen my frozen arms and tongue,
Not to drowse me.

SERMON

Chao-Mong-Mu freely laid his hands over the sky:
You do not know how to lay your hands over the breasts
of your beloved.

Chao-Mong-Mu made the tree dance at his will:
You do not know how to hug a rough tree and say
“darling” to it.

Chao-Mong-Mu magnificently ran a shaft of sunlight to
smash against the treetops:
You walk carefully, carefully, and fend off the sunlight
with your grey clothes, although you're very poor.

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Chao-Mong-Mu painted a sky that was a pink-fleshed vase; then he became a very small thing and hid in the vase:

You build yourselves immense houses to live in, and you are afraid even there.

HOPE

Tomorrow will be beautiful,
For tomorrow comes out of the lake.

INSOMNIA

For a year his desperate hands beat the darkness. Then out of their rhythm a monster was created:
Three claws on his breast, so that he could not with facility heave it;
Three claws on his skull, so that he had waking nightmares the year long.
When at last his hands dropped, the monster stooped over him, and with his yellow beak plucked out his white heart.

SMOKE

All the smoke of the cigarettes of dreamers went over to the sky, and formed that blue vault you see up there.

FUNERAL MARCH

The great corpse
Is the crowd.

A whole day
It takes to bury it.

In the morning
They begin;

Not at night,
For they're afraid.

I'm here for . . .
Oh, to wail a great goodbye.

ITALIAN SONG

Until your lips be red,
Until the winter-time,
Until the money be gone,
Until God see us:
Until God see us.

Until old age come, girl,
Until the other man come,
Until the jettatura get me,
Until God see us:
Until God see us.

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OLD ACCUSTOMED IMPUDENT GHOST

That morning the dawn arose from the sodden grey city
pavements,
And it was a sick grey breath.
I had spent myself asking the night for sleep.

Broken in pieces I was—only the evil spirit was whole
in me;
There was a curse on my bitten bloody lips. . . .
And then . . .

Oh, then the old accustomed, impudent ghost came in:
He wore my bagged, ragged pants, and was unshaven;
And his face was the one I had seen in the mirror
Too many times.

INVOCATION TO DEATH

Let me
Close my eyes tight.
Still my arms,
Let me
Be.
Then,
Come!
Let me be utterly alone:
Do not let the awful understanding that comes with
The thought of Death
Bother me.

Emanuel Carnevali

Your love was not strong enough to hold me.

Death takes things away:
I have them here in my hands,
The rags.

I do not understand the cosmic humor
That lets foolish impossibilities, like me, live.

I have made a mess of it,
But I am no debtor.

It's the yearning of a nervous man,
The yearning for peace,
The curiosity for a word:
Forever.

If She would only come quietly,
Like a lady—
The first lady and the last.

Just not to hear any longer
The noise swelling from the morning streets,
Nor the two desperate sparrows chirruping;
Just not to fear any longer
The landlady.

Emanuel Carnevali

COMMENT

RENEWAL OF YOUTH

THE Christmas season, winter-clad as it is, always utters the prophecy of youth. Celebrating the birth of a great renewer of life, it rings the first far-away bell, waves the first red-and-green banner, to usher in the springtime. It reminds us of the perennial miracle, the unconquerable hope and joy forever freshly blooming in the new life of this earth.

The passage of the generations—that is the great poem. The long epic of birth, growth and decay—the struggle of life to assert its dominion over destructive forces, the momentary conquest and the final defeat—this is the universal story of which all lesser tales are mere chapters and paragraphs. Absorbed in our small affairs, singing our individual little solos, we too often miss the immense chorus vibrating grandly through the ages—a chorus which accepts and harmonizes the whir of the cricket and the long drum-roll of the stars.

Life's bitter and unceasing fight is against the forces of decay: when it lapses, and turns to fight the forces of growth, the result is confusion and disaster. Through the battering by young minds alone may each generation forget to grow old; therefore let youth be free and strong, let it have room for its race and its shout, lest bars and shackles enslave the next age.

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The battering by young minds—perhaps an editor's office, especially a poetry-editor's office, is the place most accessible of all to such battering, the place where some of the freest and strongest of young minds love to put up their first stiff fight against the forces of decay. Too often they find these forces entrenched in the editorial chair, so that the battlefield is conveniently narrowed down and the issue personified. And the editor, if he waives all advantage of position, age, experience, etc., will have to put up the best fight he is capable of, and often come out second-best at the end of it.

A recent article on *This Youngest Generation* by Malcolm Cowley (*New York Evening Post Literary Review* of October 15th) shows with what a simple gesture the young mind can throw away the immediate past—at least of its own race and language. Youth must avenge itself, not on the honored dead, but on the too-much-honored living; and so we find Shaw and Wells and Mencken and all the Georgian poets and prozers—and, oh yes, Chesterton and Schnitzler and Nathan—cast into the discard, while youth is reading Flaubert and Laforgue and Huysmans, diving deeper into the past toward Swift and Defoe, Racine, Molière, even Marlowe, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, and then coming up again to salute Remy de Gourmont and certain new groups of French poets to whom he showed the way. Through all this the young writers are shaping their own ideals: there is to be “a new interest in form,” “a simplification of current

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life into something rich and strange"; "our younger literature will be at least as well composed as a good landscape—it may even attain to the logical organization of music."

Form, simplification, strangeness, respect for literature as an art with traditions, abstractness—these are the catchwords that are repeated most often among the younger writers. They represent ideas that have characterized French literature hitherto, rather than English or American. They are the nearest approach to articulate doctrine of a generation without a school and without a manifesto.

Le roi est mort, but he has prepared the people for the new reign:

The great advantage of this generation is the fact that a public has been formed. It has been formed exactly by those inchoate realists, like Dreiser, and by those anti-Puritanical critics, like H. L. Mencken, against whom this youngest generation is in revolt. But gratitude is not a literary virtue.

Yes, here as elsewhere gratitude is the rarest of the—shall we say, not virtues, but graces? It is an education in a still rarer virtue, and grace—humility, to note how easily the rising generation puts the risen one in its place. Shaw, Mencken, Dreiser—how they pawed the ground and trod the air not so long ago! What rebels, iconoclasts they were as they leapt all barriers toward the glamorous goal of art! Now conquering youth is mounted—soon he will ride them down with joy. *Le roi est mort*—for what happy heir shall we soon be shouting, "*Vive le roi!*"?

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Yes, the wave-movement of the arts is one phase of the universal epic. Birth, growth, decay; new birth, fresh growth, and yet at last decay—the rule is for you and me as well as another, and in each of us it is proved. So hail to conquering Youth—even to sacred Infancy in its mother's arms! May the newly risen or newly born solve the riddles and sing the songs of the world! May he rid the earth of war and disease, of poverty and ignorance—famine of body and soul! May he complete nature's beauty with the beauty of art, and nature's truth with the truth of the spirit, and lead on the millennium to which we all aspire!

H. M.

ALEXANDER BLOK

Alexander Blok's death in the late summer is a loss not only to Russia but to world-literature. He was forty-one years of age, and had achieved international fame only during the last two years through the circulation of his revolutionary lyric, *The Twelve*. He was the first distinguished Russian writer to espouse openly the Bolshevik cause, and was one of the few first-rate imaginations which seem to have been sufficiently nourished upon the black bread of revolution. In his youth he was a writer of intense and remote lyrics, full of mystic vision and the pungent odor of the flowers of evil. The translators point out that Blok "owed a cultural allegiance to the old order." But he had from the first, like the

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typical Russian peasant, adored the Christ hanging in tormented effigy at the wind-raked cross-roads, and marching before the poor, their Brother of compassion; and it was inevitable that Blok should not despair of the blind, violent, but spiritual people, discovering in their wild fury the elements of redemption.

For the world of intellectual irony seemed to him rotten and ready for destruction. The nineteenth century, he wrote, "has cast upon the living face of man a blinding mask of mechanics, positivism, and economic materialism, and has drowned the human voice in the rumble and roar of machinery." As to whether Blok felt before he died that the administrators of this revolution were betraying their ideal, "loving Her in heaven and betraying Her on earth," opinions seem to differ. Certainly there is little likeness between the cold, dedicated Cromwellian executives who now direct the Soviet government, and the twelve mystic roisterers of Blok's *The Twelve*, written in 1918.

This poem, the Russian edition of which exceeded two million copies, was recently translated by Miss Deutsch and Dr. Yarmolinsky. It portrays the procession, through the streets of Red Petrograd, of twelve holy ruffians, looting, killing, singing. The scheme of the poem is bold and flexible, including revolutionary songs, an episode of low passion and jealousy terminated by murder, and penetrating lyric passages with a movement like the folk-song. There is occasional convincing

symbolism, as when the old order is personified by a mangy cur: "Beatings are the best you'll get." Behind all the lurid light and noise is the huge bare vision, the flat endless unmoved steppe:

Hutted Russia
Thick-rumped and solid—
Russia, the stolid.

In the storm and cold the blackguards stumble on, like disciples of a starved gray-bearded introspective Dionysus. At the end of the poem, they meet their master, inscrutable, pitying, crowned with flowers—the white untouched Christ, bearing the red flag:

In mist-white roses garlanded,
Christ marches on. The twelve are led.

The Twelve is a stirring battle-song which will not soon be dissociated from the history of these mysterious blood-dripping days. The translation, while it gives little impression of beauty as English verse, permits the smoky fire of the original to shine through.

Glenway Wescott

REVIEWS

A FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS

Second April, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

If I could only sound a fanfare in words! If I could get up on some high place and blow trumpets, and shout

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and wave my hands and throw my hat! If, too, I could gather together all those of my dear friends who have said: "Oh yes, I like poetry well enough—Longfellow, and Byron and those; of course I admit I can't understand this modern stuff!" And if I could gather together all the shrugging shoulders, all the supercilious smiles, and all those brows which have knitted at the mention of poetry, and could read to them—or get Edna St. Vincent Millay to read to them, if it were only possible!—her latest book, *Second April!* And then if I could give it to all those hungry people who have not the money for beauty, and give it to children—even be generous with it!—and let it lie on the library table of the fashionable house, beside the *Golden Treasury*, where it might be picked up by the casual caller so that he would get drunk in a new way! And later, after the shy emotions and the jaded ones have had their dance in the sun, if I could get away to some deserted place of beauty, and hold a solitary revel, an orgy of poetry!

And yet even if the copies of *Second April* rained down like manna, I suppose there would still be some, among the most needy, to spurn the fare, some who would look, and look in vain, for intricacies of form, for startling words, for grotesque similes, for splashing impressionistic phrases. And there would be those who would think an occasional sonnet indecent, because it flings high, unashamed, the joy of living!

Not with libation, but with shouts and laughter

A Flourish of Trumpets

We drenched the altars of Love's sacred grove,
Shaking to earth green fruits, impatient after
The launching of the colored moths of Love.
Love's proper myrtle and his mother's zone
We bound about our irreligious brows,
And fettered him with garlands of our own,
And spread a banquet in his frugal house.
Not yet the god has spoken; but I fear,
Though we should break our bodies in his flame,
And pour our blood upon his altar, here
Henceforward is a grove without a name—
A pasture to the shaggy goats of Pan,
Whence flee forever a woman and a man.

Perhaps, there would be some to belittle the group of memorial poems, each one of which is so childlike in its simplicity—so utterly, utterly poignant:

Heap not on this mound
Roses that she loved so well;
Why bewilder her with roses,
That she cannot see or smell?
She is happy where she lies
With the dust upon her eyes.

And the stark tragedy of the *Chorus*:

Give away her gowns,
Give away her shoes;
She has no more use
For her fragrant gowns.
Take them all down—
Blue, green, blue,
Lilac, pink, blue—
From their padded hangers.
She will dance no more
In her narrow shoes;
Sweep her narrow shoes
From the closet floor.

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And there would be the happy young girl who confided to me that she could not see anything particularly wonderful or apt in the sentence, "Life in itself is nothing—an empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs."

To what purpose, April, do you return again?
Beauty is not enough.
You can no longer quiet me with the redness
Of little leaves opening stickily.
I know what I know.
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe
The spikes of the crocus.
The smell of the earth is good.
It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only under ground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself
Is nothing—
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

Yet in spite of them all, and I believe there could only be a few—the meticulous, the unfortunates whose emotions have irretrievably atrophied—in spite of them, and right in their faces, I would shout aloud, blow trumpets, wave hands, and scatter Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Second April* over the world!

Marion Strobel

FLETCHERIAN COLORS

Breakers and Granite, by John Gould Fletcher. Macmillan Co.

This volume of poems, while not a definite attempt to comprehend and express the spirit of America, by combining various groups leaves a general impression. The spirit which speaks loudest, however, is a universal one, although our ardent patriotism usually leads us to confine it to America.

It is a palimpsest which no one reads or understands, which none has time to heed, a loom-frame woven over with interspersed entangled threads, of which the meaning is lost, from which the pattern is not yet freed.

They are a great shallow sea, crinkling uneasily as if some giant's body were wallowing beneath.

The shuttles clatter and clamor and hammer at the woof of day and night. But the being—the thing that will master all the ages—still refuses to be born.

One does not squeeze this essence from the book, but finds it imbedded in long descriptions, externally conceived; often with the eye of a decorator nicely designed, more often with the hand of an artisan who labors over his pile of adjectives and colors and leaves a jumble.

Down the Mississippi is the best group. It has a sculptural quality in spite of certain passages which, with their natural southern heat, threaten to melt the modeling into a mass. But it is an excellent group. A

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fine conception of a great river, moulded and colored by sensitive hands, guided by sympathetic eyes.

Of his prose poems—*The Building of Chicago*, *The Old South* and *The Song of the Wind*—*The Old South* is the most completely satisfying. It has quality and cadence and flavor. It charms and saddens, and leaves a stagnant pool in the spirit. The other prose poems in the volume work out of inspiration hours. There are some interesting photographs, some historical descriptions. An effort is made at times to heighten them to the point of poetry by the use of the names of strong colors, but the words are cold, they do not flush from within. The lines are sterile, and hanging decorations on them does not make them burgeon.

In *New York*, this sentence begins well:

Ivory and gold, heart of light petrified, bold and immortally beautiful, lifts a tower like a full lily-stalk.

Then it grows hysterical:

With crammed pollen-coated petals, flame-calyx fretted and carven, white phoenix that beats its wings in the light, shrill ecstasy of leaping lines poised in flight, partaken of joy in the skies, mate of the sun.

We frequently encounter this violent use of language, but for the most part the poet's carousals in the names of colors fail to intoxicate him.

In *The Grand Canyon of The Colorado*

Yellow, red, grey-green, purple-black chasms fell swiftly below each other—

and

Fletcherian Colors

hammered from red sandstone, purple granite, and gold—

fail in their purpose, while

It was hidden
Behind layers of white silence

paints a picture.

Again, take from *The Well in the Desert*,

The desert below him seems burning: ashen-yellow,
red-yellow, faint blue and rose-brown—

and

At the horizon
The heat rose and fell,
Sharp flickering arpeggios . . .

Not a cloud-flake breaks with its shadow the great space
of sky and of earth.

The last two are Japanese prints, while the first is a colored photograph.

Mr. Fletcher's use of colors makes one feel their limitations; only occasionally does one feel their infinite variety.

The poems to the eye seem unrestrained, but there is not the flamboyant coloring of youth in these pages. Taking the volume as a whole, one feels a prodigal use of words of color but a paucity of colored words. If the Japanese prints, a few of which it undoubtedly possesses, were selected from the whole we should have a slimmer volume but a more rarely beautiful collection.

Laura Sherry

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MINOR CHORDS

Bluestone, by Marguerite Wilkinson. Macmillan Co.
Selected Poems, by Lady Margaret Sackville. E. P. Dutton
& Co.

These two books have no likeness of matter or manner that innately justifies their being written about together. My apology is that the authors of both are women, and that the books are both provided with prefaces so provocative that they stimulate attention perhaps more than the poetry itself.

Marguerite Wilkinson's preface is autobiographical, like her verses. It invites us into her workshop, as in her poems she invites us candidly into her homely house of life—into the kitchen and living-rooms and the empty nursery—to show us the vistas she likes, her porch and garden, her big husband, to chat a little about her ancestors and the poor and the weather, and to confide the mournful secret of her childlessness. In her workshop she lets us stand by while, between the stages of her demonstration of lyric-making, she gives an informal lecture.

To report the lecture briefly, for a summary may be made in a sentence—the poet may help himself by finding the tune which exists for each expression, and building them up together. She says:

What happens is simply this: While I am making a lyric, after the mood becomes clear, after the idea and image emerge from consciousness, I sing it, and sometimes slowly, sometimes quite rapidly, the words take their places in lines that carry a tune also. I am not giving conscious

effort to the tune; nor am I making an intellectual effort to combine words and music to get a certain effect. I am not thinking about the music. I am making a single-hearted and strong endeavor to say or sing what is felt or thought.

This leaves one well elbowed for reflection. Is this the way epics and folk-songs were written—did the bards and skalds and troubadours make their resonant verses thus? Is it analogous to the activities of any other poet—say Kreymborg, or Vachel Lindsay, in their somewhat readier improvisation?

As for the poems themselves, they are individually undistinguished. But a full sequential reading of them makes one aware of a bright, impulsive, open temperament, a small clear voice singing a small clear soul. It is frank and personal in the way that women are frank and personal, not a challenge but a confidence. It is autobiography as self-concerned and intimate, in its demure scale, as that of Benvenuto Cellini.

Mrs. Wilkinson writes most stridently, most rhetorically, when, as in the title-poem, she invokes ancestors. *Songs from beside Swift Rivers* is a pleasant, energetic group, although it contains the worst thing in the book, *The Really Truly Twirly-whirly Eel*. In *Preferences*, *Long Songs*, *Songs of an Empty House*, *Songs of Laughter and Tears*, *Whims for Poets* and *California Poems* she does better work. These in a certain way satisfy if they do not thrill us; they are, if not original, personal. Here she is busy on her autobiography; she tells a small old story, offers a bright comment.

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The closing poem, however, *The Pageant*, is to my mind the finest of the book. It is almost the only impersonal poem. It is not new or profound; but it is a conceit such as comes coolly from the hands of women whereas men's hands mold sweatily and hard; also men's eyes are sneeringly careless while women's are maternally watchful. I will quote the second stanza, and take my leave of a book pleasant but not upsetting, containing some singularly inept verses which, however, may help in the final witnessing of an unheroic, untormented and engaging personality:

Forever is a broad road where have met together
Brave Deeds in red robes and Deeds of golden fire;
Grave Deeds in silver gowns, quaint Deeds in motley,
Quiet Deeds in homely gray that only saints admire;
Gentle Deeds that love the green raiment of the summer;
Pure Deeds in very white without the chill of snow;
Squalid Deeds in dull rags, pitiful and ugly:
Down the broad highway they go.

The testimonial to Lady Margaret Sackville's *Selected Poems* is written by no less a doctor than Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. It is short and perfunctory, having the familiar sound of the literary ballyhoo. It begins by calling her ladyship the best of England's woman poets. Being quite ignorant of the poetry young Britannia is writing, I cannot enter into controversy. But I remember some sharp work by the feminine Sitwell; and some interesting perceptions in quotations from Charlotte Mew; and even though the women of talent, like the men, are diluting their poetry in the traditional English schooner, the novel—Virginia Wolf, May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, E. M. Delafield

and others—there must be women who are writing poetry less pallid and Hellenic, and more original than this.

Mr. Blunt, like other comfortable people, is waiting for the world to quiet down to "its ancient bourgeois ways of peace, prosperity, romance, and beauty." We may look for the blooming of an art that will cover the ruins, a peaceful bourgeois poetry written in the benignant, lattice-tempered "daylight of sound rhyme, metre and melody," like Lady Sackville's. It will even be free from the rhetorical independence of blank verse, which is "not really verse at all even in master-hands; say, rather, a dignified kind of prose pompous in recitation and, for common reading, dull."

Mr. Blunt is sure it will emerge from the bewildered forms of the "delirium"—such profound, powerful, denying poetry as is being written by D. H. Lawrence, the imagists, the Sitwells and Aldous Huxley. I gather that Mr. Blunt means them although he mentions no names. Their work is a delirium to him because their subject-matter is not the Greek hash served up by a muse whom people have made a slavey, but fresh fodder pungently spiced that gives savor and nourishment; because their measures are ungentle, and their language cleaned and filtered of the débris of overlapping preciousities.

In spite of this survivor of the nineties, such feeble voices as Lady Sackville's will inevitably be silenced by the "delirium." True it is a voice of some subtle cadences; of a tone pleasing and serene. It even murmurs some

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exquisite lyrics, offers some sonorous recitations, makes a shy jest. But it observes all the politeness of conventional rhyming; it never leaves its orderly park of cultivated flower-beds exhaling a luxurious odor, with nymphs and fauns pensive among the trees, fastened forever in the postures of elegantly sylvan courtship.

There is a staid, deliberate and wise sentiment in the war poems. They are not poignant or biographical, but they are pitying, even querulous, comments upon an organized cataclysm. They are bright bits of emotion, like bright colors against an elegant but monotonous background.

Lady Sackville's poetry has none of the impulse and swing of Marguerite Wilkinson's. It is impersonal and detached, and does not leave us as a palpable presence. But it has greater delicacy, mellower polish, maturer choice of material. One can see in these books an analogy; for England and America, if England did not have its own *r'voltés* and America its bland traditionalists.

Isidor Schneider

POST-MARTIAL EMOTION

Aurelia and Other Poems, by Robert Nichols. E. P. Dutton and Co.

From the ardors and endurances of war this poet, like many another, has retired into his sensibilities. It is a luxury no doubt justified in one who suffered so severe a war experience as Robert Nichols, but it is a disappoint-

ment to many who read his first book. From this earlier book there were two courses possible: one, to retain the war experience, if not its incidents, as a structural fact in his future work; the other, to throw it away as one would a soiled and bloody shirt and return to the cool, sterile delicacies of his domestic experience. With the exception of the beautifully reminiscent *Yesterday*, the poet in this book has returned frankly to pre-war psychology and subject matter. The book as a whole, including, *Four Idylls*, *Encounters*, twenty-seven Elizabethan *Sonnets to Aurelia*, *The Flower of Flame*, has assumed in manner, emotion and subject the conventional limitations of the finely wrought but minor poetry of academic England.

If war came without welcome, a thick and bulging episode in his experience, its subsidence at any rate has not left the poet voiceless. The transition from his engravings on the crude steel of war to their continuation on the ivory of peace is no doubt appropriate to this type of poet. Three strains of interest, none of them associated with warlike violence, may be noted: A contemplative and introspective interest, as in *Night Rhapsody*:

How beautiful to wake at night,
Within the room grown strange, and still, and sweet,
And live a century while in the dark
The dripping wheel of silence slowly turns;
To watch the window open on the night,
A dewy silent deep where nothing stirs,

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And, lying thus, to feel dilate within
The press, the conflict, and the heavy pulse
Of incommunicable sad ecstasy.

An interest in nature observation, as in *From the Budded Branch*:

Below a beetle on a stalk of grass
Slowly unharnesses his shuttered wings,
His tiny rainbow wings of shrivelled glass.
He leaps! He whirs away. The grass-blade swings.

An interest in personal emotion, as in the tritely facile *Sonnets to Aurelia*:

Whatever substances of love may dwell
Within the passionate heart of such as I,
Whatever waters of pure pity well
In the dark orb of a most loving eye,
I have yielded you. Whatever were the pain
If power within me so to do did live,
I, at your need, had made these yours again,
But now I know I have no more to give.

But the weaver of these has not yet a certain hand. His imaginative facility, his ability to subordinate the crude image to the structural idea of his poem without diminishing its vividness, his technical excellence in poetic detail, do not save him from casualness in the larger principles of his work.

It is unfortunate that Robert Nichols should have only the poised and static culture of his particular English group to support him. Rarely if ever does he break over the narrow boundaries of self-centered sophistication,

of fagged and too mature emotion. Mr. Nichols and his group seem to be too little in literary touch with the massive energies of contemporary life to be moved by any great or unifying poetic idea. The environment is luxuriously sweet to the minor poet, but its very graciousness undermines stronger men. It is too small a pot for great broth. In the gratuitous energy of great poetry this book is lacking.

Baker Brownell

COLOR SONATAS

Poems, by Iris Tree. John Lane Co.

An organ exists which plays in color instead of in tone and pitch. Its invention was a recognition of the synesthetic power which every artist to some extent possesses—the power to translate images received through one sense into terms of another sense.

If one could carry the principle of synesthesia inventively several steps farther than the color organ, and produce a device that would interpret sound in terms of fragrance, and color in terms of odor, and so on, one would have something very like Iris Tree's book. It is, to quote her own words, "a kaleidoscope of roaring color," using the word "color" itself in a rather synesthetic sense. Such figures as "scarlet rhapsodies and beryl-cold sonatas," "The pale smell of their falling blossoms," and "Its scent is sweeter than ghostly music," are characteristic.

Rebecca West, I believe, once referred to the works of

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Compton Mackenzie as not precisely novels but brilliantly colored cushions. I have somewhat the same feeling about Iris Tree's volume—it does not seem exactly a book. It is not a cushion; sometimes it seems a tapestry, at other times a bouquet of highly perfumed flowers, and still again a series of ariettes. This is nothing against it; anybody can make a book that seems like a book, but few can make a book that seems like—well, perhaps “a kaleidoscope” is the most inclusive term. The author, in her own words, opens wide

the violet-petalled doors
Of every shy and cloistered sense
That all the scent and music of the world
May rush into the soul.

The poems are dazzling, arresting, with imagery now a bit Keatsian in suggestion, but more often altogether modern. Verses like these represent the author's method:

Moonlit lilacs under the window,
And the pale smell of their falling blossoms,
And the white floating beams like luminous moths
Fluttering from bloom to bloom.
Sprays of lilac flowers
Frothing at the green verge of midnight waves,
Frozen to motionless icicles.
Moonlight flows over me,
Full of illicit, marvelous perfumes
Wreathed with syringa and plaited with hyacinths;
Hair of the moonlight falling about me,
Straight and cool as the drooping tresses of rain.

The spiritual interpretations which the author makes are as unvivid as her imagery is vivid. Neither “the dim

psychic crystals" of her soul nor her wish that she were "God in a colored globe" moves one to more than casual interest. Perhaps this is partly because one looks for sensuous instead of spiritual beauties in a kaleidoscope.

Illustrations and decorations usually spoil a book of poems. In this case the decorations, done by Curtis Moffatt, the author's husband, have the same quality as the verses and add to their flavor.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

THE PREMATUREITY OF IMMATUREITY

Hidden Path, by Ned Hungerford. Privately printed.

It is hard to call this the poetry of a young man. There is feeling and experience in it; it is immature not in knowledge of life but in the mechanics of expression, in the practice of poetic craftsmanship. Where other poets can amble and even trip gaily and gracefully, in well trodden and frequented ways, Mr. Hungerford plods lonely and stumbling. He presents almost pathetically the figure of a man desperately concerned with self-expression, not as a necessity born with him but out of some troubling circumstance. I feel that things are maddeningly dull for Mr. Hungerford, wherever he is; that he has an insuppressible desire to find a kinder environment.

That is why opening his book gave me the thrill that a man might feel if he picked up a stray message from a lost man—say, something in a bottle, or between the halves of a fruit. There is a distracting personal interest in

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every poem that makes its status as poetry unimportant. And the regrettable element in the matter is that the author deliberately aims to achieve this effect. He writes in his introductory poem:

Reader . . .
That these poems are now in your hands
Is proof that they are meant for you.
Whatever your race, color, or creed, you are brother
To him who wrote them,
And to him who placed them in your hands.

It is the old plea of the beginner not sure of his audience, the old futile defiance of criticism, futile because of its unconscious confession of a lack of technique. Somewhere else in the book, he makes the stock challenge:

O ready condemners,
Isn't it just possible
You and I are thinking of something
Entirely different?

The persistent illusion of being misunderstood (when one is merely ignored), the illusion that others in his plight may take heart from his avowals, is the inspiration of a good many of these poems. Throughout, the reader is left with the consciousness of listening to a muddled eager man, who can hardly resist the temptation to buttonhole his few auditors. The very titles of this and a previous book—*Hidden Path, Uncertain Trail*—give Mr. Hungerford's own estimate of his literary journey.

If Ned Hungerford is comparatively young, he may find out eventually whither he is bound, in which case he

The Prematurity of Immaturity

will regret publishing this misgiven itinerary. If he is not a young man and is bogged fast in bewildering cross-roads, the book will be one more of the crowded minor fatalities on the literary front. From any standpoint it is premature; it may have satisfied momentarily a craving to appear in print, but already it must have obliterated that satisfaction by coming back in all its gruesome immaturity to haunt its author. It would have been passed over in silence; but as it is typical of many books of verse sent out in quest of reviews, the above remarks may serve as a hint to other self-deceived, and often embittered, would-be poets.

Isidor Schneider

CORRESPONDENCE

THE ALLIED ARTS AGAIN

I

Dear Editor: It was with great interest that I read in *POETRY* for October, your comments upon my *Musical America* article. I am glad to have the opportunity and the invitation to express an opinion I have long held.

I believe we should have something in the nature of a National Committee for the Protection of the Native Lyric from the Distortions Practised by Incompetent Composers. Poets, when asked for permission to make "settings" of their words, often grant it graciously and trust to luck. What a writer ought to do is to tell the

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composer to make a setting and submit it to him for approval. But as few poets are willing to profess expertness in musical judgments, the writer usually has to submit to whatever outrageous interpretation the composer may perpetrate. I see no reason why a poet should not say to a composer: "Yes, you may make a setting of my poem, provided that, before publishing it, you will submit it to a committee on which both poetry and music are represented." Such a committee would be a step toward establishing a standard, and perhaps it might do a great deal, in ways other than censorship, to stimulate the progress of American song.

One other thing might be spoken of as a possible reason why there is not greater co-operation among poets and musicians: often of late the poet talks business and proposes a division of royalty, whereupon the negotiations are soon at an end. There are different reasons in different cases, but usually this happens because the composer knows, if he has ever published anything, that the royalty will be too small to divide—a fact which he dislikes to confess, even to a fellow-artist. And he does not want to be forced to keep books and mail out each month a cheque which would probably fluctuate between two dollars and six. If there is money in music-publishing, the music-publisher must get most of it.

Referring again to your editorial, you express doubt whether I have taken the trouble to get acquainted with, or try to understand, contemporary poets. But

The Allied Arts Again

I can plead guilty only in part—I have not been able to keep pace with all our American poets, it is true, but I *have* known some of them, and I am eager to meet others and try to understand their art.

Instead of citing Carpenter's settings of the Tagore things in your editorial, you might more fitly have mentioned his use of *The Heart's Country*, by Florence Wilkinson; or the delightful song Henry Hadley made last year out of *When I Go Away from You*, by Amy Lowell.

Please let me say in conclusion that I never have said there were not fine American songs. But they *are* remarkably few, and remarkably hard to place effectively in a recital programme.

Charles Albert Case

Northampton, Mass.

II

Dear POETRY: To all serious students of the dance, the first sentence in your October article, "POETRY would like to celebrate its ninth birthday by inaugurating a closer affiliation with the allied arts of music and the drama—*perhaps also the dance,*" is encouraging. That "perhaps" is deserved: only those who come in daily contact with the too-popular belief that the door to real achievement may be kicked open by a perfectly pointed toe, can realize how far the dance has traveled from its dignified origin. In alliance with that music and poetry to which the dance really gave birth lies her only hope. Music and poetry give the dancer a reason for existence.

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We had the pleasure of working with Alfred Kreyborg in the summer of 1920, and not only felt that we, as dancers, had profited, but we gained an insight into, and a feeling for, the rhythm of modern poetry that nothing but the actual bodily expression of it could have given us. We have been fortunate also in being associated with a musician who has used pieces of Sara Teasdale's, Vachel Lindsay's, Bliss Carman's, and other moderns, as themes for dance-music.

Certainly poets, musicians and dancers need not fear to join forces. They have the fundamentals in common. With such different, yet harmonious, outward manifestations of those fundamentals, surely the result will not be unworthy of poetry or music, and will surely be of infinite value to the dance in its reinstatement among the arts.

We so often fail to say the pleasant things we think. POETRY is a monthly refreshment. It is like a breath from freshly opened flowers, or a drink of mountain water.

Bertha Wardell

Los Angeles, Cal.

Note by the Editor: Another correspondent reminds us that Rupert Hughes, well known both as novelist and composer, has used a number of modern lyrics: for example, one of the editor's own, *I Love my Life*, originally published in POETRY; and quite recently *Evening in the West*, or better *The Ivory Moment*, by John Drury, from the new Los Angeles monthly, *The Lyric West*. Schirmer & Co. are Mr. Hughes' publishers.

NOTES

Mr. Lew Sarett, of Chicago, or rather of her neighbor-city Evanston, has consented to act henceforth as a member of the Advisory Committee of POETRY. Mr. Sarett is the author of *Many Many Moons*; and the award of last month to his poem, *The Box of God*, makes him the latest winner of the Helen Haire Levinson Prize. He has been, for the last year, in the Public Speaking Department of Northwestern University.

In our advertising pages the Poetry Society of South Carolina makes an announcement of great interest to poets. A prize of \$250, donated by W. Van R. Whitall, Esq., of Pelham, N. Y., is to be awarded annually, under the Society's auspices, for the best poem sent in competition before Jan. 1st of each year. Mr. Pelham makes sure of a competent choice this year by appointing Miss Amy Lowell to the honor of initiating the award by acting as the first judge.

Louise Ayres Garnett (Mrs. Eugene H.), of Evanston, Ill., wrote the poem *Resurgam* as the text of an oratorio for which Mr. Henry Hadley is now composing the music. In our November *Correspondence* Mrs. Garnett told the story of this collaboration; and the complete work, which will soon be published, may be regarded as an essay in that closer alliance between poetry and music which the editor has pleaded for in recent numbers of POETRY.

Mrs. Garnett has published, through Rand, McNally & Co., three books of verse for children; and she wrote both words and music of *Creature Songs* (Oliver Ditson Co.). The Macmillan Co. published her play *Master Will of Stratford*, and *The Drama* has printed two or three of her plays for children.

Mr. Walter de la Mare, the well known English poet, is the author of numerous books of verse for adults and children; and his *Collected Poems—1901-1918* were published in a two-volume edition by Henry Holt & Co. in 1920.

Mr. Fenton Johnson, of Chicago, who stands *facile princeps* among living poets of his race, is the author of three small privately printed books of verse, the latest being *Songs of the Soil* (1916). He founded, and edited for some time *The Champion*, a magazine for Negroes, and he has been on the staff of *The Favorite Magazine*.

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Mr. Emanuel Carnevali, of Chicago, has contributed verse and prose to most of the special magazines, but has not yet published a volume. In 1918 he received a Young Poet's Prize from POETRY.

Miss Winifred Waldron, of North Glendale, Cal., has printed poems in various magazines. "Paul Tanaquil" is a pseudonym.

Of the poets who have not hitherto appeared in POETRY:

Miss Pearl Andelson, of Chicago, was until recently a member of the Poetry Club of the University of Chicago, which has been a good training-school for a number of young poets.

Miss Dorothy Dow, of Winchester, Ill., has published little as yet.

Mr. Laurence Vail lives in New York.

Ditto Mr. Henry Saul Zolinsky, who, although only seventeen, has already been newsboy, bell-boy, office-boy, electrician, shoe-salesman and ad-solicitor; and who hopes to become a student again some day and finish his interrupted course at college.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Poems, by Claude Colleer Abbott. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.

Missing Links and Other Things, by Thomas F. McCarthy. Journal Publishing Co., Devil's Lake, N. D.

A Brochure of Verse, by Ralph S. Woodworth. Privately printed, Elkhart, Ind.

The Infant in the News-sheet: An Ode Against the Age, by Herman George Scheffauer. Overseas Pub. Co., Hamburg, Germany.

Pagan Love Lyrics, by Alfred Bryan. Privately printed.

Little Visits, by Raymond E. Manchester. F. W. Orth Co., Cuyahoga Falls, O.

Memorial Poems, by Henry Polk Lowenstein. Privately printed, Kansas City.

Every Day Poems, by George Elliston. Stewart Kidd Co., Cincinnati.

Golden Mud, by Glenn M. Coleman. Privately printed, Mt. Vernon, Ia.

Scattered Leaves, (3rd ed.), by Edward C. Wentworth. The Book-fellows, Chicago.

Shadows, by Susan Baker. Privately printed, Chicago.

(Other books received will be listed next month.)

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Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the distinguished English poet, novelist and critic, wrote us last July:

If American periodical literature has today a little peak, a little group of journals, raising it to the level of the best of European cosmopolitanism, or at any rate in that direction, it is because you and your small paper showed how, editorially and economically, it could be done.

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POETRY asks its friends to become Supporting Subscribers by paying ten dollars a year to its Fund. The art of poetry requires, if it is to advance, not only special sympathy from a discriminating public, but also endowment similar to that readily granted to the other arts. All who believe in the general purpose and policy of this magazine, and recognize the need and value of such an organ of the art, are invited to assist thus in maintaining it.

 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX

NO. IV

JANUARY 1922

THE WITCH OF COOS

Circa 1922

I STAID the night for shelter at a farm
Behind the mountain, with a mother and son,
Two old-believers. They did all the talking.

The Mother

Folks think a witch who has familiar spirits
She *could* call up to pass a winter evening,
But *won't*, should be burned at the stake or something.
Summoning spirits isn't "Button, button,
Who's got the button," you're to understand.

The Son

Mother can make a common table rear
And kick with two legs like an army mule.

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The Mother

And when I've done it, what good have I done?
Rather than tip a table for you, let me
Tell you what Ralle the Sioux Control once told me.
He said the dead had souls, but when I asked him
How that could be—I thought the dead were souls,
He broke my trance. Don't that make you suspicious
That there's something the dead are keeping back?
Yes, there's something the dead are keeping back.

The Son

You wouldn't want to tell him what we have
Up attic, mother?

The Mother

Bones—a skeleton.

The Son

But the headboard of mother's bed is pushed
Against the attic door: the door is nailed.
It's harmless. Mother hears it in the night
Halting perplexed behind the barrier
Of door and headboard. Where it wants to get
Is back into the cellar where it came from.

The Mother

We'll never let them, will we, son? We'll never!

The Son

It left the cellar forty years ago
And carried itself like a pile of dishes
Up one flight from the cellar to the kitchen,
Another from the kitchen to the bedroom,

Robert Frost

Another from the bedroom to the attic,
Right past both father and mother, and neither stopped
it.

Father had gone upstairs; mother was downstairs.

I was a baby: I don't know where I was.

The Mother

The only fault my husband found with me—

I went to sleep before I went to bed,

Especially in winter when the bed

Might just as well be ice and the clothes snow.

The night the bones came up the cellar-stairs

Toffile had gone to bed alone and left me,

But left an open door to cool the room off

So as to sort of turn me out of it.

I was just coming to myself enough

To wonder where the cold was coming from,

When I heard Toffile upstairs in the bedroom

And thought I heard him downstairs in the cellar.

The board we had laid down to walk dry-shod on

When there was water in the cellar in spring

Struck the hard cellar bottom. And then someone

Began the stairs, two footsteps for each step,

The way a man with one leg and a crutch,

Or little child, comes up. It wasn't Toffile:

It wasn't anyone who could be there.

The bulkhead double-doors were double-locked

And swollen tight and buried under snow.

The cellar windows were banked up with sawdust

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And swollen tight and buried under snow.
It was the bones. I knew them—and good reason.
My first impulse was to get to the knob
And hold the door. But the bones didn't try
The door; they halted helpless on the landing,
Waiting for things to happen in their favor.
The faintest restless rustling ran all through them.
I never could have done the thing I did
If the wish hadn't been too strong in me
To see how they were mounted for this walk.
I had a vision of them put together
Not like a man, but like a chandelier.
So suddenly I flung the door wide on him.
A moment he stood balancing with emotion,
And all but lost himself. (A tongue of fire
Flashed out and licked along his upper teeth.
Smoke rolled inside the sockets of his eyes.)
Then he came at me with one hand outstretched,
The way he did in life once; but this time
I struck the hand off brittle on the floor,
And fell back from him on the floor myself.
The finger-pieces slid in all directions.
(Where did I see one of those pieces lately?
Hand me my button-box—it must be there.)

I sat up on the floor and shouted, "Toffile,
It's coming up to you." It had its choice
Of the door to the cellar or the hall.

It took the hall door for the novelty,
And set off briskly for so slow a thing,
Still going every which way in the joints, though,
So that it looked like lightning or a scribble,
From the slap I had just now given its hand.
I listened till it almost climbed the stairs
From the hall to the only finished bedroom,
Before I got up to do anything;
Then ran and shouted, "Shut the bedroom door,
Toffile, for my sake!" "Company," he said,
"Don't make me get up; I'm too warm in bed."
So lying forward weakly on the handrail
I pushed myself upstairs, and in the light
(The kitchen had been dark) I had to own
I could see nothing. "Toffile, I don't see it.
It's with us in the room, though. It's the bones."
"What bones?" "The cellar bones—out of the grave."

That made him throw his bare legs out of bed
And sit up by me and take hold of me.
I wanted to put out the light and see
If I could see it, or else mow the room,
With our arms at the level of our knees,
And bring the chalk-pile down. "I'll tell you what—
It's looking for another door to try.
The uncommonly deep snow has made him think
Of his old song, *The Wild Colonial Boy*,
He always used to sing along the tote-road.

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He's after an open door to get out-doors.
Let's trap him with an open door up attic."
Toffile agreed to that, and sure enough,
Almost the moment he was given an opening,
The steps began to climb the attic stairs.
I heard them. Toffile didn't seem to hear them.
"Quick!" I slammed to the door and held the knob.
"Toffile, get nails." I made him nail the door shut,
And push the headboard of the bed against it.

Then we asked was there anything
Up attic that we'd ever want again.
The attic was less to us than the cellar.
If the bones liked the attic, let them like it,
Let them *stay* in the attic. When they sometimes
Come down the stairs at night and stand perplexed
Behind the door and headboard of the bed,
Brushing their chalky skull with chalky fingers,
With sounds like the dry rattling of a shutter,
That's what I sit up in the dark to say—
To no one any more since Toffile died.
Let them stay in the attic since they went there.
I promised Toffile to be cruel to them
For helping them be cruel once to him.

The Son

We think they had a grave down in the cellar.

The Mother

We know they had a grave down in the cellar.

Robert Frost

The Son

We never could find out whose bones they were.

The Mother

Yes, we could too, son. Tell the truth for once.

They were a man's his father killed for me.

I mean a man he killed instead of me.

The least I could do was help dig their grave.

We were about it one night in the cellar.

Son knows the story: but 'twas not for him

To tell the truth, suppose the time had come.

Son looks surprised to see me end a lie

We'd kept up all these years between ourselves

So as to have it ready for outsiders.

But tonight I don't care enough to lie—

I don't remember why I ever cared.

Toffile, if he were here, I don't believe

Could tell you why he ever cared himself. . . .

She hadn't found the finger-bone she wanted

Among the buttons poured out in her lap.

I verified the name next morning: Toffile.

The rural letter-box said Toffile Barre.

Robert Frost

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SONGS OF NIGHT

ODE TO MYSELF TRYING TO SLEEP

Draw in the threads of thought—
Each delicate filament,
Reaching into too many places,
Finding forgotten faces . . .
Draw in the long twisting thoughts you have sent.

Strange, that you lie here wondering
About things that don't matter;
Strange, that you lie here pondering . . .
And outside, the raindrops patter,
A fog is on the town,
And over the river
The drenched lights cross and quiver,
And the far harsh rumble of trams goes up and down.

Once, like a wind, beauty swept through you;
Once, like a small song that sings and sings,
Happiness crept through you;
Once, love seemed the reason for things;
And once you thought
Peace had come upon you . . .

And then all came to naught.

Draw in the threads of thought—
Each delicate filament,

Marjorie Meeker

Quivering and bright;
Draw in the long twisting thoughts you have sent.
Cast all the tangled old dreaming and groping
To the still, deep,
Strange heart of Night
(Gentle forever to all grieving and hoping)—
And sleep.

IN DARKNESS

Deep in the heart of darkness I am lying,
Alone and still;
And all the winds of darkness and of silence
Work their will,

Blowing about me through the awful spaces
Of night and death;
Nor all immensity can touch or thrill me
To thought or breath.

Deep in the heart of darkness I am dreaming,
Quiet, alone,
Careless alike of tender words or cruel—
Even your own.

BY A WINDOW

The owl and the bat
Are alone in the night—

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What are they at
By the dead moon's light?
Hush! How the wings of the black bat whirl!
(Oh hush, for the sleepers moan and stir!)

The moon is bleak,
Like a monk in a cowl . . .
What do they seek,
The bat and the owl?
What danger brews in the night, what sin?
(But hush, for the sleepers dream within.)

SONG FOR A MAY NIGHT

Heigho!
Many mysterious things I know!

I know why the moon is like a moth—
Do you?

I know why stars are many, and suns
Are few.

I know a place where a star fell down,
And made a hole in the middle of town,
And all the people jumped in. And so—
Heigho!

Other mysterious things I know!

COLOR OF WATER

You will be the color of water;
Your voice will be like the wind;
You will go where the dust goes;
None will know you have sinned.

None will know you are quiet,
Or fluent, or bound, or free;
None will care you are nothing;
You will be nothing to me.

Except a scarlet remembrance . . .
As if, in a dream of pride,
A poppy had flaunted her petals
One day to the sun, and died.

LONELY SKY AND SEA

O lonely, lonely sky and sea—
Where time is a wind that plays between,
Blowing the colored centuries by,
Tiny tragedies, quaint and mean—

Why are you waiting? What have you heard?
What majestic thing have you known,
That you watch each other, listening,
So long, so long alone?

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COMRADES

Time sweeps through me like a wind;
Space engulfs me like a sea.
Time and Space are at me always—
They will not let me be.

I am weary, weary with years,
Troubled by immensity.
With eternities around me,
How can I be free?

Marjorie Meeker

FIRST SNOW

The night was hiding a secret
When it stole
Through the red gates of sunset,
Coming so silently.
We heard it whispering
To the bare trees.

And while we wondered,
The white souls of the autumn leaves
Came softly back,
Drifting, drifting.

Esther Louise Ruble

SONGS OF THE PLAINS

I

There's no hiding here in the glare of the desert—
If your coat is sham the sun shines through.
Here with the lonely things and the silence
There is no crowd for saving you.

When hearts love here the love lasts longer,
And hate leaves here a heavy scar.
But we, with the desert's beauty of distance,
Are always dreaming of places far!

If you have come to start a kingdom—
Our eyes have looked on Rome and Tyre!
But if you come with dreams for baggage,
Sit with us by the cedar fire!

II

The sultry sudden darkness,
Like some black mantle thrown
From shoulders of a giant
On children left alone,
Falls over us; and, stilled with fear,
In dark we see, in silence hear!

Then rain!—a sudden pounding
Of unformed maddened things,

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Pounding, splashing—stubborn
As vultures' heavy wings
That pound the air, too sure to hate,
In hunger, and move low, and wait!

III

Four old trees stand tall on a hill.
Wind swirls around them, never still;
And their heads together bow and sway
As if in talk of a game they play.
Sometimes they laugh and sometimes sigh;
And there beneath a low gray sky
I've seen them drop their leaves when thins
The gold and crimson, as near dawn
Wise gamblers drop their cards upon
The table, saying kindly, "Why
Quarrel with a game that no one wins!"

IV

The wood was so old that I thought
I'd hear it saying its prayers
In the aisles like cloisters wrought;
But I came on it, unawares,
Chuckling—like old men mellow grown—
Talking of youth on a hill alone!

v

The birds love you too,
 Calling, "Sweet, sweet, sweet!"
In the windy lane
 Where the tree-tops meet.

But I love you best,
 Since my lips let pass
No song lest I miss
 Your steps on the grass.

vi

I'll go where willows quicken
 Their dances in the glow.
Of morning, and the wild brooks
 Make music down below;
For I am weary seeking
 The things I may not know.

And I shall feel the silver
 Of willow leaves, and hold
A drop of water winking
 With rainbows yet unsold.
What more may all the world find
 Now all its dreams are old!

Glenn Ward Dresbach

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TWO POEMS

I SHALL REMEMBER

Open to me the door of heaven
For an hour, an hour!
Let me pace the floor of heaven,
Let me pluck one flower!

Forever and forever heaven
Will live upon my lips.
I shall remember. Never heaven
Shall fail my seeking ships.

I shall be shod and swathed with heaven—
Ah, the blue filmy veil—
Because for an hour I bathed in heaven
Whose winds hurt and heal.

I shall remember. Songs of heaven,
I shall sing them still;
Like the silver throngs of heaven
I shall have heaven's will.

So open to me the door of heaven
For an hour, an hour!
Let me breathe the air of heaven,
Let me pluck one flower!

Grace Fallow Norton

SHY PERFECT FLOWER

Shy perfect pearl-white flower, blooming alone
In northern woods where snow has sown
Its myriad seed—shy perfect flower,
Fragrant, alone—
Your dark leaves cluster close to hide you the more.

I part them and remember bright poppies on the plain.
They run in the wind, a ragged gypsy train;
They fling themselves at the feet of the golden grain—
When it is slain they too are slain.
Their life is a cry! Their life is a sudden scarlet stain!
Their dream-dark seeds have fearful power.

And you, shy perfect pearl-white flower?

Grace Fallow Norton

TO SAPPHO

Torn fragments of your woven words I read;
And less their throbbing cry has power to stir
My passion than to soothe me to strange peace,
Remembering the long silence fallen on you.

Julia R. Reynolds

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IRISH SONG

Where the highway steps along
(In Donegal, in Donegal!)
I gave my feet the choice o' way, wherever they would
 roam.

They might have marched to Londonderry, Belfast,
 Dublin . . .

The foolish, eager feet o' me, they marched straight home!

The little gown o' blue you wore
(In Donegal, in Donegal!)
Cried out to me, *Come in! Come in!* Your apron it said,
 Stay!

The tying o' the plaid shawl across the warm heart o' you
Tied in-along the heart o' me—I couldn't get away.

I took off my wander-shoes,
(In Donegal, in Donegal!)
The highway stepped along alone, until it slipped from
 view.

I laid aside my dusty dreams, hung up my ragged lifetime,
And rested feet and heart o' me before the sight o' you!

Helen Coale Crew

ON THE WING

A wind that blows from the sea, and smells
Of spring and fall together,
Runs racing up the yellow fields
Into the autumn weather.

And I run too, for I am young
And breathless with all living—
The trees are shouting as we pass,
The asters singing in the grass.

In half an hundred years from now,
When all my songs are sung,
I'll not be old and crossly sage,
I'll love the bright hill of my age
Under its winter sun,
And wave the gayest hand I know
To everything that's young.

Dorothy Keeley

FOUR POEMS

I ASK FOR A FRIEND

I ask a girl, for a friend—a playmate
Full of May-blown dreams; and lilac in her hair;
With boyish ankles, intimately strange
And hands forever busy with applause;
And mothering, lash-screened, virgin eyes;
And a slim-breasted body made of joy.

Her coming would mean spring to my heart;
We'd give our souls a holiday, cut loose,
Arrange a rendezvous with Love somewhere—
And forget to keep it, being good friends.

I ask a girl, for a friend—a playmate
Full of May-blown dreams; and lilac in her hair.

SONNET

When Love unveiled her body to my sight
And in my heart a strange unquiet grew,
As soft winds stir the bosom of the night
And, after, spill their tears as drops of dew—
When first Love laid aside her woven dress
Of silken-tissued dreams and scented stuff,
And fastened my young eyes with loveliness
Until I thought one world was scarce enough
To hold such utter happiness and pain—

Ernest Walsh

I begged the god of love to strike me blind,
And seal Love's image up within my brain,
Queen of my thoughts the kingdom of my Mind!
But when I took Love's body to my breast,
Her lips were bitter, and her face a jest.

THE FICKLE LOVER

I have made Life my mistress; built temples
Of song to her in my heart; paraded
Before her enemy, Death. And smiling,
Have kissed Life before Death's envious eyes;
Proud in my lust, gay in my strength, love-wise.

But often in my dreams I've wished to touch
The cool sophisticated lips of Death.

COLLAPSE

As an old tree bent by ages of winds,
So I am tired;

As an oak-leaf blown out upon the sea,
I am lonely;

As a storm-conceived adventurous wave
Divides before its thousand lonely deaths
On alien shores,
My life shall end.

Ernest Walsh

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TABLEAUX

SCHERZO

My soul is a dancer—
A dancer under shimmering willows in the sunlight.

The wind draws a bow across his violin.
He plays a scherzo—
Rippling notes on strings of silver.

Play faster, wind!
My feet are more swift than the leaves of the willow—
Shimmering, shimmering—
Amber shadows in the sunlight.
My feet are more swift than the laughter of waters.
Play faster, wind!

TRYST

I will wear my gown of dusk-blue silk,
And in my hair
A crescent moon, curved like a petal.

From the rim of the shadowy pool
I will pluck an iris—
Dusk-blue, shading to purple,
Faint-scented as the breath of sandalwood.

Softly
I will come through the drooping willows.

Ellen Margaret Janson

The leaves will catch at my gown,
Dusk-blue
In the purple shadows.
The grasses will whisper, sighing,
As if they knew.

Down at the wall
I will wait alone in the darkness;
And close my eyes,
Dreaming that I hear your voice.

INCENSE SMOKE

One stick I lit in the bronzen image.
The smoke curls upward—lazily—between his lips;
Ivory, and the frail blue of shadows.

The image is speaking—
Words of lazy dream-blue smoke
Carved like ivory:
“Do you remember?—
The priests wore dragons, great jeweled dragons on their
robes.

They sang dreamily
To the god of the dim temple—
Chanting, chanting
Through the twisted smoke of incense.
But the god did not stir.
His eyes were like opals, veiled with lost mystery!”

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The smoke curls upward—drowsily—
Between his lips;
Mist-gray, and the amber of shadows.

The image is speaking.
Words of dim gray-gold smoke
Graven like amber:
“Do you remember
The offering you burned alone at dawn
To one who did not answer?
Across the ashes
You saw the sea-mist rising—rising—
Like the smoke of incense,
And cried out with the pain in your heart.”

The smoke curls upward—dreamily—
Between his lips;
Ivory, and the lost blue of shadows.

NIGHT IN THE CITY

I hear them pass by the wall of my garden—
The swift whisper of silk,
And laughter—
Tinkling like the wind-bells on the shadowy terrace,
Tinkling and calling.

Their lanterns form a necklace
Of gems,

Ellen Margaret Janson

Low-strung across the dusk.
Their laughter dies away past the wall of my garden.

In the willow
The echo lingers—
The echo of laughter, failing
Into sudden weariness.

THE UNKNOWN

I am the stir of garments that you heard
Pass by you in the wood.
I am the lips that smile, but speak no word
For evil or for good.

I am the voice that whispered in the long
Sweet twilights of the spring.
I am the haunting music of the song
I would not let you sing.

I am the finger beckoning in the street;
The strife, and the reward;
The quivering joy that stabbed you with its sweet
Sharper than any sword.

I am the dream that shines—a light apart,
When other lights are spent.
I am the pain that grips and breaks your heart
To save it from content!

Ellen Margaret Janson

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POEMS

WILD ORCHARD

It is a broken country,
the rugged land is
green from end to end;
the autumn has not come.

Embanked above the orchard
the hillside is a wall
of motionless green trees,
the grass is green and red.

Five days the bare sky
has stood there day and night.
No bird, no sound.
Between the trees

stillness
and the early morning light.
The apple trees
are laden down with fruit.

Among blue leaves
the apples green and red
upon one tree stand out
most enshrined.

Still, ripe, heavy,
spherical and close,

they mark the hillside.
It is a formal grandeur,

a stateliness,
a signal of finality
and perfect ease.
Among the savage

aristocracy of rocks
one, risen as a tree,
has turned
from his repose.

THE LONELY STREET

School is over. It is too hot
to walk at ease. At ease
in light frocks they walk the streets
to while the time away.
They have grown tall. They hold
pink flames in their right hands.
In white from head to foot,
with sidelong, idle look—
in yellow, floating stuff,
black sash and stockings—
touching their avid mouths
with pink sugar on a stick—
like a carnation each holds in her hand—
they mount the lonely street.

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SPOUTS

In this world of
as fine a pair of breasts
as ever I saw,
the fountain in
Madison Square
spouts up of water
a white tree,
that dies and lives
as the rocking water
in the basin
turns from the stone rim
back upon the jet
and rising there
reflectively drops down again.

THE WIDOW'S LAMENT IN SPRINGTIME

Sorrow is my own yard
where the new grass
flames as it has flamed
often before, but not
with the cold fire
that closes round me this year.
Thirty-five years
I lived with my husband.

William Carlos Williams

The plum tree is white today
with masses of flowers.
Masses of flowers
load the cherry branches
and color some bushes
yellow and some red,
but the grief in my heart
is stronger than they,
for though they were my joy
formerly, today I notice them
and turn away forgetting.
Today my son told me
that in the meadows,
at the edge of the heavy woods
in the distance, he saw
trees of white flowers.
I feel that I would like
to go there
and fall into those flowers
and sink into the marsh near them.

William Carlos Williams

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COMMENT

THE HOPE OF PEACE

ALL the movements of the day—all the isms and schools and drives—fade into insignificance compared with the movement to get rid of war. This movement is not out of place in these pages—in fact, it is immediately the poet's business.

I am tempted to repeat now an editorial from *POETRY* for September, 1914. In the first white heat of those terrible first battles, I wrote this page on *The Poetry of War*:

Poets have made more wars than kings, and war will not cease until they remove its glamour from the imaginations of men.

What is the fundamental, the essential and psychological cause of war? The feeling in men's hearts that it is beautiful. And who have created this feeling? Partly, it is true, kings and their "armies with banners"; but, far more, poets with their war-songs and epics, sculptors with their statues—the assembled arts which have taken their orders from kings, their inspiration from battles. Kings and artists have united to give to war its glamour, to transmute into sounds and colors and forms of beauty its savagery and horror, to give heroic appeal to its unreason, a heroic excuse to its rage and lust.

All this is of the past. The race is beginning to suspect those old ideals, to give valor a wider range than war affords, to seek danger not at the cannon's mouth but in less noisy labors and adventures. When Nicholas of Russia and William of Germany, in solemn state the other day, invoked the blessing of God upon their armies, the emotion that went round the world was not the old thrill, but a new sardonic laughter.

As Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away, so some poet of the new era may strip the glamour from war. Tolstoi's *War and Peace* and many lesser books are chapters of the new revelation, and modern science,

The Hope of Peace

modern invention, have aided the race in its half-conscious effort to unveil the bitter hideousness of the war-god's visage. But the final word has not been said; the feeling that war is beautiful still lingers in men's hearts, a feeling founded on world-old savageries—love of power, of torture, of murder, love of big stakes in a big game. This feeling must be destroyed, as it was created, through the imagination. It is work for a poet.

There will be a new poetry of war.

The time for that poetry is now. It must be written in peace, for when war begins there is nothing to do but fight. War is no more inevitable between nations than between individuals: as duelling was outlawed long ago in all civilized states, and its elaborate and long-accepted code of honor relegated to the scrap-heap, so shall war be outlawed by the assembled nations of the world, and its elaborate and long-accepted code of international law become a dusty byword of history. War is an absurd anachronism in this closely connected talking and trading world; and modern science has made it an anachronism poisonous and murderous beyond the maddest dreams of the darkest devils of hell. It must end if the white race is to preserve its numbers, its supremacy, its creative energy and power, and the proud fabrics of its civilization.

We face a war to the death on war, and none can afford to be a slacker in it. In this ultimate war the deadliest weapon is the germ of thought in human brains. Only the poet can spawn that germ, and send it flying forth by invisible millions to mature in the minds of men. Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*, and suddenly a rotten

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thing, long ready for death, was dead. Let some poet—or perhaps a number of poets in a number of arts—stab with laughter or scorch with tears the rotten hulk of war, and suddenly the world will know that war is dead.

H. M.

MUST ART BE INTERESTING?

Implicitly all interesting things have beauty, and the most interested person is no doubt the most esthetic. Such a thesis is not hard to support on the ground that interest can relate only to things of immediate worth and beauty. But to travel from this rather nervous doctrine of values to the position that beauty is determined by the interest it arouses is another and more complex matter. Though Ford Madox Hueffer in his recent *Thus to Revisit* reiterates charmingly, and with convincing disregard for the logical responsibilities of his theme, that art must be interesting, the shadow of an unsolved problem rather obscures the result. He rests his proposition, it is true, on human impulse, not on philosophical consideration; but the question is not easily confined. In that speculative periphery of art where beauty dissolves into metaphysics no problem is more persistent.

As a weapon against the absolutism in art which makes no compromise with the public taste the book will be effective. It undermines this stern and puritan dogma with the suggestion that final values in art as well as in other fields of human experience lie after all in human

Must Art be Interesting?

nature itself. It abandons the rigorous heaven reserved by the absolutists for the saved few, and returns frankly to popular interest for its standard. To their ascetic practice in casting off mundane and popular interests it can oppose the Protagorean formula, "Man is the measure of all things." But in liberating art from these moralisms Mr. Hueffer imposes another moralism in his repeated dictum, "Art must be interesting." Why after all must these highly complex things, art and interest, always be associated? That interesting things, as a matter of descriptive fact, are in a measure beautiful does not imply that art, as a matter of moral or artistic imperative, must be interesting. Mr. Hueffer rather increases than diminishes the speculative difficulties and enticements of the problem.

Overburdened beauty carries many theories on its back. All of them, from absolutist to pragmatist, aim in some way to find a functional value of beauty in the social system. The mere act of erecting a rational theory about it indicates an effort to organize beauty into a system of human relationships. There remains to remark, no doubt, that beauty is not a theory, that it is not subject to theorizing, that it needs and possesses no justification in the social order. But that too in its way is incorrect. In this field rich with questions Mr. Hueffer's interesting book quite appropriately asks what it cannot answer.

Baker Brownell

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REVIEWS

A SYMPOSIUM ON MARIANNE MOORE

Poems, by Marianne Moore. Egoist Press, London.

Such contrary opinions of this provocative little pamphlet have reached us that perhaps the most suggestive review will be a more or less questioning rehearsal of them. Miss Moore's steely and recondite art has long been a rallying-point for the radicals. Although her first appearance was in *POETRY*—in May, 1915, most of the entries in these twenty-four closely printed pages date from *Others* and *The Egoist*, a few from *The Dial* and *Contact*. Rumor has hinted that the selection and publication were made by certain friends of the author without her knowledge.

If one were to accept the challenge of the title, and of the geometrical verse-designs which frame these cryptic observations, one might be led straight to the ancient and rather futile inquiry, What is poetry? Poetry is evidently a matter of individual definition. H. D., surely a critic of authority, calls Miss Moore a poet, and a number of young radicals are eager to pronounce her "a very great poet," as Yvor Winters did in a recent letter. "With the exception of Wallace Stevens," he wrote, "she is about the only person since Rimbaud who has had any very profound or intricate knowledge and command of sound; and I am not sure but I think her about the best poet in this country except for Mr. Stevens."

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

A more moderate admirer, Miss Winifred Bryher, sends us the following estimate from England:

This volume is the study of a Marco Polo detained at home. It is the fretting of a wish against wish until the self is drawn, not into a world of air and adventure, but into a narrower self, patient, dutiful and precise. *Those Various Scalpels* is sharper than a diamond. It is as brilliant a poem as any written of late years, and yet it is but a play with the outside of substances and the inside of thoughts too tired to feel emotion. And *Dock Rats* again, or *England*, are wrought as finely as the old Egyptians wrought figures from an inch-high piece of emerald; but they lack the one experience of life for which life was created.

The temperament behind the words is not a passive one, however much environment may have forced meditation upon it as a form of "protective coloration." The spirit is robust, that of a man with facts and countries to discover and not that of a woman sewing at tapestries. But something has come between the free spirit and its desire—a psychological uneasiness that is expressed in these few perfect but static studies of a highly evolved intellect.

Technically it is a triumphant book. There are scenes which are a joy to remember; the shifting color of

wade
through black jade
of the crow-blue mussel shells—

And the vivid beauty of *The Talisman*:

Under a splintered mast,
torn from ship and cast
near her hull,

a stumbling shepherd found
embedded in the ground,
a sea-gull

of lapis lazuli,
a scarab of the sea,
with wings spread—

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curling its coral feet,
parting its beak to greet
men long dead.

Miss Moore has preferred, to date, to express simply the pictorial aspect of the universe, and she has fulfilled perfectly each self-imposed task. Her *Poems* are an important addition to American literature, to the entire literature of the modern world. Only, Marco Polo, your sword is ready and your kingdoms wait. May it soon please you to leave the fireside and ride forth.

But Miss Moore's admirers don't have it all their own way. Here is the point of view of one of POETRY's associate editors, Marion Strobel:

Even a gymnast should have grace. If we find ourselves one of an audience in a side-show we prefer to see the well-muscled lady in tights stand on her head smilingly, with a certain nonchalance, rather than grit her teeth, perspire, and make us conscious of her neck muscles. Still, we would rather not see her at all.

Just so we would rather not follow the contortions of Miss Moore's well-developed mind—she makes us so conscious of her knowledge! And because we are conscious that she has brains, that she is exceedingly well-informed, we are the more irritated that she has not learned to write with simplicity.

The subject-matter of her poems is inevitably dry; the manner of expression pedantic. She shouts at our stupidity: "Literature is a phase of life;" "Words are constructive when they are true—the opaque allusion, the simulated flight upward, accomplishes nothing." And we yawn back at Miss Moore's omniscience.

And another poet-critic, Pearl Andelson, says:

Marianne Moore has much the Emily Dickinson type of mind, but where Emily Dickinson's not infrequent obscurities arise out of an authentic mysticism, Marianne Moore's are more likely the result of a relentless discipline in the subtler "ologies" and "osophies." She is brilliant at times to the point of gaudiness, although one feels that in

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her brilliance she is most herself. As to form, the fact that she wavers between prose and poetry is not disguised by the breath-taking line-formation. Indeed, I should say the incongruous effect was heightened, rather than diminished, by occasional rhyming. The same, for the most part, may be said of content as of form. Such poems as *Picking and Choosing* and *Poetry* are hybrids of a flagrantly prose origin.

Well, let us turn to the book—without prejudice one way or the other. In the first place, the lady is delightfully independent; she says in *Black Earth*:

Openly, yes,
with the naturalness
 of the hippopotamus or the alligator
 when it climbs out on the bank to experience the
sun, I do these
things which I do, which please
 no one but myself. Now I breathe and now I am sub-
 merged; the blemishes stand up and shout when the object
in view was a
renaissance; shall I say
 the contrary? The sediment of the river which
 encrusts my joints makes me very gray, but I am used
to it, it may
remain there; do away
 with it and I am myself done away with, for the
 patina of circumstance can but enrich what was
there to begin
with. This elephant skin
 which I inhabit, fibred over like the shell of
 the cocoanut, this piece of black glass through which no light
can filter—cut
into checkers by rut
 upon rut of unpreventable experience—
 it is a manual for the peanut-tongued and the

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hairy-toed. Black
but beautiful, my back

is full of the history of power, Of power? What
is powerful and what is not? My soul shall never

be cut into
by a wooden spear.

And so on for about forty more lines, which develop and elaborate the elephantine symbol, and then drop it, as it were, in mid-career, with a quizzical trunk-flourish. As *Black Earth* is admirably representative of its author's thought and style, it may serve as the text for a few inquiries.

Meditative self-confession is no novelty in English poetry—we have countless examples in as many different patterns. Hamlet's soliloquies, Gray's *Elegy*, Pope's *Essay on Man*, Byron's *Childe Harold*, Whitman's *Song of Myself*, many sonnets by Milton, Wordsworth, Keats and other supreme sonneteers—these are but a few of the numerous high precedents in English poetry for more or less imaginative and more or less metrical meditation. And one may not deny imaginative power to the mind which can create and round out and energize so effectively the grotesque image which appears when she holds up the mirror to her soul. Neither may one refuse any poet the right to attempt new metrical patterns; since only through such attempts does any achievement become possible—any enrichment of the English prosodic scheme.

So it remains to attempt to estimate the validity of Miss Moore's processes and the degree of her achievement.

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

Unquestionably there is a poet within the hard, deliberately patterned crust of such soliloquies as *Black Earth*, *Those Various Scalpels*, *Pedantic Literalist*, *Reinforcements*—almost any of these titles—though a poet too sternly controlled by a stiffly geometrical intellectuality. Miss Moore is in terror of her Pegasus; she knows of what sentimental excesses that unruly steed is capable, and so her ironic mind harnesses down his wings and her iron hand holds a stiff rein. This mood yields prose oftener than poetry, but it wrings out now and then the reluctant beauty of a grotesque, or even, more rarely, such a lyric as *Talisman*.

No amount of line-patterning can make anything but statement and argument out of many of the entries in this book—for example, *Picking and Choosing*, which begins:

Literature is a phase of life: if

one is afraid of it, the situation is irremediable; if
one approaches it familiarly,

what one says of it is worthless. Words are constructive
when they are true; the opaque illusion—the simulated flight

upward—accomplishes nothing. Why cloud the fact

that Shaw is self-conscious in the field of sentiment but is otherwise re-
warding? that James is all that has been

said of him but is not profound? It is not Hardy
the distinguished novelist and Hardy the poet, but one man

“interpreting life through the medium of the
emotions.”

If the mood instinctively flouts the muse, what of the
method? If the mood may rarely yield more than the

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hard reluctant beauty of a grotesque, is the method inevitable and right, fitting words musically, magically to the motive, as in all the masterpieces of the art? Well, let me confess that I do not find the divine shapeliness and sound-richness which Mr. Winters referred to in his letter. What I do find in certain poems is a brilliant array of subtly discordant harmonies not unlike those of certain ultra-modern composers, set forth in stanza-forms purely empirical even when emphasized by rhyme, forms which impose themselves arbitrarily upon word-structure and sentence-structure instead of accepting happily the limitations of the art's materials, as all art must. When Miss Moore uses the first syllable of *accident* as a whole line to rhyme with *lack*, or the article *a* as a line to rhyme with the end of *Persia*; when she ends a stanza in a split infinitive, or in the middle of the swift word *very*—indeed, anywhere in the middle of words or sentences, she is forcing her pattern upon materials which naturally reject it, she is giving a wry twist even though her aim is a grotesque; and when her aim is more serious, such verbal whimsicalities strike at once the intensely false note of affectation. And as she takes her own way in these details of style, so she gives little heed to the more general laws of shapeliness; each poem begins as it ends and ends as it begins—a coruscating succession of ideas, with little curve of growth or climax.

What I do find throughout this book is wit — wit fundamental and instinctive which expresses itself not

A Symposium on Marianne Moore

only in words, phrases, rhymes, rhythms, but in ideas, emotions. The grim and haughty humor of this lady strikes deep, so deep as to absorb her dreams and possess her soul. She feels immense incongruities, and the incongruity of her little ego among them moves her art not to grandeur but to scorn. As a satirist she is at times almost sublime—what contrary devil balks her even at those moments, tempting her art to its most inscrutable perversities?

Youth is sometimes penetrating in self-diagnosis. I am tempted to recall the first poem Miss Moore ever published—*That Harp You Play So Well*, from the 1915 group in *POETRY*:

O David, if I had
Your power, I should be glad—
 In harping, with the sling,
 In patient reasoning!

Blake, Homer, Job, and you,
Have made old wine-skins new.
 Your energies have wrought
 Stout continents of thought.

But, David, if the heart
Be brass, what boots the art
 Of exorcising wrong,
 Of harping to a song?

The sceptre and the ring
And every royal thing
 Will fail. Grief's lustiness
 Must cure the harp's distress.

“If the heart be brass . . . every royal thing will fail.”

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It is not this reviewer who says that, or invokes for this poet "grief's lustiness." May even grief soften a heart of brass? And is a deep resistless humor like Miss Moore's the most subtly corrosive destroyer of greatness?

H. M.

A MYSTIC WARRIOR

The Mystic Warrior, by James Oppenheim. A. A. Knopf.

We might count as art every cross-country flyer cutting its shriek into a black sky or a blue sky; every sky-scraper flinging windows, light, smoke into an incredulous sky; every unimpeachable bath-room trinity; the giant torsos of boilers and bellies of gas-tanks; the bird-like or fish-like aeroplane; the architecture of the farm—silo, granary and barn; or, for the matter of that, the fields of grain themselves, the vain prodigal orchards. It is in the air to do this. Out of such industrial shapes men are making violent tragic-comic drama, ruled as in art by the mathematics of the elements. So the analogy is close and tempting, and we can point that way to America as rich in self-expression. Or we may follow another trend of fashion—an import out of French dadaism or a mood synchronous with it—and abandon the word art altogether as an obsolete and paupered notion. A composer of genius was recently heard to bandy the idea of an anti-art society, where he said, lightly but seriously, any artist of consequence belonged. Ben Hecht in his first work of size follows his apparently biographic hero to say it is not

A Mystic Warrior

“art” he wants, “art is something he can spit out in conversation.” In a foreword to an exhibition of his photographs Alfred Stieglitz formally junks the word along with a number of abstractions. Yet it was a word concrete enough to artists, not so long dead either—Cézanne, Degas, Rodin, Whistler—to whom the living still pay homage.

People may be wiped from the face of the earth, but art is.

And there are still those who echo this as a hard truth, in whose eyes even the machine has been unable to break the essential sequence of things. They have need of this word to name the one human reality running so close to all reality as to far outstrip that vanity, self-expression; as to make shapes more intentional, more delicate, more potent than any American industry has yet made. In the pages of *The Mystic Warrior*, an analysis of himself, James Oppenheim writes himself down as one of these. His sense of the relentless absolutes of art, his denial of himself as an absolute, instil this poem with a deep candor, a kind of darkened tranquillity—virtues rare enough today to mean in themselves distinction:

The artist, finally the artist?

.....
America shuns him, cutting herself off from her own greatness:
But he comes nevertheless . . . he is Walt riding on top a bus, and Poe
dreaming of stars in a cottage with his wife dying,
And Emerson, absent-minded, minded of the Oversoul, in Concord
woods,
And Hawthorne moody in sad Puritanism,

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And Mark Twain smoking cigars in bed, sweating and groaning over
Huckleberry Finn,
And giant-like tearful Dreiser, and Sandburg sitting in a newspaper
office,
And Vachel Lindsay jazzing in Paradise (or is it Springfield, Illinois?)
And Masters among all souls in strange Spoon River.

So I speak for the artist . . .

But also I speak for the multitude like myself, with equal struggles and
the same yearnings,
The same sorrows, joys and lamenting,
But no gift: inarticulate, frustrated, America's victims.

There is the argument, in the unfolding of which perhaps Oppenheim does not quite go the length of candor. For his indecisions and his failures he can't resist blaming America more than the mere fact that the inevitable image, word, phrase come seldom to him. You enjoy the drift of the book, but you have to ignore more than one lapse of taste—that unerring instinct for the word and the place. Perhaps too breathless an awe has sometimes defeated him. There is a hint of this in the picture of a meeting with “our most powerful novelist”—Theodore Dreiser, one is led to suppose:

So we walk, we talk.

And here is the Hudson, the North River, with shouting gold of sunset
and smokes of the tugboats,
Shadows of cliffs, like the spacious threshold of a spiritual universe;
And I grow tense with the wonder of it and feel the artist's despair of
setting it down in words . . .

So I turn to him: “Just look,” I say, “could you describe that?”

He speaks carelessly:

“Oh, yes—that or anything.”

A Mystic Warrior

Yet this reverence for great vision, great craft, has had its reward, the reward of concentration—workmanship. If this writer were a house-painter, you might not always like the colors he mixed, but his surfaces, his finish would be scrupulous. So *The Mystic Warrior* contains pictures,—indelible pictures, snatches of rhythm, voices: pictures of childhood in New York schools and brownstone houses; pictures of a death and a funeral:

I am a tailor: I am cutting and sewing a pair of pants for my little brother:

My little grandmother comes in, walks softly, inaudibly by me
She carefully pulls down the shades, making the room yellow . . .
I confront her: "Why do you pull down the shades, grandma?"

She says there is too much sunlight . . .
Then she looks at me, hesitates, takes me by the arm,
Whispers in my ears, "James, your father is dead."

I smell flowers—lilies, roses, violets—I shall never forget that smell . . .
I am taken down in the long parlor . . .
There are people there: uncles and aunts, grandpa, grandma . . .
There are camp-stools, and a black-cloth coffin smothered in flowers . . .

And now my infancy is ended . . .
For this is death; I have come face to face with my enemy, death . . .
Servant-girls soothed me, saying, "He is an angel now." . . .

Vivid portraits of people; pictures of offices, wharves, homes; pictures of a Jewish bourgeoisie in New York, redolent of the race, recalling the riches Rembrandt made of the same theme in Amsterdam centuries ago; and the breath of countless streets:

Old days on the West Side,

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Old nights.

Summer nights when there was a faint Coney Island stir down electric-lit Eighth Avenue . . .

A moth-stir, flame, shadow, Bagdad.

There is unction in *The Mystic Warrior*, but almost no sham, no bunk. At its best the tenor of it is curiously dark and steady—a suggestion of slow night rain, or a ship at anchor in night waters. The poem succeeds in being a distillation, in contrast to the brew made, it seems, after the recipe: “To hell with work, novelty will provide the kick.” Oppenheim, you feel, has earned the right to say:

In the grey air we walk, in the glister of the dying year;

And my soul goes down to roots, and the roots, like a tree’s, are deep in the earth.

Acknowledging this, you are even willing to ignore the abstract use of the word “soul.” *Dorothy Dudley*

MRS. WYLIE’S POEMS

Nets to Catch the Wind, by Elinor Wylie. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

A lyric voice slight, but clear and fine, may be heard in this book, the voice of a free and lightly ranging spirit. The sound of it is now gay, now grave, but always it holds a little aloof—one detects that something “austere, immaculate” for which the poet herself holds her Puritan ancestry responsible. In a number of poems her mood is thoughtfully admonitory, as *The Eagle and the Mole*, *Madman’s Song*, or *Say Not of Beauty she is Good*:

Oh, she is neither good nor bad,
But innocent and wild.
Enshrine her and she dies, who had
The hard heart of a child.

Again, it is meditative or descriptive, or, as in *Valentine*, self-searching. But always the emotion is shy and delicate, as of a cool small wild-flower growing, by some whim of Nature, not in the woods, but in the protected area of a garden. The flower is very simple and of quiet color, but it has an individual vitality nevertheless.

The Eagle and the Mole, urging toward the high or the profound as against a safe "middle-of-the-road" policy, is perhaps the most temptingly quotable poem in the book. But as it has already gone the rounds, and as POETRY has printed *Velvet Shoes* and certain others, we prefer to offer *The Prinkin' Leddie* as an example of pure and irresistible gayety—a mood extremely rare in modern art:

"The Hielan' lassies are a' for spinnin'
The Lowlan' lassies for prinkin' and pinnin';
My daddie w'u'd chide me, an' so w'u'd my minnie
If I s'u'd bring hame sic a prinkin' leddie."

Now haud your tongue, ye haverin' coward,
For whilst I'm young, I'll go flounced an' flowered,
In lustring striped like the strings o' a fiddle,
Wi' gowden girdles about my middle.

My silks are stiff wi' patterns o' siller,
I've an ermine hood like the hat o' a miller,
I've chains o' coral like rowan berries,
An' a cramoisie mantle that cam' frae Paris.

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When the skies are low an' the earth is frozen,
Ye'll be gay an' gled for the leddie ye've chosen,
When ower the snow I go prinkin' and prancin'
In my wee red slippers were made for dancin'.

It's better a leddie like Solomon's lily
Than one that'll run like a Hielan' gillie
A-linkin' it ower the leas, my laddie,
In a raggedy kilt an' a belted plaidie!

An unusually interesting first book.

H. M.

THOUGHTFUL MEASURES

Out of Mist, by Florence Kilpatrick Mixer. Boni & Liveright.

Carefully studied, delicately wrought, are these poems—this sequence of twenty-nine sonnets followed by as many other poems. If they are in a sense too studied and deliberate, they yet express genuine emotion in grave and thoughtful measures of modern straightness and simplicity—there is no pretense in the feeling, and rarely a trace of rhetoric or palaver in the style. The best of them rise to a quiet beauty and distinction—*Lullaby*, which was in *POETRY* last summer, is a fine lyric; and this one, *To a Young Girl*, is almost as quotable, though the word *holocaust* is a bit melodramatic:

I had forgotten there were hearts so young
As yours, tonight,
Whose voice, now echoing with songs unsung,
Fills me with strange delight.

I had forgotten there were eyes so swift
Of April mirth,

Thoughtful Measures

Flashing as though with some invisible gift
From Heaven to Earth.

I had forgotten there were lips that pray,
Like a gray-winged dove,
For one more hour of laughter and of play
Before the holocaust of love.

The sonnet sequence hints at the story of a youthful love affair finished by autocratic death. We follow it a little apart, watching "out of mist," through translucent veils, an experience not unusual, not strongly individualized, but for that very reason of wide appeal. Many a first love-story appears here in thoughtful reminiscence, its joy and sadness real, but softened by time and change. In sonnet XXVII we have the climax of it:

In memory I sit beside your bed
And see again the smile that lit your face;
Nor do the slow forgetful years erase
A syllable of those last words we said.
For, through my tears, seeing your brightness fled
Because of them, I pled with Heaven for grace
To make you smile once more, while with quick pace
I heard night passing that would leave you dead.
Swiftly I took your hand and held it tight,
Then told in words that choked me ever after
Some foolish trifling thing. And though the light
That came with your brave laugh was gone thereafter,
Yet, as a rocket fills the quiet night
With falling stars, I hear again your laughter.

Cradle Song, *Dressing Up*, *Elegy*, and *The Candle* use the familiar four-line measure to present emotions of flower-like grace.

H. M.

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OUR CONTEMPORARIES

NEW INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINES

Three magazines which aim at international authority and circulation send us their first numbers from Rome, London and New York. All three appear in a luxury of format and typography more easily attained abroad than here; attainable here, indeed, only at a cost so high as to be almost prohibitive. We have, first, *The Broom*, described as "an international magazine of the arts published by Americans in Italy" (at 18 Trinità dei Monti), and edited by Harold A. Loeb and Alfred Kreyborg, with Giuseppe Prezzolini as associate editor; second, *Fanfare*, "a musical causerie issued on the first and fifteenth of the month," edited by Leigh Henry and published by Goodwin & Tabb, Ltd., at 34 Percy Street, London; and, third, we have the resuscitated *Little Review*, issued as a seven-dollar-a-year "quarterly of arts and letters," in an initial autumn number, from 27 West Eighth Street, New York, the "administration" consisting of Margaret Anderson, "jh," Ezra Pound and Francis Picabia.

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In *The Broom* Alfred Kreyborg shows once more his ability as an editor, but the new paper does not "start something," nor arouse the excitement of anticipation, to the degree that the first number of *Others* did in July, 1915. There is much variety in the contents, which range from

a strictly correct sonnet by Walter de la Mare to phantasmagoric designs in black and white and gray from paintings in the most approved cubistic manner by Albert Gleizes and Juan Gris.

We see many familiar names among the fifteen or so literary contributors: Lew Sarett has a *Maple-sugar Song* of the Chippewas; Amy Lowell offers a three-page chant in praise of *Lilacs*—

Your great puffs of flowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.

Lola Ridge sings of *Hospital Nights*; Wallace Gould offers a prose-poem narrative about *Marnia*. The only other verse-entries are some Chinese poems of J. Wing, translated by E. Powys Mathers, and a twelve-line rhymed poem, *Lake*, by Bayard Boyeson, which opens the number. Other poets appear in prose: James Stephens with a tragic Dublin story, *Hunger*, as ruthless and terrible in its deliberate detail as the title implies; James Oppenheim with a quite wonderful study of a sanely insane mind; Haniel Long with a whimsical sketch. Conrad Aiken, Louis Untermeyer and Emmy Sanders offer certain critical inquiries concerning poets and their art, and the invasion of Europe by America. In short, almost everyone appears except the over-modest Mr. Kreyborg.

The magazine has a beautifully printed page about five by seven inches, set sumptuously in hand-made large-paper measuring nearly nine by thirteen.

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Fanfare, which is primarily musical, blows a gay trumpet as it enters:

Fanfare—does not the word suggest something stirring, brilliant, joyous, exciting—something which preludes adventure? . . . We are the heralds of the new era, sounding the fanfare for its union with new beauty. Such union calls for revelry; hence our *Fanfare* will be merry. . . . We set forth boldly, our trumpets bright to reflect sunlight, our *Fanfare* ringing truly alike for ritual, ceremony, battle, joust, forlorn hope, festival, triumph or masquerade.

This paper, although a musical periodical, believes, like POETRY, in a closer alliance of the arts. Its editor thinks that musicians are too narrowly trained—therefore

Fanfare will deal with literature, drama, painting, sculpture, and theatre-craft, as matters a knowledge of which forms a necessary complement to musical culture.

So we have two or three clever drawings and a poem by John Gould Fletcher among the musical entries within the gaily decorative cover of *Fanfare's* first number.

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The Little Review is larger than of yore—an hundred and twelve pages measuring more than seven inches by nine. It aims at the very latest thing, and achieves, as its *pièce de résistance*, a fifty-page poem by Jean Cocteau, translated by Jean Hugo, *The Cape of Good Hope*. Having read half of it, and being still in a state of innocence, I commend the rest to those who can watch “the dangerous hallucinations continue.”

On the way to Cocteau, we have Ezra Pound on Brancusi, illustrated; some *Fumigations* by Picabia, a phi-

New International Magazines

osophy of *Psycho-democracy* set forth by Mina Loy, poems in French by Paul Morand and in German by Ivan Goll. Also there are some rather outspoken tales, and Ezra Pound tells us all of our sins in a *Historical Survey*.

It is said that Mr. Pound readopted *The Little Review* because of its editor's brave fight against the suppression of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Well, it *was* a brave fight—any fight against the censor's gag-laden fist takes bravery. The trouble is, *The Little Review* never knows when to stop. Just now it seems to be headed straight toward Dada; but we could forgive even that if it would drop Else von Freytag-Loringhoven on the way.

VARIOUS PRIZES

The Dial's first award of its annual prize of two thousand dollars, for one of its contributors, was announced December first. It goes to Sherwood Anderson, of Chicago, the distinguished author of a number of novels and short stories, and of *Mid-American Chants*, poems in free verse, of which a group first appeared in POETRY for September, 1917.

This is the most generous literary prize as yet awarded in this country; an admirable example which should have a train of followers. Although Mr. Anderson's contributions to *The Dial* have been in prose, his being a poet as well gives POETRY the opportunity to congratulate him,

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and also the staff of the magazine which honors him.

The Poetry Society of America announces the award of two prizes, each of five hundred dollars:

First, the prize offered for the best book of verse by an American poet, published in the United States during the year 1920, is divided equally between *Heavens and Earth*, by Stephen Vincent Benét, and *Smoke and Steel*, by Carl Sandburg. The judges were Richard Le Gallienne, William Lyon Phelps and Harriet Monroe.

Second, the prize offered in the William Lindsey Contest for poetic drama has been awarded to Harry Lee for his four-act play, *Il Poverello*. One hundred and forty-five plays were submitted, and the judges were Stuart Walker, George Arliss, George P. Baker, Jane Dransfield and Jessie B. Rittenhouse.

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The Friday Club of Chicago, at a recent meeting of its board of directors, voted fifty dollars to POETRY as a prize for a young poet for the current year.

This gift is acknowledged with special pleasure as it is the first offer of the kind which POETRY has received from any women's club, or indeed from any society. A number of clubs, in Chicago and elsewhere, have given annual prizes to painters, sculptors, and perhaps musicians; we hope that the Friday Club's example will remind them that prizes to poets, being excessively rare, should have the preference from clubs largely devoted, as most of them are, to the study of literature.

CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM PARIS

My Dear POETRY: Interest in American letters seems to be increasing in France. As one evidence, note that the program required for the English-teaching certificate contains Frost's *North of Boston*. This is due to M. Charles Cestre, the well-known professor of American literature at the Sorbonne. I consider it a bold step to admit in University studies a quite modern poet whose genius has not yet been fully acknowledged by our critics.

French verse is still a matter of discussion. Yet Paul Valéry seems to attract partisans from sundry corners:

La lune mince verse une lueur sacrée,
Toute une jupe d'un tissu d'argent léger
Sur les bases de marbre ou vient l'ombre songer,
Que suit d'un char de perles une gaze nacrée.

A scintillating symphony of vowels, and a modern rendering of an old romantic theme. Valéry and a few other poets have united to form a "New Pléiade." The original French Pléiade, you remember, was formed at a moment when the French language needed clarification and enriching. What seems to be the aim of the actual Pléiade? The names of the members will speak for themselves: Countess Mathieu de Noailles, Pierre Camo, Derennes, Gasquet, de Magallon, Mazade, Valéry—all artists of classical or semi-classical verse. It is a protest against the extremist and cryptic schools of art. The

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Countess is a great favorite among women, tender youths, priests (if I dare trust a friend's testimony), and bourgeois readers in whose ears still lingers the flowing cadence of our traditional verse. Camo writes finely-chiselled sonnets and odes in which the modern notes blend exquisitely with fading reminiscences. Gasquet was a fiery artist of the South, whose experiments in polyphonic stanzas, together with alexandrines, have just been cut short by death. Our poetical tradition has definitely acquired a pliancy which not even the attempts at classic tragedy of the official Comédie Française are able to endanger. Even Max Jacob, the sweet child of humor, who keeps apart from any coterie with his *bons mots* and new faith—even Max Jacob writes exquisitely modulated alexandrines. You see that our extremists, Dada excepted (but who knows what they mean?—not even Ezra Pound), display a certain coquetry towards our well ordered muse:

Le ciel a pour la mer des regards qui bénissent,
Le soleil sur la mer est un bateau qui glisse,
Chaque lame a son or, chaque écume a sa nuit . . .

What do you think of this gold-and-black up-to-date fabric?—

Every wave has its gold; every foam has its night.

More robust and more thoughtful has become the muse of Vildrac, and of Romains. The *Chants du Désespéré*, by Charles Vildrac, ring with the sorrow of the poet's bruised dreams. Vildrac bends over the corpse of his friend, a

A Letter from Paris

victim of the war; he turns his clear eyes on his suffering fellow-men; he sees more ugliness than before.

Jules Romains (*Le Voyage des Amants*) seems to remain more true to his former philosophy. A smiling fancy, direct sensations of Paris and the world, with sometimes a cosmic vista:

Les jours grandissent,
Chaque jour est un coup plus dur
Porté plus profond dans la nuit;
Et la matière des ténèbres
Tantôt molle, tantôt cassante,
Se pulvérise ou s'aplatit.

The art of the New Pléiade and of the Unanimists make this a great epoch for French poetry. Alas! that it should not also be glorious for the French drama! But here we have to deplore that our official theatres leave to private and too little moneyed initiative the production of new, vigorous and audacious plays. The Comédie Française practically gave nothing worth mentioning apart from the classical répertoire. *La Mort Enchaînée*, by Maurice Magre, has won a prize of a few thousand francs for the best new play, and it is grievously accurate that this heavy and obscure mythological drama was merely one of the passable novelties of the Comédie. As for the Odéon, we feel sure that the new play by Paul Fort is going to make up for the stuff that has been produced there in the course of the few past months. But of course we have our secondary stages: the Vieux Colombier, the Théâtre des Arts; and we have the Group of the Six.

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I shall have occasion to write you about this young group of Six Musicians, and about Jean Cocteau as a poet. Let me say now that *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, played at the finest and most comfortable theatre in Paris, the Champs Elysées, before a smart audience and a good number of buoyantly hostile traditionalists, has not proved a failure. It is a farce mimed by dancers for actors, while a phonograph explains, in the words of Cocteau, the progress of the plot. A nervous cerebral music, with here and there patches of sunlight, has been composed by the Six. It is a healthy combination of sound, color, and gesture; with no human voice, which may be deplored, but at least with nothing of the thundering declamation of too many comedians. *Jean Catel*

NOTES

Mr. Robert Frost has recently accepted an invitation from the University of Michigan; and he is now an informal member of its faculty, resident during the college year at Ann Arbor. His latest book was *Mountain Interval*, published by Henry Holt & Co., in 1916.

Dr. William Carlos Williams, of Rutherford, N. J., will put out very soon a new book of poems through the Four Seas Co., which has previously published *Al Que Quiere* and *Kora in Hell*. Dr. Williams and Robert McAlmon are editors of *Contact*, a magazine of which four numbers have appeared during the past year.

Miss Grace Fallow Norton, of New York, who is now sojourning in France, is the author of *The Sister of the Wind* and other books of verse (Houghton Mifflin Co.).

Mr. Glenn Ward Dresbach, who has recently removed from New Mexico to El Paso, Texas, is the author of several books of verse, the latest being *Morning, Noon and Night* (Four Seas Co.). A new one, *In Colors of the West*, will appear next spring.

Marjorie Meeker, who recently married Mr. Shirley Wing, lived formerly in Columbus, O., but is now travelling abroad. She has not yet published a volume.

The other poets in this number are recent accessions to POETRY's list:

Helen Coale Crew (Mrs. Henry Crew), of Evanston, Ill., has published verse and prose in various magazines.

Miss Julia R. Reynolds is a young poet of Sumter, S. C.; Miss Ellen Margaret Janson of Seattle, Wash.; and Miss Dorothy Keeley of Chicago. Miss Esther Louise Ruble was brought up in Kansas, and is now a student at the University of Chicago.

Mr. Ernest Walsh, who was in the aviation service during and after the War and suffered a fall, is now in the Army Hospital at Camp Kearny, Cal., where there is a group of young men who are much interested in poetry.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- The Lifted Cup*, by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. Houghton Mifflin Co.
The Fugitive, by Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan Co.
Red Poppies in the Wheat, by John Richard Moreland. J. T. White & Co.
Free Forms, by Simon Felshin. Privately printed, Paris, France.
John Masterson, by Kenneth Campbell. Campbell Press, San Diego.
Collected Poems, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co.
A Penny Whistle Together with The Babette Ballads, by Bert Leston Taylor. Alfred A. Knopf.
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ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- Songs of the Cowboys*, ed. by N. Howard Thorp. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Oxford Poetry, 1921, edited by Alan Porter, Richard Hughes and Robert Graves. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, England.
Widsith; Beowulf; Finnsburgh; Waldere; Deor: translated by Charles Scott Moncrieff; introd. by Viscount Northcliffe. E. P. Dutton & Co.
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PROSE:

- Louise Imogen Guiney*, by Alice Brown. Macmillan Co.
The Literature of Ecstasy, by Albert Mordell. Boni & Liveright.

234 a

Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the distinguished English poet, novelist and critic, wrote us last July:

If American periodical literature has today a little peak, a little group of journals, raising it to the level of the best of European cosmopolitanism, or at any rate in that direction, it is because you and your small paper showed how, editorially and economically, it could be done.

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No. V

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POETRY asks its friends to become Supporting Subscribers by paying ten dollars a year to its Fund. The art of poetry requires, if it is to advance, not only special sympathy from a discriminating public, but also endowment similar to that readily granted to the other arts. All who believe in the general purpose and policy of this magazine, and recognize the need and value of such an organ of the art, are invited to assist thus in maintaining it

 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XIX
NO. V

FEBRUARY 1922

POEMS BY WANG WEI

ANSWERING VICE-PREFECT CHANG

AS the years go by, give me but peace,
Freedom from ten thousand matters.
I ask myself and always answer,
What can be better than coming home?
A wind from the pine-trees blows my sash,
And my lute is bright with the mountain-moon.
You ask me about good and evil? . . .
Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing!

BOUND HOME TO MOUNT SUNG

The limpid river, past its bushes
Flowing slowly as my chariot,

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Seems a fellow-voyager
Returning with the evening-birds.
A ruined city-wall overtops an old ferry,
Autumn sunset floods the peaks. . . .
Far away, beside Mount Sung,
I shall rest and close my door.

A MESSAGE TO P'AI TI

Cold and blue now are the mountains
From autumn-rain that beat all day.
By my thatch-door, leaning on my staff,
I listen to cicadas in the evening wind.
Sunset lingers at the ferry,
Cooking-smoke floats up from the houses. . . .
Oh, when shall I pledge Chieh-yu again,
And sing a wild poem at Five Willows!

ON THE WAY TO THE TEMPLE

Not knowing the way to the Temple of Heaped Fragrance,
I have roamed, under miles of mountain-cloud,
Old woods without a human track.
But far on the height I hear a bell,
A rillet sings over winding rocks,
The sun is tempered by green pines. . . .
At twilight, close to an emptying pool,
I lie and master the Passion-dragon.

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

MOUNT CHUNG-NAN

The Great One's height near the City of Heaven
Joins a thousand mountains to the corner of the sea.
Clouds, when I look back, close behind me;
Mists, when I enter them, are gone.
A central peak divides the wilds
And weather into many valleys. . . .
Needing a place to spend the night,
I call to a wood-cutter over the river.

A VIEW OF THE HAN RIVER

With its three Hsiang branches it reaches Ch'u border
And with nine streams touches the gateway of Ching:
This river runs beyond heaven and earth,
Where the color of mountains both is and is not.
The dwellings of men seem floating along
On ripples of the distant sky. . . .
O Hsiang-yang, how your beautiful days
Make drunken my old mountain-heart!

IN MY LODGE AT WANG-CH'UAN
AFTER A LONG RAIN

The woods have stored the rain, and slow comes the smoke
As rice is cooked on faggots and carried to the fields;
Over the quiet marshland flies a white egret,
And mango-birds are singing in the full summer trees.

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I have learned to watch in peace the mountain morning-
glories,
To eat split dewy sunflower-seeds under a bough of pine,
To yield the place of honor to any boor at all. . . .
Why should I frighten sea-gulls even with a thought?

MY RETREAT AT CHUNG-NAN

My heart in middle age found the Way,
And I came to dwell at the foot of this mountain.
When the spirit moves, I wander alone
Where beauty is known only to me.
I will walk till the water checks my path,
Then sit and watch the rising clouds,
And some day meet an old woodcutter,
And talk and laugh and never return.

IN A RETREAT AMONG BAMBOOS

Alone I am sitting under close bamboos,
Playing on my lute, singing without words.
Who can hear me in this thicket? . . .
Bright and friendly comes the moon.

LINES

You who arrive from my old country,
Tell me what has happened there!
Did you see, when you passed my silken window,
The first cold blossom of the plum?

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

A PARTING

Friend, I have watched you down the mountain
Till now in the dark I close my thatch-door. . . .
Grasses return again green in the spring,
But, O Wang Sun, will *you* return?

A SONG AT WEI-CH'ENG

The morning rain settled the dust in Wei-ch'eng;
In the yard of the tavern green willows revive. . . .
Oh, wait to empty one more cup!
West of Yang Gate—no old friends!

THE BEAUTIFUL HSI-SHIH

Since beauty is honored all over the empire,
How could Hsi-shih remain humbly at home?
At dawn washing clothes by a lake in Yueh;
At dusk in the Palace of Wu, a great lady!
Poor, no rarer than the others—
Exalted, everyone praising her rareness.
But above all honors, the honor was hers
Of blinding with passion an emperor's reason.
Girls who had once washed silk beside her
Now were ordered away from her carriage. . . .
Ask them, in her neighbors' houses,
If by wrinkling their brows they can copy her beauty.

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A SONG OF YOUNG GIRLS FROM LO-YANG

There are girls from Lo-yang in that door across the street,
Some of them fifteen and some a little older.

While their master rides a rapid horse with jade bit and
bridle,

Their handmaid brings them codfish on a golden plate.

On the painted pavilions, facing their red towers,
Cornices are pink and green with peach-bloom and with
willow;

Canopies of silk awn their seven-scented chairs;

Rare fans shade them home, to their nine-flowered cur-
tains.

Their lord, with rank and wealth and in the green of life,
Exceeds, for magnificence, even Chi-lun;

He favors girls of lowly birth and teaches them to dance,
And he gives away his coral-trees to almost anyone.

The wind of dawn just stirs when his nine soft lights go out,
Those nine soft lights like petals in a flying chain of
flowers.

From play to play they have barely time for singing over
the songs;

No sooner are they dressed again than incense burns before
them.

Those they know in town are only the rich and the lavish,
And day and night they're visiting the homes of Chao and
Li. . . .

Who cares about a girl from Yueh, face jade-white,
Humble, poor, alone, by the river, washing silk!

Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

HARMONIZING A POEM BY PALACE-ATTENDANT KUO

High beyond the thick wall a tower shines with sunset,
Where peach and plum are blooming and willow-cotton
flies.

You have heard it in your office, the court-bell of twilight:
Birds discover perches, officials head for home.

Your morning-jade will tinkle as you thread the golden
palace,

You will bring the word of heaven from the closing gates
at night.

And I should serve there with you; but, being full of years,
I have put aside official robes and am resting from my ills.

A GREEN STREAM

I have come on the River of Yellow Flowers,
Borne by the current of a green stream
Rounding ten thousand turns through the mountains
To journey less than a hundred li.

Rapids hum on scattered stones,

Light is dim in the close pines,

The surface of an inlet sways with nut-horns,

Weeds are lush along the banks,

Down in my heart I have always been clear

As this clarity of waters.

Oh, to remain on a broad flat rock

And cast my fishing-line forever!

Translated from the Chinese

by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu

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IN PRAISE OF ABRIGADA

I had been told
A foolish tale—
Of stone—dank—cold:
But you,
Held to wide winter storm,
To clutch of blackening frost and ocean gale,
Are warm!

I thought that stone was silent too,
Unmoved by beauty,
Unaware of season or of mirth:
But I hear laughter, singing, as I lay
My face against your gray;
Surely I hear the ritual of far waves
And scent their winging spray,
Mixed with wild-rose and honeysuckle,
Budding sassafras,
And the cool breath of pungent, leafy bay.

I knew that walls were sheltering
And strong;
But you have sheltered love so long
That love is part
Of your high towering,
Lifting you higher still,
As heart lifts heart. . . .

Hush!
How the whip-poor-will
Wails from his bush:
The thrush
Grows garrulous with delight!
There is a rapture in that liquid monotone,
"Bob White! Bob—*White!*"
Dear living stone!

.
In the great room below,
Where arches hold the listening spaces,
Flames crackle, leap and gleam
In the deep fire-places;
Memories dream . . .
Of other memories, perhaps,
Of gentle lives,
Of births, and of those other births that men call death,
Of voices, foot-steps tapping the stone floor,
And faces . . . faces . . .

Beyond, the open door,
The meadows drowsy with the moon,
The faint outline of dune,
The lake, the silver magic in the trees:
Walls, you are one with these!

.
High on the loggia-roof,
Under the stars as pale as they,

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Two silent ones have crept away,
Seeking the deeper silence lovers know:
Into the radiant shadows of the night,
Into the aching beauty of the night,
They dare to go!

The moon
Is a vast cocoon,
Spinning her wild, white thread
Across the sky.
A thousand crickets croon
Their sharp-edged lullaby.
I hear a murmuring of lips on lips:
"All that I am, beloved!
All!"—
Lovers' eternal cry!
Lift them still higher, wall!

.

You stand serene:
The great winds linger, lean
Upon your breast;
The mist
Lifts up a gray face to be kissed;
The east and west
Hang you with banners,
Flaunt their bold victories of dusk and dawn;
Seasons salute you as they pass,
Call to you and are gone.

Amid your meadow-grass
Lush, green,
You stand serene.

.

Houses, like hearts, are living, loving,
Joyful or woeful,
Forget or are forgot;
Houses, like tired hearts,
Sicken at last, and die,
Crumble and rot:
But they who know you, Abrigada,
They—and I—
Forget you not!

.

Nor they who stand on Abrigada's roof,
Glowing, aloof!

.

Come with me now,
Climb with me, stand, look down
In new content of mood,
Withdrawn from clasp of crowd
And tangle of the town!
Climb swifter still—
From safe companionship of cloud
The deeper to look down!

Not back!
Forget the thirst, the sordid cup,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The plethora, the piteous lack;
Forget the trafficking in tears,
The arrogance of scars.
Look up . . .
To dream undaunted dreams aloud,
And stumble toward the stars!

.
*This be in praise
Of Abrigada;
In all the ways
That come to me
Through the wise, wistful summer days.
In speech, in rhyme and rhythm of word—
Call it a poem, maybe!
In song—tuck the brown shining wood
Under my chin!
Call it my bird,
My heart,
My violin!
In prayer . . .
In dream . . .
In silence, best of all,
Leaning on the beloved dew-drenched wall.
Leaning and lifting . . .
High . . .
With Abrigada's gesture toward the sky.*

Leonora Speyer

AN OLD WOMAN

Something within her makes her live so long—
It pays no heed that all her friends are dead.
Her age is moving as a simple song,
Wailing that happy days long since are dead.
Something forgets that all her teeth have dropt,
That eyes no longer serve to see her ways.
Time seems not weary of this weed uncropt,
And draws her on into these newer days.
She does not know at night if she will rise
And wake again to live another day.
Eternity of age now makes her wise—
A thing on point of passing, hear her say:

“The moon outlasts my days; the sleepless hounds
Bark ever in the night—strange haunting sounds.”

I COMPLAIN IN PASSING

I am weary of green in the grass,
Of green in the trees;
Of blue in the sky, of white on the clouds,
And things like these.
I pray for one boon down the long white day—
That I may cease;
For mountain and meadow and grove and sky
Leave me no peace.

Harlow Clarke

WINTER DAWN

The dark rolls back.
Like dropped stars,
The willows shine on the sides of the water-courses:
Their ice-blades clash,
Making a slow thin music.
So wakes he, Tem-Sotetc-Kwi;
So comes he slowly—like a slow thin music.
Ah—ah—hi-i, brothers! Lovers of trails and sea-paths!
It is the time of sorrow and the time of shutting-in:
For he has come again—Tem-Sotetc-Kwi—
With heavy winds,
Like frozen ropes of cedar, hoary,
Uncoiling from his thighs
To bind the world.

I have seen his white moccasins upon the mountain:
His steps have hushed the waters
Of the great and little falls;
The rushing rivers are stopped.
He has fed the lake's watery breast to the White Bear
That follows him.
The canoes of the Coast-dwellers are hung under the roofs
Like empty cradles:
We can no longer rock on the wings of the great Blue
Heron!

The great Blue Heron has hidden herself

Under the thatch of her nest,
Because of his pale gray foxes, with white ears—
His hungry foxes,
Huddled about the brink of her nest.
He has taken away the brown fields,
Where our bare feet danced with Autumn
At the feast of berries and maize—
The bare brown fields that were glad
When we drummed with our brown bare feet,
Singing, "Hoy-mah-ah! hoy a-mah!"

Ai-hi! The mats his witch-woman weaves for him are
thick and cold:

We have put beaver-fur about our feet,
And made us long, long flat shoes to bear us up.
(This is our magic, wise men's magic,
To save us from the White Bear's maw!)
His great snowy owls fill all our cedars.
Aii-hi! The red breasts of woodpeckers
No longer flicker in our forests.
His witch-woman is plucking the wings of the sky,
The air is stuffed with white feathers:
We no longer may speak with the sun—ai-i!
Gravely, with bowed hearts, we greet you,
O Tem-Sotetc-Kwi, Snow-chief, Ice-hunter,
Priest of the Long White Moons!

Slowly, slowly, like thin music,
Murmur the sorrow-chant,

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Coast-dwellers, my brothers:
For Tem-Sotetc-Kwi has carved the death totem
Over Swiya's house-door—
Q'ulx—se—wag—ila—making pure!
Our mother Swiya, Swiya our mother is dead.
Sorrow, sorrow, my tribe, for Swiya!

Much joy had Swiya, our mother, who loved three lovers!
As a maid, boldly she went forth
And met Spring among the willows;
He pierced her with hope.
Singing she entered the green doors of Summer;
Singing she came out, girdled with fragrance.
She took the yellow harvest-moon in her hands,
And waited in the maize-fields behind our village.
Autumn clasped her there in the fields; he crowned her
with maize,
He filled her pouch with berries, he gave her much deer's
meat.

Autumn, Feast-maker! Dearest was he among her three
lovers—
He was the strong one: he gave the most food; he was the
last.
Ai! great joy had Swiya, our mother, who loved three
lovers,
And took their gifts.
All their gifts were ours: Swiya, our mother, kept nothing
back.

Constance Lindsay Skinner

Now she lies bare, her hands are empty, her face is cold;
Her eyelids are shut, for her eyes are in the Place of Death,
Under white eyelids! *Q'ulx—se-wag-ila!*
Tem-Sotetc-Kwi has carved the death-totem over Swiya's
door.

Slowly, softly, like thin music, murmur the sorrow-chant
For Swiya, our mother. Swiya, our mother, is dead.

Q'ulx—se—Q'ulx-se-wag-ila wa!

Gravely, with bowed hearts, we greet you,
O Tem-Sotetc-Kwi, Snow-chief, Ice-hunter,
Priest of the Long White Moons!

Constance Lindsay Skinner

FROM A CHICAGO "L"

The great gray houses walk along
Sombrely and slow,
Weary in the dusk,
In a dragging row.
They are very tired,
Heart-broken and old;
They seem to shudder as they pass,
The winter wind is cold.

Sarah-Margaret Brown

FATE

I

I have so often
Examined all this well-known room
That I inhabit.

There is the open window;
There the locked door, the door I cannot open,
The only doorway.

When at the keyhole often, often
I bend and listen, I can always hear
A muffled conversation.

An argument:
An angry endless argument of people
Who live behind;

Now loudly talking,
Now dimly to their separate conflict moving
Behind the door.

There they seem prisoned,
As I, in this lone room that I inhabit:
My life; my body.

You, of the previous being,
You who once made me and who now discuss me,
Tell me your verdict, and I will obey it!

You, long ago,

With doubting hands and eager trembling fingers,
Prepared my room.

Before I came,
Each gave his token for remembrance, brought it,
And then retired behind the bolted door.

There is the pot of honey
One left, and there the jar of vinegar
On the same table.

Who poured that water
Shining beside the flask of yellow wine?
Who sighed so softly?

Who brought that living flower to the room?
Who groaned, that I can ever hear the echo?
You do not answer.

Meanwhile from out the window
Sounds penetrate of building other houses:
Men building houses.

And so it may be
Some day I'll find some doorway in the wall—
What shall I take them?

What shall I take them
Beyond those doorways, in the other rooms?
What shall I bring them,
That they may love me?

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Fatal question!
For all the jangling voices rise together;
I seem to hear:

“What shall he take them?” . . .
Beyond their closed door there’s no final answer.
They are debating.

II

O Fate! Have you no other gift
Than voices in a muffled room?
Why do you live behind your door,
And hide yourself in angry gloom?

And why, again, should you not have
One purpose only, one sole word,
Ringing forever round my heart,
Plainly delivered, plainly heard?

Your conversation fills my brain
And tortures all my life, and yet
Gives no result. I often think
You’ve grown so old that you forget;

And having learnt man’s fatal trick
Of talking, talking, talking still,
You’re tired of definite design,
And laugh at having lost your will.

Harold Monro

HILLSIDE POEMS

WINTER RAIN

It is sad, this rain
Drip-dripping in the night
Monotonously
Into the snow;
Dripping from the corners of the house
And the ends of black twigs
All night long without change.
Rain, rain soft-fingered,
Lifting up the white snow,
Uncovering the clay beneath;
Rain, soft,
Almost unwilling—
The fingers of an old woman
Who cannot resist
Slipping downstairs in the night
To the front room,
And lifting the sheet for a last look
At what it conceals.

A NAKED MAPLE

You have put off your leaves.
You are like a runner who stands naked at the mark,
Calm and certain of victory.

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You are glorious in your ease,
Waiting for the first silver whistle of the snow;
And in your sureness
That the yellow medal of a May moon will be pinned to
 your breast,
Clothed again and triumphant.

NOONTIME

Noontime and locusts,
Locusts goading the heat
Quivering over the hay-fields;
Yet the men arise from half-eaten dinners
And hood canvas over the stacks—
The full tawny breasts of the hayfields—
For the first dark finger of lust
Is pointing over a steeple
Far in the distance.

JUDGES

Between her two brothers,
Who argue of nations and laws
With a neighbor,
She stands, big with a child,
Watching the sunshine;
Waiting the end of their talk,
Saying nothing.

Frederick R. McCreary

ALONE ON THE HILL

Alone on the hill
In the warm October noon,
With the woods below
And beyond their brilliance the sea:
The moment has come,
The rapt still instant of being,
When water and wood are gone.
There is nothing now
But the on-running fluid of hours
Gleaming with blue, yellow, crimson.
Now quick! Let me run on sharp stones,
Let me strangle in surf choked with the bitter salt-water!
Let me feel pain, feel torture,
And the acid hunger of loneliness!
Give me self, self—
Before I am lost
In this madness of space eternal,
This horror of dream triumphant.

Frederick R. McCreary

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INCIDENTALS

DUST IN THE ROAD

The dust
Is a yellow-grey veil
Over the limbs of the wind.
And the little breeze dons it,
That her fleet litheness,
And the whirling torsions of her sprite's form,
May be apparent
As she gaily runs down the road
To greet us.

TAPS

Out of the night,
Up from the serene valley of the Missouri,
Over the free forested Kansas hills
Come notes of a bugle—
Mincing, silver-slippered steps of music.

THE STAR

When the "screws" had made their last round
And the lights in the cells were out,
I arose and peered out the window.
And just over the edge of the prison-wall
I saw a tiny, twinkling, yellow star

Hi Simons

Furtively winking at me,
Like the eye of the Infinite;
Mischievously happy
Because it had slipped me a bit of joy
Over the wall, from "the outside."

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD ROUÉ

The seeds of his sin
Thrust tiny red roots
Among the cell-crevices of his face.
Now their minute purple tendrils
Trace, on his cheeks and nose,
Vine-patterns as intricately beautiful
As his fastidious iniquities.

Hi Simons

TAK FOR SIDST

To C. S.

"Good-bye," you said, and your voice was an echo, a
promise.

You turned to go, a grey iron ghost.

The night took you.

Insubstantial as air, stronger than iron,

You were here and had gone.

Your voice was an omen, an echo.

Babette Deutsch

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IN THE OFFICE

THE GUARDIANS

Old men nodding over great books,
Always writing with gold pens,
Every morning
Adding figures,
Turning pages;
Every morning
A little grayer,
A little mustier,
A little older.

Old men!—do you keep Age
Hidden between your desks?
Will she catch me
If I come down to ask you
For the October statement?

AILEEN

She goes through the order of the day
Like a nun.
The rattle of her typewriter
Is the rustle of a rosary;
And she speaks in the telephone
With the retreated delicacy
Of one who murmurs before an altar.

Gwendolen Haste

MOTHERHOOD

Playing alone by the ocean's edge,
Eager and unafraid,
You are the child I used to be,
Playing the games I played.

Now I have only a coward's heart,
Finding you all too dear,
Learning at last that love shall teach
The fearless how to fear.

You are so little against the sky,
Laughing and undismayed—
Oh, little son by the ocean's edge,
I am afraid, afraid!

Medora C. Addison

THE LOVER

You do not know the wonder I will pour on your name—
It will burst like thunder with all heaven for a frame!
I will raise it as a flame that the wind blows under,
I will cast myself asunder—to my shame, to my blame!
I will make a fame, a wonder of your name.

Paul Tanaquil

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FIRE

Love, let us light
A fire tonight,
A wood fire on the hearth.

With torn and living tongues the flames leap.
Hungrily
They catch and lift, to beat their sudden wings
Toward freedom and the sky.
The hot wood sings
And crackles in a pungent ecstasy
That seems half pain of death, and half a vast
Triumphant exultation of release
That its slow life-time of lethargic peace
Should come to this wild rapture at the last.

We watch it idly, and our casual speech
Drops slowly into silence.
Something stirs and struggles in me,
Something out of reach
Of surface thoughts, a slow and formless thing—
Not I, but a dim memory
Born of the dead behind me. In my blood
The blind race turns, groping and faltering.

Desires
Only half glimpsed, not understood,
Stir me and shake me. Fires

Eunice Tietjens

Answer the fire, and vague shapes pass
Like shapes of wind across the grass.

The red flames catch and lift,
Roaring and sucking in a furious blaze;
And a strange, swift
Hunger for violence is in me. My blood pounds
With a dark memory of age-old days,
And mad red nights I never knew,
When the dead in me lived, and horrid sounds
Broke from their furry throats.

In drunken rounds,
Blood-crazed, they danced before the leaping flames,
While something twisted in the fire. . . .

Now as the flames mount higher
Strange pictures pass. I cannot see them quite
And yet I feel them.

I am in a dread
Dark temple, and I beat my head
In maddened rite,
Before the red-hot belly of a god
Who eats his worshippers. . . .

This is a funeral pyre

And one lies dead
Who was my life. The fat smoke curls and eddies,
Beckoning suttee. . . .

But the moment slips
To Bacchanalian revels—quick hot lips

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And leaping limbs, lit by the glare
Of human torches. . . .

A sudden spark
Goes crackling upward, followed by a shower;
And I am in the hills, cool hills and dark,
Primeval as the fire. The beacon flare
Leaps in a roaring tower,
Spattering in sparks among the stars
Tales of wild wars.
And on a distant crest
Its mate makes answer. . . .

But the embers gleam
Like molten metal steaming at a forge,
Where with rough jest
Great lusty fellows
Ply the roaring bellows,
And clang the song of labor—and the dream
Man builds in metal. . . .

Now the red flame steadies.
Softly and quietly it burns,
Purring, and its embers wear
A friendly and domestic air.

This is the hearth-fire—home and peace at last.
Comfort and safety are attendant here.
The primal fear
Is shut away, to whistle in the blast

Eunice Tietjens

Beyond the doorway where the shadows twine.
The fire is safety, and the fire is home,
Light, warmth and food. Here careless children come
Filling the place with laughter;
And after
Men make good council-talk, and old men spin,
With that great quiet of the wise,
Tales of dead beauty, and of dying eyes.

The fire is drooping now. A log falls in
Softly upon itself, like one grown tired
With ecstasy. The lithe tongues sink
In ash and ember:
And something I remember
From ages gone—and yet I cannot think—
Some secret of the end,
Of earth grown old, and death turned friend,
And man who passes
Like flame, like light, like wind across the grasses.

Ah, what was that? A sudden terror sped
Behind me in the shadows. I am cold;
And I should like your hand to hold
Now that the fire is dead.
Love, light the lamp, and come away to bed.
Fire is a strange thing, burning in your head.

Eunice Tietjens

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COMMENT

THE UTTERANCE OF POETRY

IN the *Literary Review* of a recent New York *Evening Post* Lawrence Mason tells whimsically of the tortures he has endured in hearing poetry read aloud. Listing "several different methods," he says:

Some chant or intone it in a dulcet sing-song that woos reluctant slumber from her lair. Some attack it with athletic vigor, and pride themselves upon the sheer speed of their delivery. Others find the *summum bonum* in emphasizing the beat with the deadly regularity of a metronome. Still others coldly isolate and anatomize each line till there is no more savor in it than in a dried prune. Others, again, so boggle and halt and garble and apologize and re-read that the hearer is driven to madness, despair, or violent revolt.

And he refers to a cousin "whose method is none of these—his sole and sufficient guiding principle is to conceal from his unfortunate hearers every evidence of versification."

Mr. Mason's suffering reminds me of my own experience with a certain "eminent dramatic revelator" (so advertised) who for two seasons has given expensive recitals in Chicago under the alleged patronage of women of social prominence, of whom some, as I definitely ascertained, had never consented to the use of their names, and others had consented in a mistaken impulse of kindness while in blessed ignorance of the man and his "art." The revelator, whose programs ranged from *Othello* to *Deburau*, followed the method of Mr. Mason's

The Utterance of Poetry

cousin, but enriched it with a kind of vocal gymnastics inherited from the elocutionary school of the eighteenth-seventies. While the three-dollar-a-head audience sat in silence under the infliction, I amused myself, during the half-hour or so that a heroic sense of duty held me there, in certain speculations about the simple, but much abused art of reading poetry aloud.

It would seem to be a rare gift—the beautiful reading of poetry. Even the poets themselves are often disappointing, though there is usually a degree of beauty and illumination to be gained from a poet's reading of his own verse. The poet instinctively emphasizes rhythm, sometimes even to the point of intoning or chanting it; indeed, he rarely carries this too far. But not all poets have good voices, an accent neither too local nor too studiously correct, and a simple effective delivery.

Certain poets, of course, it is a privilege to hear—their reading is as much a work of art as the poem, and the two fit together in indissoluble unity. I used to feel this of Lindsay, whose first reading of *The Congo* at POETRY'S first banquet—in March, 1914—was a triumph in the double art. But of late Lindsay has acquired bad habits—his reading has become too loud and melodramatic. John Masefield's very simple reading of his poems is beautiful beyond words, because of that marvellous bass voice of his, rich with all the sorrows of the world. Carl Sandburg also has a deep-toned organ in his throat which he uses with subtle simplicity in the proof of his delicate

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rhythms. The fine voice of William Butler Yeats is of higher pitch than these; his quiet intoning of poetry nobly illustrates its beauty. Lew Sarett's presentation of his Indian poems is their perfect and almost necessary completion. Robert Frost's personality and voice also fulfil and emphasize the quality of his poems. Witter Bynner has a rich voice and graceful delivery, but an over-precise utterance mars the effect of his reading for me. Alfred Kreyborg, Carlos Williams, Maxwell Bodenheim—each of these complements his very personal rhythm in the utterance of his poems. And Padraic Colum brings to us the authentic Celtic tune—he is even more of an Irishman than Mr. Yeats.

I wish I could say as much for the women. Amy Lowell, Eunice Tietjens, Lola Ridge, Helen Hoyt, Marjorie Seiffert, Florence Frank, Jean Untermeyer—all these read well, some of them brilliantly; all simply, and in rhythmic fulfilment of their poems. But none of them with quite the artistic beauty which some of the men have attained.

On the stage one rarely hears beautiful utterance of poetry. In all my unusual experience of theatricalized Shakespeare, which, beginning with Edwin Booth in my sixth year, includes almost every distinguished interpreter since his time, I have heard only one whose reading of the lines—no, not reading, not anything remembered and recited—whose spontaneous utterance of the lines—seems to me of such perfection, such strange

The Utterance of Poetry

and consummate beauty, as to be forever memorable and—alas—incomparable. This was Ada Rehan: to hear her as Viola or Rosalind was to be moved by a voice, deep and rich like falling waters, which turned English words into speech-music of transcendent quality, music that moved one like Kubelik's violin or Isadora Duncan's dancing.

Among women, Ellen Terry was perhaps Miss Rehan's closest rival; but her voice was not quite so bitter-sweet, and there was a slight jerkiness in her delivery which gave it vitality and picturesqueness but detracted from absolute music. Mary Anderson had a voice like a cello, of extraordinary richness and range, and a fine sense of poetic cadence; but her delivery, though beautiful, to be remembered always with joy, was more deliberate and studied, leaning more to the old rhetorical school.

Booth was wonderful, of course—my youth shone with the romantic glamour of him. But it must be admitted that Booth mouthed his lines by overstressing his consonants, and that his delivery was not the spontaneous utterance of perfect art but the brilliant recital of speeches learned. He was a great artist of his Victorian time and his somewhat rhetorical school; but he was not an originator, not one of the genius-illumined who strike out new times, new methods.

Henry Irving had a more far-seeing mind, but his gift was for the spectacular. His speech was gusty and storm-ridden, his cadences churned and broken like a bold

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skiff outriding a gale. It was an adventure to listen to the lines of his Shylock—the poetry was so often in danger and so unexpectedly triumphant. He ranted early and often, but his ranting was always in the picture, always in the service of a deliberate conventionalization, a planned and achieved pattern. The modern poetic drama has scrapped his particular convention; but we may still envy him his skill, for we cannot yet claim to have established our own convention.

If Booth and Irving ranted sometimes, Lawrence Barrett ranted always; and John McCullough was seldom above the temptation, although his robust blank verse had always a certain beauty of cadence. Richard Mansfield came in a time of more simple Thespian manners, but he broke up the lines, he had no sense of rhythm; whether in *Henry Fifth* or *Beau Brummel*, he spoke always prose. Of all the male actors I have heard, Forbes-Robertson is the most assured master of poetic cadence; but his reading of Shakespeare, though beautiful, is sophisticated and deliberate—it lacks the spontaneity, and also the variety, which made Ada Rehan's, and even Ellen Terry's, a continual flaring of new fires.

The Irish Players are rhythmically endowed beyond any other company of my remembrance; which is not strange, since Irish speech is musical with poetic cadence, and these players were trained by Synge and Yeats and Lady Gregory, the three poets who have used it to the highest poetic purpose. This beautiful rhythmic speech has been

the secret of their charm, the one most potent reason for the effect of artistic unity and beauty in their rendition of the great plays of the Celtic renaissance.

The subject has led me to reminiscence when inquiry was intended—we have lingered with the masters instead of seeking examples in common life. If few actors read poetry with due regard for the rhythm, still fewer public readers have any conception of the primary principles of the art they profess, even when they have freed themselves of the hideous old elocutionary tradition which deliberately destroyed poetic cadence, broke up the lines, and turned poetry into agonizing prose.

This tradition is chiefly to blame for banishing from modern life an art which should be at least as common and friendly a pleasure and solace as music. A good voice, a sense of rhythm, simple unexaggerated utterance, all showing respect for the line and revealing the larger cadences which overlie the basic pattern—such a combination may make the reading-aloud of poetry, in any household or group of friends, a joy as fine as the excellent playing of a musical instrument.

More encouragement of this art might reveal and develop exceptional talent in persons scarcely aware of it. I remember an exquisite out-door presentation of Ernest Dowson's *Pierrot of the Minute* by two young sisters who had never realized their rare gift for the most delicate musical subtleties of poetic dialogue. And in the history department of the University of Chicago hides a

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certain modest professor whose reading of the *Ode to a Nightingale* gives his friends an experience as magnificent as Muratore ever offered with his proudest solo, or Paderewski in his palmiest days.

The reading of poetry should be an easily accessible delight instead of the bore which it usually is. The defect chiefly to be avoided is a certain high-sounding rotundity which most people assume like a toga when they start to read poetry aloud. Most voices need training, to be sure, to develop the latent beauty in them; every school should teach the proper use of this delicate musical instrument within us. Given a good voice properly controlled, an ear for poetic rhythm, and the simplest possible observance of the pitches and tones of poetically enhanced speech, and you have the beginning of good reading of poetry—a beginning which practice, and the stimulus of emotional and imaginative intensity, may develop into high artistic beauty.

H. M.

TRANSLATING WANG WEI

Just as Tu Fu and Li Po are often spoken of in conjunction by the Chinese, so are two other great poets of the T'ang Dynasty, Meng Hao-jan and Wang Wei. The latter, who lived 699-759 A. D., is distinguished among the poets of China by a deep and beautiful optimism. The melancholy that wounded Tu Fu and Meng Hao-jan seems not to have touched Wang Wei beneath the surface.

Translating Wang Wei

And, whereas Li Po sought in wine solace from the ills and sorrows of life, Wang Wei found an abiding content in the "green and healing hills" and in the highly humbled and attuned mysticism of Lao-tzu's teaching.

As a young man, Wang Wei became Assistant Secretary of State; but at the age of thirty-one, when his wife died, he left his post and retired to live near Mount Chung-nan. Two of his poems about Mount Chung-nan are published in this number, both breathing the sober sweetness and simplicity of his retired life. One of them begins with the line, "My heart in middle age found the Way"; the Chinese word for the Way being Tao, the first character of the title of Lao-tzu's book, *Tao-Te-Ching*, which may be translated in whole as *The Way and the Exemplification*. Taoism appears, then, to have been the consolation of Wang Wei, although Professor Herbert M. Giles, in his volume *Chinese Literature*, declares it to have been Buddhism. We realize, not only from the direct statement in this one poem, but from the spirit of all his poems, that he had serenely accepted the Way, the natural way of the universe.

There was for a while a strong division between the followers of Lao-tzu and the followers of Confucius. Po Chu-yi ridiculed Taoist doctrines in the following four lines, crisply translated by Professor Giles:

"Who know speak not, who speak know naught,"
Are words from Lao-tzu's lore.
What then becomes of Lao-tzu's own
Five thousand words or more?

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The answer is that Lao-tzu's words, fused now with both Buddhism and Confucianism, have become an integral part of the religion of China. Here are two characteristic quotations from his gospel:

Follow diligently the Way in your own heart, but make no display of it to the world.

Do nothing, and all things will be done.

Among the selections printed in this issue, note the last two lines of the poem, *Answering Vice-Prefect Chang*: a question asked in terms of complicated morality and answered in terms of simple happiness:

You ask me about good and evil?
Hark, on the lake there's a fisherman singing.

This does not mean that the ideal Taoist literally "did nothing." As a matter of fact Wang Wei was a physician, a high government official, a great poet, and also one of China's most illustrious painters. (A scroll attributed to him is on view at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.) His activities, however, were all in flow with universal forces: they sang like the fisherman—there was no fret, no jealousy, no self-exaltation, no irritated struggle; only harmony, humility, exalted identity with nature—a true and wide knowledge of values, making him a master of words, a master of the brush, and a master of life. Yes, there was a sure gaiety in Wang Wei, instanced in his *Message to P'ai Ti*, the fellow-poet with whom he longed to drink again and to "sing a wild

poem"; or in the verses already mentioned, *My Retreat at Chung-nan*, in which he happily anticipated the day when he should "meet an old wood-cutter, and talk and laugh and never return."

In the last two lines of the poem to P'ai Ti, he addressed his friend, according to a too frequent Chinese manner, by the name of Chieh-yu, who was a recluse of the Ch'u kingdom, famous somewhat for drinking, but more for stopping Confucius' chariot and warning him against politics with the song:

O phoenix, O phoenix,
Virtue is corrupted!
What is past is past all counsel,
What is future may be moulded. . . .
Come away! Come away!
Politics are dangerous!

And Wang Wei's reference in the final line of this same poem is to the place where he will be drinking with his friend; yet Five Willows is the place named, where long ago T'ao Ch'ien had lived, another famous recluse who was both a great writer and a great drinker.

The last two lines of the poem *In my Lodge at Wang-Ch'uan after a Long Rain*, clear and significant as they are in themselves, yet contain, for the Chinese reader, enriching allusion and connotation. There was once a scholar, Yang-tzu, who, before he became a student of Lao-tzu, was highly respected and honored by his fellow-men. Later, through the many years of his discipleship, he lost his prestige, and even a boor would take precedence over

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him; but he was glad because he had formerly been proud and pretentious. The last line refers to a hermit who was fond of sea-gulls; they followed him wherever he went. His father asked why they were not afraid and bade the son bring him some; but next day, when the hermit went out intending to take them to his father, they all flew away.

The poem in the group most in need of explanation, because of its allusion to historic events and personages, is *The Beautiful Hsi-shih*; and the last two lines of *A Song of Young Girls from Lo-Yang* also require the following summary:

During the Chou Dynasty, when the Yueh kingdom was conquered by the Wu kingdom, the Yueh king still held his throne and plotted to throw off the tributary yoke. Aided by his able minister, Fan Li, he planned to distract the king of Wu with women. Fan Li searched through the Yueh kingdom for girls to beguile him and came upon Hsi-shih washing clothes by a lake. Conquering his own love for her, he fiercely persuaded her to his scheme. She remained at court for some time; and the Wu king, in his infatuation, forgot affairs of state. Weakened by this means, the Wu kingdom was overcome by the Yueh kingdom; and Fan Li eventually accepted Hsi-shih as his reward. The whimsical phrasing of the line "If by wrinkling their brows they can copy her beauty" alludes to the fact that she had heart trouble, and it was said that her drawn brows, her look of gentle-

ness in suffering, which the girls of her time tried unsuccessfully to imitate, made her more beautiful.

One might enlarge upon references in others of the poems. For instance, the quatrain called *Lines* contains the phrase "my silken window." This is not a decorative adjective. It merely means that, before the use of paper or glass, windows in China were of silk. The last line of the same poem is made lovelier by knowledge that the *mei*, or plum blossom, is in China the earliest flower of spring. It is interesting to know that *A Song at Wei-Cheng*, which was written for music, is still popular through China as a song of farewell, and that to this day "since we picked willow-branches at Wei-Cheng" means "since we parted." The beauty of the four lines called *A Parting*, with its simple, profound expression of the abiding presence of friendly nature and the transient presence of friendly man, is heightened by the reader's response to the grace of the name Wang Sun, which from a dim and ancient origin still means in China a noble-hearted young scholar, or sometimes lover. But on the whole, these T'ang poems are so valid and universal in uttering beauty that they may vitally enter the poetic consciousness of a westerner still ignorant of the various allusions.

Translating the work of Wang Wei and others in the *Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty*, Dr. Kiang and I have tried constantly to transfer the Chinese idiom into an equivalent idiom in English, rather than to stress the

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local novelty and pungency of Chinese phrasing. It would be as erroneous to overemphasize the component radicals of a Chinese character as to overemphasize the component meanings of such words in English as day-break, breakfast, nightfall or landscape. The delicate importance of the translator's office lies in bringing from one language to another the rounded and proportioned effect of a whole poem. And we, conscientiously, have tried to make felt, in our translations, the high honesty and wise humanness of poets who have in many ways, and in one Wei especially, lived closer to the heart of life than importunate passion brings the poets of the West.

Witter Bynner

Note by the Editor: Mr. Bynner's preference for the line of four feet and for the four-line or eight-line poem is his tribute to the close prosodic structure of Chinese poetry. In the translator's opinion the form he has chosen is the closest approach to the original which is possible in English.

REVIEWS

A COOL MASTER

Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson (with portrait frontispiece). Macmillan Co.

Near the middle of the last century, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a sentimental philosopher with a genius for a sudden twisted hardness of words, wrote lines like:

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,

A Cool Master

And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.

And it was with Emerson that American poetry may be said to have begun. He was slight enough, but at his best a master, and above all a master of sound. And he began a tradition that still exists.

He was followed shortly by Emily Dickinson, a master of a certain dowdy but undeniably effective mannerism, a spinster who may have written her poems to keep time with her broom. A terrible woman, who annihilated God as if He were her neighbor, and her neighbor as if he were God—all with a leaf or a sunbeam that chanced to fall within her sight as she looked out the window or the door during a pause in her sweeping:

And we, we placed the hair,
And drew the head erect;
And then an awful leisure was,
Our faith to regulate.

The woman at her most terrible had the majesty of an erect corpse, a prophet of unspeakable doom; and she spoke through sealed lips. She was greater than Emerson, was one of the greatest poets of our language, but was more or less in the tradition that Emerson began. She and Emerson were probably the only poets of any permanently great importance who occurred in this country during their period.

The tradition of New England hardness has been carried on by Mr. Robinson, in many ways may be said

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to have reached its pinnacle in Mr. Robinson. This poet, with a wider culture than his predecessors, has linked a suavity of manner to an even greater desperation than that of Dickinson's *The Last Night*—his hardness has become a polished stoniness of vision, of mind.

This man has the culture to know that to those to whom philosophy is comprehensible it is not a matter of the first importance; and he knows that these people are not greatly impressed by a ballyhoo statement of the principles of social or spiritual salvation. A few times he has given his opinion, but quietly and intelligently, and has then passed on to other things. A man's philosophical belief or attitude is certain to be an important part of his milieu, and as a part of his milieu may give rise to perceptions, images. His philosophy becomes a part of his life as does the country in which he was born, and will tinge his vision of the country in which he was born as that country may affect his philosophy. So long as he gives us his own perceptions as they arise in this milieu, he remains an artist. When he becomes more interested in the possible effects of his beliefs upon others, and expounds or persuades, he begins to deal with generalities, concepts (see Croce), and becomes a philosopher, or more than likely a preacher, a mere peddler. This was the fallacy of Whitman and many of the English Victorians, and this is what invalidates nearly all of Whitman's work. Such men forget that it is only the particular, the perception, that is perpetually startling. The generality, or concept,

can be pigeon-holed, absorbed, and forgotten. And a ballyhoo statement of a concept is seldom a concise one—it is neither fish nor flesh. That is why Whitman is doomed to an eventual dull vacuum that the intricately delicate mind of Plato will never know.

Much praise has fallen to Mr. Robinson because he deals with people, "humanity"; and this is a fallacy of inaccurate brains. Humanity is simply Mr. Robinson's physical milieu; the thing, the compound of the things, he sees. It is not the material that makes a poem great, but the perception and organization of that material. A pigeon's wing may make as great an image as a man's tragedy, and in the poetry of Mr. Wallace Stevens has done so. Mr. Robinson's greatness lies not in the people of whom he has written, but in the perfect balance, the infallible precision, with which he has stated their cases.

Mr. Robinson's work may be classified roughly in two groups—his blank verse, and his more closely rhymed poems, including the sonnets. Of his blank verse, the *Octaves* in *The Children of the Night* fall curiously into a group by themselves, and will be considered elsewhere in this review. The other poems in blank verse may be called sketches—some of people the poet may have known, some of historical figures, some of legendary—and they have all the evanescence, brittleness, of sketches. However, there are passages in many of these poems that anticipate Robert Frost, who in at least one poem, *An Old Man's Winter Night*, has used this method with greater

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effect than its innovator, and has created a great poem. Mr. Frost, of course, leaves more of the bark on his rhythms, achieves a sort of implied colloquialism which has already been too much discussed. But with Frost in mind, consider this passage from *Isaac and Archibald*:

A journey that I made one afternoon
With Isaac to find out what Archibald
Was doing with his oats. It was high time
Those oats were cut, said Isaac; and he feared
That Archibald—well, he could never feel
Quite sure of Archibald. Accordingly
The good old man invited me—that is,
Permitted me—to go along with him;
And I, with a small boy's adhesiveness
To competent old age, got up and went.

The similarity to Frost is marked, as is also the pleasing but not profound quality of the verse. It has a distinction, however, that many contemporaries—French as well as English and American—could acquire to good advantage.

Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford, a much praised poem, seems largely garrulous, occasionally brilliant, and always brittle; and one can go on making very similar comments on the other poems in this form, until one comes to those alternately praised and lamented poems, *Merlin* and *Lancelot*. Remembering Tennyson, one's first inclination is to name these poems great, and certainly they are not inconsiderable. But there are long passages of purely literary frittering, and passages that, while they may possess a certain clean distinction of

manner, are dry and unremunerative enough. But there are passages in these poems which are finer than any other blank verse Mr. Robinson has written—dark, massive lines that rise out of the poem and leave one bitter and empty:

On Dagonet the silent hand of Merlin
Weighed now as living iron that held him down
With a primeval power. Doubt, wonderment,
Impatience, and a self-accusing sorrow
Born of an ancient love, possessed and held him
Until his love was more than he could name,
And he was Merlin's fool, not Arthur's now:
"Say what you will, I say that I'm the fool
Of Merlin, King of Nowhere; which is Here.
With you for king and me for court, what else
Have we to sigh for but a place to sleep?"

But passing on from this less important side of Mr. Robinson's work to his rhymed poems, one finds at least a large number of perfectly executed poems of a sensitive and feline approach. What effect rhyme, or the intention of rhyme, has upon an artist's product, is a difficult thing to estimate. The question verges almost upon the metaphysical. The artist, creating, lives at a point of intensity, and whether the material is consciously digested before that point is reached, and is simply organized and set down at the time of creation; or whether the point of intensity is first reached and the material then drawn out of the subconscious, doubtless depends a good deal on the individual poet, perhaps on the individual poem. The latter method presupposes a great deal of previous

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absorption of sense impressions, and is probably the more valid, or at least the more generally effective, method. For the rhythm and the "matter," as they come into being simultaneously and interdependent, will be perfectly fused and without loose ends. The man who comes to a form with a definitely outlined matter, will, more than likely, have to cram or fill before he has finished, and the result is broken. The second method does not, of course, presuppose rhyme, but it seems that rhyme, as an obstacle, will force the issue.

The best of Mr. Robinson's poems appear to have come into being very much in this second fashion. He has spun his images out of a world of sense and thought that have been a part of him so long that he seems to have forgot their beginning—has spun these images out as the movement of his lines, the recurrence of his rhymes, have demanded them. A basic philosophy and emotional viewpoint have provided the necessary unity.

This method inevitably focuses the artist's mind upon the object of the instant, makes it one with that object, and eliminates practically all individual "personality" or self-consciousness. The so-called personal touch is reduced to a minimum of technical habit that is bound to accrue in time to any poet who studies his medium with an eye to his individual needs. The man of some intelligence who cannot, or can seldom, achieve this condition of fusion with his object, is driven back to his ingenuity; and this man, if he have sufficient intelligence or ingenuity,

becomes one of the "vigorous personalities" of poetry; and he misses poetry exactly in so far as his personality is vigorous. Browning, on two or three occasions one of the greatest of all poets, is, for the most part, simply the greatest of ingenious versifiers. He was so curious of the quirks with which he could approach an object, that he forgot the object in admiring, and expecting admiration for, himself. And it is for this reason that Mr. Robinson, working in more or less the same field as Browning, is the superior of Browning at almost every turn.

And it is for this reason also that Mr. Robinson's *Ben Jonson* is a failure. For the poet, while in no wise concerned with his own personality, is so intent upon the personality of Jonson, his speaker, that, for the sake of Jonson's vigor, he becomes talkative and eager of identifying mannerism; and the result is, that Shakespeare, about whom the poem is written, comes to the surface only here and there, and any actual image almost never.

The following stanza is an example of Mr. Robinson's work at its best:

And like a giant harp that hums
On always, and is always blending
The coming of what never comes
With what has past and had an ending,
The City trembles, throbs, and pounds
Outside, and through a thousand sounds
The small intolerable drums
Of Time are like slow drops descending.

And there is the compact, intensely contemplated statement of *Eros Turannos*, a poem that is, in forty-eight

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lines, as complete as a Lawrence novel. And the nimble trickery of *Miniver Cheevey*, as finished a piece of burlesque as one can find in English. A few of us have feared, in the last few years, that Mr. Robinson was deteriorating; but going through this book one is reassured. If there is nothing in *The Three Taverns* to equal *Eros Turannos*, there are at least two or three poems as great as any save that one Mr. Robinson has written; and there is nothing in these last poems to preclude the possibility of another *Eros Turannos*.

Mr. Robinson, as probably the highest point in his tradition, has been followed by Frost, a more specialized, and generally softer artist. And there is Gould, who, if he belongs to the tradition at all, is a mere breaking-up of the tradition, a fusion with Whitman. But in considering the work of a man of so varied a genius as Mr. Robinson, it is interesting, if not over-important, to observe the modes of expression that he has anticipated if not actually influenced; even where he has not chosen, or has not been able to develop, these modes.

The resemblance in matter and manner, save for Mr. Robinson's greater suavety, of certain poems, especially the sonnets, in *The Children of the Night*, to the epitaphs in *The Spoon River Anthology*, has been noted by other writers; and I believe it has been said that Mr. Masters was ignorant of the existence of these poems until after the *Anthology* was written. There is little to be said about such a poem as Mr. Robinson's *Luke Havergal*:

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies
To rift the fiery night that's in your eyes;
But there, where western glooms are gathering,
The dark will end the dark, if anything:
God slays Himself with every leaf that flies,
And hell is more than half of paradise.
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss
That flames upon your forehead with a glow
That blinds you to the way that you must go.

And Mr. Masters' satire has been forestalled and outdone in these early sonnets.

But a more curious and interesting resemblance to a later poet is found in the *Octaves* in the same volume:

To me the groaning of world-worshippers
Rings like a lonely music played in hell
By one with art enough to cleave the walls
Of heaven with his cadence, but without
The wisdom or the will to comprehend
The strangeness of his own perversity,
And all without the courage to deny
The profit and the pride of his defeat.

If the actual thought of this passage is not that of Wallace Stevens, nevertheless the quality of the thought, the manner of thinking, as well as the style, quite definitely is. To what extent Mr. Robinson may have influenced this greatest of living and of American poets, one cannot say, but in at least three of the *Octaves*, one phase of Mr. Stevens' later work—that of *Le Monocle de Mon Oncle* and other recent and shorter poems—is certainly fore-

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shadowed. Mr. Robinson's sound is inevitably the less rich, the less masterly.

In another of the *Octaves* there are a few lines that suggest the earlier poems of Mr. T. S. Eliot, but the resemblance is fleeting and apparently accidental.

If the tradition of New England seems to be reaching an end in the work of Mr. Frost, Mr. Robinson has at least helped greatly in the founding of a tradition of culture and clean workmanship that such poets as Messrs. Stevens, Eliot, and Pound, as H. D. and Marianne Moore, are carrying on. Mr. Robinson was, when he began, as much a pioneer as Mr. Pound or Mr. Yeats, and he has certainly achieved as great poetry. While the tradition begun, more or less, by Whitman, has deteriorated, in the later work of Mr. Carl Sandburg, into a sort of plasmodial delirium; and while the school of mellifluous and almost ominous stage-trappings, as exemplified by Poe, has melted into a sort of post-Celtic twilight, and has nearly vanished in the work of Mr. Aiken; the work of these writers and a few others stands out clear and hard in the half-light of our culture. I cannot forget that they exist, even in the face of the desert. *Yvor Winters*

MR. YEATS' PLAYS

Four Plays for Dancers, by William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Yeats is one of the few poets writing poetic plays who are also, in exact meaning, men of the theatre. Just

as he is probably the foremost poet of his generation, so he shares with Gordon Craig and one or two others the distinction of having seen furthest into the theatre as it may become. That youth which in the Irish temperament is so old as to be imperishable has retained for him his leadership in the poetic drama and in the exploration of new forms. *Four Plays for Dancers*, as in its own time *The Land of Heart's Desire* (written "without adequate knowledge of the stage"!), is the work of a pioneer bringing a form to its perfection with no apparent interval of apprenticeship.

"My blunder has been," he writes, "that I did not discover in my youth that my theatre must be the ancient theatre that can be made by unrolling a carpet, or marking out a place with a stick, or setting a screen against a wall." When he was last in America he told us of such a theatre, so intimate that its few properties could be carried by the players in a taxicab and set in a drawing-room, and of how he had found a first model in the *Noh* stage of aristocratic Japan. Shortly afterward *The Only Jealousy of Emer* was published in POETRY; and now, with three other plays similar in construction, it appears in book form. There are also masks and costume plates by Edmond Dulac for *At the Hawk's Well*, produced as early as 1916 in England, music for the dances and songs by W. M. Rummel, and suggestive notes on the plays and their production.

Unhesitatingly one may call this book the most signifi-

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cant contribution to the art-theatre that has been written in a long while. True, it is the art-theatre in its most aristocratic phase; but the best in this art, as in another, must sometimes, in relation to audiences, be aristocratic. What gives to these plays their significance, apart from the almost ineffable beauty with which at least two of them are written, is that he has found a way by which the color, the enchantment, the distance and subtlety of legendary drama may be projected intimately and by a medium of amazing simplicity. In doing this, granting that one's insight into the effect of the plays in production is accurate, he has conquered difficulties which would seem insurmountable.

He has secured the illusion of distance, not in despite of, but *through*, the intimacy of a small audience in contact with the players. Never before in the western theatre, and in no other western art except perhaps that of the story-teller setting his tale directly in the imagination, has such an effect been possible. It is the quality of his technique, the unerring sense of the theatre, which seems to make this an authentic form both in these individual plays and as existing apart from them. Beside it the artificial intimacy effected by Max Reinhardt becomes clap-trap. Restricting himself to the simplest means, he has chosen them with the instinct of a poet, with that same instinct which made such lines as these of the Musician:

I call to the eye of the mind
A well long choked up and dry,
And boughs long stripped by the wind.

And I call to the mind's eye
Pallor of an ivory face,
Its lofty dissolute air,
A man climbing up to a place
The salt sea wind has swept bare.

“In literature if we would not be parvenus we must have a model;” and as his theatre has been modified until it has become independent of the *Noh*, so a new poetic drama may be liberated by his inspiration.

As for the plays in relation to each other, we have learned long since to expect in the work of Mr. Yeats the clarity and beauty of poetic content and expression that one finds in these plays. We expect it; and it seldom fails the anticipation. If *The Dreaming of the Bones* and *Calvary* do not seem quite to reach the height of the two others, that is not to deny that they are rich in content also. But there is a beauty lacking in them, purity of inspiration replaced by what is not far from propaganda in the one and from an over-subtle interpretation in the other. The mood has flagged somewhat, after the splendor of utterance in *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer*. These are incomparable.

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Postscript—to “Little Theatres”: These plays, when you read them, may not appear difficult to present, what with the elaborate stage directions and the photographs. But I fear that you would find them impossible, lacking a Yeats, a Dulac, and a Michio Itow, who are indispensable. And it would be a mistake to confuse this theatre

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in any way with the theatre of Jacques Copeau, which is also admirable. Mr. Yeats has not abandoned the *mise en scene*—he has intensified it. And, incidentally, he has given us, when we are ready for it, one kind of synthetic theatre, including even the management of light.

Cloyd Head

NOTES

Wang Wei, the famous poet-painter who lived in China thirteen centuries ago, interests Mr. Bynner more than any other Chinese poet, and is sufficiently introduced by his editorial. For nearly three years the two translators have been studying Chinese poetry of the great age for the benefit of readers of English, and their book of translations, *The Jade Mountain*, is to be published next autumn by Alfred A. Knopf.

Kiang Kang-hu, who is a scholar in both languages, made the literal English versions which Mr. Bynner, after close consultation over meanings and rhythms, has shaped into English poems.

Eunice Tietjens (Mrs. Cloyd Head) of Chicago, who is a member of POETRY's advisory committee, is the author of two books of verse—*Profiles from China* and *Body and Raiment* (Alfred A. Knopf).

Leonora Speyer (Mrs. Edgar S.), of New York, is the author of *A Canopic Jar* (E. P. Dutton & Co.). *Abrigada* is not a castle in Spain, but an old house in Long Island where the Speyers lived last summer.

Miss Constance Lindsay Skinner, of New York, received, in 1915, one of POETRY's prizes for her group of Indian poems, *Songs of the Coast-dwellers*. She has not yet printed a volume of her Indian interpretations, but many of them may be found in George W. Cronyn's anthology, *The Path on the Rainbow* (Boni & Liveright).

Mr. Harold Monro, of London, author of three or four books of verse and editor of *The Chap Book*, will publish this spring, through the Poetry Book Shop, of which he is chief, a new book of poems, *Real Property*.

Babette Deutsch (Mrs. A. Yarmolinsky), of New York, is the author of *Banners* (George H. Doran Co.). Mr. and Mrs. Yarmolinsky together translated from the Russian *The Twelve*, by the late Alexander Blok,

which was published in 1920 by B. W. Huebsch, with an introduction by the translators; and they have just issued, through Harcourt, Brace & Co., *Modern Russian Poetry: An Anthology*.

"Paul Tanaquil" is a cosmopolite resident of Coronado, Cal.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Medora C. Addison (Mrs. Charles Read Nutter), of Concord, Mass., will soon publish, through the Yale Univ. Press, her first book of verse, *Dreams and a Sword*.

Mr. F. R. McCreary is a young poet of Cambridge, Mass. Miss Gwendolen Haste, a native of Illinois, is now in business in New York. Miss Sarah-Margaret Brown is a student at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

Mr. H. Austin Simons, or "Hi Simons," as he prefers to be called, was imprisoned for eighteen months as a conscientious objector at Fort Leavenworth, and since his release has been doing newspaper work in Chicago.

All trace of Mr. Harlow Clarke, except his poems, has disappeared from this office—we shall be grateful for a word from him.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Dreams Out of Darkness*, by Jean Starr Untermeyer. B. W. Huebsch.
Explorations, by Robert McAlmon. Egoist Press, London.
Hymen, by H. D. Henry Holt & Co.
Cobblestones, by David Sentner. Alfred A. Knopf.
Poems: Second Series, by J. C. Squire. George H. Doran Co.
The Secret Way, by Zona Gale. Macmillan Co.
A Web of Thoughts, by Marjorie Anderson. Four Seas Co.
With Star and Grass, by Anna Spencer Twitchell. Cornhill Co.
Mystic Songs of Fire and Flame, by K. Arthur-Behenna. Cornhill Co.
Tree-top Mornings, by Ethelwyn Wetherald. Cornhill Co.
Mid Light and Shade, by John Langdon Jones. Duffield & Co.
Anita and Other Poems, by Evarts Scudder. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
Eternal Helen, by F. Pearce Sturm. Basil Blackwell.
The Traveller's Tale, by Clifford Bax. Basil Blackwell.
Through a Glass, by Fanny DeGroot Hastings. Priv. ptd., New York.

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- Shadings*, by Bessie Glen Buchanan. Privately printed.
The Birth of the Poinsettia, by Francis A. W. Kendall. Priv. ptd.
Irish and Canadian Poems, by Michael A. Hargadon. Modern Printing Co., Montreal.
Pjesme, by Vladislav S. Pavic. Stamparija J. A. Omero Press, N. Y.
Igdrasil, by Royall Snow. Four Seas Co.
The Playground of the Gods and Other Poems, by Elizabeth Huntingdon. Four Seas Co.
Missouri and Other Verse, by Nathaniel M. Baskett, M. D. Privately printed, Canton, Mo.
Legends of Life and Other Poems, by Bertha Oppenheim. Stratford Co.
Mavericks, by William A. Brewer, Jr. Priv. ptd., Berkeley, Cal.

PLAYS:

- Plays of Edmond Rostand*. Translated by Henderson Daingerfield Norman; illustrated by Ivan Glidden. (2 Vols.) Macmillan Co.
Aria Da Capo, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Mitchell Kennerley.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- Modern Russian Poetry*, chosen and translated by Babette Deutsch and Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
Die neue Welt, eine Anthologie juengster Amerikanischer Lyric, herausgegeben von Claire Goll. S. Fischer, Berlin.
Fir-flower Tablets. Translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough; English versions by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Some Contemporary Poets—1920, by Harold Monro. Leonard Parsons, London.

PROSE:

- The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived Before Achilles*, by Padraic Colum. Illustrations by Willy Pogany. Macmillan Co.
A Hasty Bunch, by Robert McAlmon. Priv. ptd., Dijon, France.
A Mother's First Prayer, by Kathryn Wire Hammond. Abingdon Press, New York.
The Poetic Procession, by J. F. Roxburgh. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
The Beginning of Wisdom, by Stephen Vincent Benét. Henry Holt & Co.
Gray Wolf Stories—Indian Mystery Tales of Coyotes, Animals and Men, by Bernard Sexton. Illus. by Gwenyth Waugh. Macmillan Co.
Browningiana in Baylor University, compiled by Aurelia E. Brooks. Baylor University Press, Waco, Texas.

How I wish that some English paper had anything like the authentic vitality of
 POETRY!
Louis Golding

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 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

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MARCH 1922

MEDLEY OF POEMS

MOON-RIDERS

I

WHAT have I saved out of a morning?
The earliest of the morning came with moon-mist
And the travel of a moon-spilt purple:
Bars, horse-shoes, Texas long-horns,
Linked in night silver,
Linked under leaves in moonlit silver,
Linked in rags and patches
Out of the ice-houses of the morning moon.
Yes, this was the earliest—
Before the cowpunchers on the eastern rims
Began riding into the sun,
Riding the roan mustangs of morning,

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Roping the mavericks after the latest stars.
What have I saved out of a morning?
Was there a child face I saw once
Smiling up a stairway of the morning moon?

II

"It is time for work," said a man in the morning.
He opened the faces of the clocks, saw their works,
Saw the wheels oiled and fitted, running smooth.
"It is time to begin a day's work," he said again,
Watching a bullfinch hop on the rain-worn boards
Of a beaten fence counting its bitter winters.
The clinging feet of the bullfinch and the flash
Of its flying feathers as it flipped away
Took his eyes away from the clocks—his flying eyes.
He walked over, stood in front of the clocks again,
And said, "I'm sorry; I apologize forty ways."

III

The morning paper lay bundled,
Like a spear in a museum,
Across the broken sleeping-room
Of a moon-sheet spider.
The spinning work of the morning spider's feet
Left off where the morning paper's pages lay
In the shine of the web in the summer-dew grass.
The man opened the morning paper: saw the first page,

The back page, the inside pages, the editorials;
Saw the world go by, eating, stealing, fighting;
Saw the headlines, date-lines, funnies, ads,
The marching movies of the workmen going to work, the
workmen striking,
The workmen asking jobs—five million pairs of eyes look
for a boss and say, "Take *me*";
People eating with too much to eat, people eating with
nothing in sight to eat tomorrow, eating as though
eating belongs where people belong.

"Hustle, you hustlers, while the hustling's good,"
Said the man, turning the morning paper's pages,
Turning among headlines, date-lines, funnies, ads.
"Hustlers carrying the banner," said the man,
Dropping the paper and beginning to hunt the city;
Hunting the alleys, boulevards, back-door by-ways;
Hunting till he found a blind horse dying alone,
Telling the horse, "Two legs or four legs—it's all the same
with a work plug."

A hayfield mist of evening saw him
Watching the moon-riders lose the moon
For new shooting-stars. He asked,
"Christ, what have I saved out of a morning?"
He called up a stairway of the morning moon
And he remembered a child face smiling up that same
stairway.

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FEATHER LIGHTS

Macabre and golden the moon opened a slant of light.

A triangle for an oriole to stand and sing, "Take me home."

A layer of thin white gold feathers for a child queen of gypsies.

So the moon opened a slant of light and let it go.

So the lonesome dogs, the fog moon, the pearl mist, came back.

THE NAKED STRANGER

It is five months off.

Knit, stitch, and hemstitch:

Sheets, bags, towels, these are the offerings.

When he is older, or she is a big girl,

There may be flowers or ribbons or money

For birthday offerings. Now, however,

We must remember it is a naked stranger

Coming to us; and the sheath of the arrival

Is so soft we must be ready, and soft too.

Knit, stitch, hemstitch, it is only five months.

.

It would be easy to pick a lucky star for this baby

If a choice of two stars lay before our eyes—

One a pearl-gold star and one pearl-silver—
And the offer of a chance to pick a lucky star.

.

When the high hour comes
Let there be a light flurry of snow,
A little zigzag of white spots
 Against the gray roofs.
The snow-born all understand this as a luck-wish.

MEDLEY

Ignorance came in stones of gold;
The ignorant slept while the hangmen
Hanged the keepers of the lights
Of sweet stars: such were the apothegms,
Offhand offerings of mule-drivers
Eating sandwiches of rye bread,
Salami and onions.

“Too Many Books,” we always called him;
A landscape of masterpieces and old favorites
Fished with their titles for his eyes
In the upstairs and downstairs rooms
Of his house. Whenever he passed
The old-time bar-room where Pete Morehouse
Shot the chief of police, where
The sponge squads shot two bootleggers,

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He always remembered the verse story,
The Face on the Bar-room Floor—
The tramp on a winter night,
Saddened and warmed with whiskey,
Telling of a woman he wanted
And a woman who wanted him,
How whiskey wrecked it all;
Taking a piece of chalk,
Picturing her face on the bar-room floor,
Fixing the lines of her face
While he told the story,
Then gasping and falling with finished heartbeats,
Dead.

And whenever he passed over the bridge at night
And took the look up the river to smaller bridges,
Barge lights, and looming shores,
He always thought of Edgar Allan Poe,
With a load of hootch in him,
Going to a party of respectable people
Who called for a speech,
Who listened to Poe recite the Lord's Prayer,
Correctly, word for word, yet with lush, unmistakable
Intonations, so haunting the dinner-party people
All excused themselves to each other.

Whenever Too Many Books
Passed over the town bridge in the gloaming,

Carl Sandburg

He thought of Poe breaking up that party
Of respectable people. Such was Too Many Books—
We called him that.

GYPSY MOTHER

In a hole-in-a-wall on Halsted Street sits a gypsy woman,
In a garish, gas-lit rendezvous, in a humpback higgling
hole-in-a-wall.

The left hand is a tattler; stars and oaths and alphabets
Commit themselves and tell happenings gone, happenings
to come, pathways of honest people, hypocrites.

“Long pointed fingers mean imagination; a star on the
third finger says a black shadow walks near.”

Cross the gypsy's hand with fifty cents, and she takes your
left hand and reads how you shall be happy in love,
or not, and whether you die rich, or not.

Signs outside the hole-in-a-wall say so, misspell the
promises, scrawl the superior gypsy mysteries.

A red shawl on her shoulders falls with a fringe hem to a
green skirt.

Chains of yellow beads sweep from her neck to her tawny
hands.

Fifty springtimes must have kissed her mouth holding a
calabash pipe.

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She pulls slow contemplative puffs of smoke. She is a shape for ghosts of contemplation to sit around and ask why something cheap as happiness is here; and more besides than plain happiness, chapped lips, rough eyes, red shawl, gypsy perfection of offhand insolence.

She is thinking about somebody and something—the same as Whistler's mother sat and thought about somebody and something.

In a hole-in-a-wall on Halsted Street are stars, oaths, alphabets.

Carl Sandburg

SONG SKETCHES

WE HAVE A DAY

We have a day, we have a night
Which have been made for our delight!

Shall we run, and run, and run
Up the path of the rising sun?

Shall we roll down every hill,
Or lie still
Listening while the whispering leaves
Promise what no one believes?

(The hours poise, breathless for flight, and bright.)

Only a night, only a day—
We must not let them get away:

Don a foolish cap and bell,
For all is well and all is well!

Dance through woods a purple-blue!
Dance into
Lanes that are a hidden stem
Beneath the beauty over them.

(The hours lift their shadow-form, are warm.)

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Why do you still stand mute and white?
The day is past, but there is night.

Turn your head, give me your lips—
The darkness slips! The darkness slips.

We could make it hushed and still.
If you will
We could hear, close to the ground
Life—the one authentic sound.

(The hours, as a startled faun, are gone.)

SPRING MORNING

O day—if I could cup my hands and drink of you,
And make this shining wonder be
A part of me!
O day! O day!
You lift and sway your colors on the sky
Till I am crushed with beauty. Why is there
More of reeling sunlit air
Than I can breathe? Why is there sound
In silence? Why is a singing wound
About each hour?
And perfume when there is no flower?
O day! O day! How may I press
Nearer to loveliness?

TONIGHT

A flame
Leaps high
In a wind:
 I am the same.

I go
My head
High. I flame
 Red—blue. Oh,

Tonight
The sky
Will be a
 Cry of light—

Fire!
Come swift
As wind—come,
 Lift me higher!

THE SILENCE STIRS AGAIN

The silence that has lain so long between us
Stirs again: .
The rushes bend in shining pathways
To the shining end;
The air is burdened with the rose that is not there—
Always the rose.

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I have no laughter now, no tears—
Only the silence grows big with years,
Only the silence has a touch
That hurts overmuch.

The rushes bend
In shining pathways to the shining end;
Bend, and close.

THE NIGHT

The night binds darkness round my eyes
And makes me wise.
The quiet hours beguile—
Like maidens chaste in single file,
Like maidens who have said,
“Be comforted.”
The truth of day falls far away
And far away . . .
And all the little gaieties
Are dressed in colors as I please;
And sadness has a gentle hand
I understand.

The night bound darkness round my eyes—
I was made wise.

I WOULD PRETEND

Now that between us there is nothing more
To say, I would have loud and foolish speech
With you, I would pretend I still adore
Your voice: "Come, beautiful, draw near and teach
The way my hands should go in a caress—
Should fingers trail as pink feet of a crane
That skim the water?—or should fingers press
Their weight heavily?" Draw near me again—
What does it matter if the words you say
Are lies, if they be sweet to listen to?
Your lips are quite as cruel, quite as gay
As ever; and your eyes are honest blue. . . .
Oh, be sublimely false (who are not true)—
And I'll pretend I love you . . . as I do!

ADMONITION

Come quietly, without a word—
I am so tired of the things I've heard.
I am so tired of words that tear
At beauty till the branch is bare:

Of words that will not let beauty be
A sweet-clustered mystery.
As a Canterbury bell
Purse your lips, but do not tell.

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FRIGHTENED FACE

Child of the frightened face,
Trying to understand
The little bit of love
Under your hand,

Holding the little love
Under fingers that crush
That which is soft as the
Throat of a thrush,

Holding your hand upon
The wonder of the thing,
Crushing out the song that
Wanted to sing:

Child of the frightened face,
Why do your fingers try
To kill the little love?
Soon it would die.

DAILY PRAYER

And at last when I go
Will it be so?
Shall I find you behind
The rude platitude of death?

Marion Strobel

I kneel within the certainty
That you are near to me:
Each day I pray
That I may follow through
To you.
Each day I pray.

L'ENVOI

The moments reach and touch the hours gently.
Each is kind,
Each is soothing as the tips
Of fingers held to lips.

The moments reach and touch the hours: flowers
Will bloom again,
And I shall pick fresh jonquils for the room;
And I shall pick fresh jonquils in the usual way
Every day.

The moments reach and touch the hours:
Time has no beginning, and no end,
Dear friend.

Marion Strobel

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WORKING-HOUR SONGS

THE SHOE FACTORY

Song of the knot-tyer

They told me
When I came
That this would be drudgery,
Always the same
Thing over and over
Day after day—
The same swift movement
In the same small way.

*Pick up,
Place,
Push,
And it's tied.*

*Take off,
Cut,
And put
It aside.*

Over and over
In rhythmical beat—
Some say it is drudgery
But to me it is sweet.

*Pick up,
Place,
Push,
And it's tied.*

*Out-doors
The sky
Is so blue
And so wide!*

It's a joyous song
Going steadily on,
Marching in measures
Till the day is gone.

*Pick up,
Place,
Push,
And it's tied.*

*Soon end
Of day
Will bring him
To my side.*

Oh, I love the measures
Singing so fast,
Speeding happy hours
Till he comes at last!

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MAKING LITTLE CLOTHES

Grey rain on the window-pane,
And in my heart grey rain—
And the ceaseless whir of machines
Pounding my weary brain.

*He had such a little share of life,
And now he's gone.
And all my heart went with him,
Yet I go numbly on,
Making little clothes
Just the size of him,
Little clothes for others
But nevermore for him.*

Grey rain on the window-pane,
And in my heart grey rain—
And the endless grind of machines
Beating a dull refrain.

ALWAYS AND ALWAYS

Always and always
I go out from myself
In the silver morning,
Out to greet some new friend,
With my arms laden with friendship gifts
And a hundred little songs of gladness on my lips.

Ruth Harwood

Always and always
I return to myself
In the purple twilight—
Back to the comforting sureness of myself,
To fill my empty arms again with gifts,
To ease the little hurt my heart has brought.

Ruth Harwood

THE UNLOVED

Stephen, son of me,
 You will never be born, my dear.
Light of day you will never see,
 And the earth-sounds never hear.

But after I have died,
 When I come to the courts of the sun—
Though husband-love I have never had,
 And lovers never a one—

You will stand with a ripple of joy
 On the lips that have never smiled,
And I shall clasp my son at last—
 My child, my child!

Alison Buchanan

ECCLESIASTES

In the smoke-blue cabaret
She sang some comic thing:
I heeded not at all
Till "Sing!" she cried, "Sing!"
So I sang in tune with her
The only song I know:
"The doors shall be shut in the streets,
And the daughters of music brought low."

Her eyes and working lips
Gleamed through the cruddled air—
I tried to sing with her
Her song of devil-may-care.
But in the shouted chorus
My lips would not be stilled:
"The rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea is not filled."

Then one came to my table
Who said, with a laughing glance,
"If that is the way you sing,
Why don't you learn to dance?"
But I said: "With this one song
My heart and lips are cumbered—
'The crooked cannot be made straight,
Nor that which is wanting, numbered.'

“This song must I sing,
 Whatever else I covet—
Hear the end of my song,
 Hear the beginning of it:
‘More bitter than death the woman
 (Beside me still she stands)
Whose heart is snares and nets,
 And whose hands are bands.’”

A NEW HAMPSHIRE BOY

Under Monadnock,
 Fold on fold,
The world's fat kingdoms
 Lie unrolled.

Far in the blue south
 City-smoke, swirled,
Marks the dwellings
 Of the kings of the world.

Old kings and broken,
 Soon to die,
Once you had little,
 As little as I.

Smoke of the city,
 Blow in my eyes—

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Blind me a little,
Make me wise.

Dust of the city,
Blow and gust—
Make me, like all men,
Color of dust.

I stand on Monadnock,
And seem to see
Brown and purple kingdoms
Offered to me.

Morris Bishop

ROADS

You who have made the ancient road of turf,
That my feet might pass over it
Into the level evening—
Make now the ancient road of tears
That my song may pass over it;
Make the ancient road of song
That my ghost may pass over it,
Coming with the new earth.

Sarah Unna

HOLIDAY CROWD

They do not know they wear their wounds so plain,
These covered bodies swathed in cloth and fur.
They do not dream they hold their naked pain
Before this show of life—the checkered stir
Here in the wintry sunlight on the street.
And yet, like martyrs on an old church wall,
They point their wounds—their bleeding hands and feet,
The aching scars, and lips that drank the gall.
For life has hurt them, though they will not cry
“Enough”; shaped flesh to hunger quick or dead,
Withered them, harried, twisted bones awry,
And bleached them white beneath their flying red.
Strange skeletons in merry dominoes,
They do not dream how plain the outline shows.

WINGED VICTORY

Your flimsy dress,
Out of a bargain basement,
Reacts to the wind
As the living draperies
Of the Victory of Samothrace.
Your body also is proudly revealed,
Cleaving the air as hers.
And, verily, you would do as well
Without a head.

Hortense Flexner

MONOLOGUE FROM A MATTRESS

Heinrich Heine, aetat 56, loquitur:

Can that be you, *La Mouche*? Wait till I lift
This palsied eyelid and make sure. . . . Ah, true.
Come in, dear fly, and pardon my delay
In thus existing; I can promise you
Next time you come you'll find no dying poet!
Without sufficient spleen to see me through,
The joke becomes too tedious a jest.
I am afraid my mind is dull today;
I have that—something—heavier on my chest,
And then, you see, I've been exchanging thoughts
With Doctor Franz. He talked of Kant and Hegel
As though he'd nursed them both through whooping-cough;
And, as he left, he let his finger shake
Too playfully, as though to say, "Now off
With that long face—you've years and years to live."
I think he thinks so. But, for Heaven's sake,
Don't credit it—and never tell Mathilde.
Poor dear, she has enough to bear already . . .
This *was* a month! During my lonely weeks
One person actually climbed the stairs
To seek a cripple. It was Berlioz—
But Berlioz always was original.

Come here, my lotus-flower. It is best
I drop the mask today; the half-cracked shield

Of mockery calls for younger hands to wield.
Laugh—or I'll hug it closer to my breast!
So . . . I can be as mawkish as I choose
And give my thoughts an airing, let them loose
For one last rambling stroll before—Now look!
Why tears?—you never heard me say “the end”.
Before . . . before I clap them in a book
And so get rid of them once and for all.
This is their holiday—we'll let them run—
Some have escaped already. There goes one . . .
What, I have often mused, did Goethe mean?
So many years ago, at Weimar, Goethe said,
“Heine has all the poet's gifts but love.”
Good God!—but that is all I ever had.
More than enough!—so much of love to give
That no one gave me any in return.
And so I flashed and snapped in my own fires
Until I stood, with nothing left to burn,
A twisted trunk, in chilly isolation.
Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam—you recall?
I was that northern tree and, in the South,
Amalia. . . . So I turned to scornful cries,
Hot iron songs to save the rest of me:
Plunging the brand in my own misery,
Crouching behind my pointed wall of words—
Ramparts I built of moons and loreleys,
Enchanted roses, sphinxes, love-sick birds,
Giants, dead lads who left their graves to dance,

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Fairies and phoenixes and friendly gods— —
• A curious frieze, half renaissance, half Greek,
Behind which, in revulsion from romance,
I lay and laughed—and wept—till I was weak.
Words were my shelter, words my one escape,
Words were my weapons against everything.
Was I not once the son of Revolution?—
Give me the lyre, I said, and let me sing
My song of battle: words like flaming stars
Shot down with power to burn the palaces;
Words like bright javelins to fly with fierce
Hate of the oily philistines, and glide
Through all the seven heavens till they pierce
The pious hypocrites who dare to creep
Into the Holy Places. “Then,” I cried,
“I am a fire to rend and roar and leap;
I am all joy and song, all sword and flame!”
H’m—you observe me passionate. I aim
To curb these wild emotions lest they soar
Or drive against my will. (So I have said
These many years—and still they are not tame.)
Scraps of a song keep rumbling in my head . . .
Listen—you never heard me sing before.

*When a false world betrays your trust
And stamps upon your fire,
When what seemed blood is only rust,
Take up the lyre!*

Louis Untermeyer

*How quickly the heroic mood
Responds to its own ringing;
The scornful heart, the angry blood
Leap upward, singing!*

Ah, that was how it used to be. But now,
Du sch^oner Todesengel, it is odd
How more than calm I am. Franz said he knew
It was religion, and it is, perhaps;
Religion—or morphine—or poultices—God knows.
I sometimes have a sentimental lapse
And long for saviors and a physical God.
When health is all used up, when money goes,
When courage cracks and leaves a shattered will,
Christianity begins. For a sick Jew
It is a very good religion. . . . Still
I fear that I shall die as I have lived,
A long-nosed heathen playing with his scars;
A pagan killed by *Weltschmerz*. . . . I remember,
Once when I stood with Hegel at a window,
I, being full of bubbling youth and coffee,
Spoke in symbolic tropes about the stars.
Something I said about “those high
Abodes of the blest” provoked his temper.
“Abodes? the stars?”—he froze me with a sneer;
“A light eruption on the firmament.”
“But,” cried romantic I, “is there no sphere
Where virtue is rewarded when we die?”

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And Hegel mocked: "A very pleasant whim—
So you demand a bonus since you spent
One lifetime and refrained from poisoning
Your testy grandmother!" . . . How much of him
Remains in me—even when I am caught
In dreams of death and immortality!

To be eternal—what a brilliant thought!
It must have been conceived and coddled first
By some old shopkeeper in Nuremberg,
His slippers warm, his children amply nursed,
Who, with his lighted meerschaum in his hand,
His nightcap on his head, one summer night
Sat drowsing at his door; and mused: "How grand
If all of this could last beyond a doubt—
This placid moon, this plump *gemüthlichkeit*;
Pipe, breath and summer never going out—
To vegetate through all eternity. . . ."
But no such everlastingness for me!—
God, if he can, keep me from such a blight.

*Death, it is but the long cool night,
And life's a sad and sultry day.
It darkens; I grow sleepy;
I am weary of the light.*

*Over my bed a strange tree gleams,
And there a nightingale is loud*

Louis Untermeyer

*She sings of love, love only . . .
I hear it, even in dreams.*

My Mouche, the other day as I lay here,
Slightly propped up upon this mattress-grave
In which I've been interred these few eight years,
I saw a dog, a little pampered slave,
Running about and barking. I would have given
Heaven could I have been that dog; to thrive
Like him, so senseless—and so much alive!
And once I called myself a blithe Hellene,
Who am too much in love with life to live.
The shrug is pure Hebraic . . . for what I've been,
A lenient Lord will tax me—and forgive.
Dieu me pardonnera—c'est son métier.
But this is jesting. There are other scandals
You haven't heard. . . . Can it be dusk so soon?—
Or is this deeper darkness . . . ? Is that you,
Mother?—how did you come? And are those candles
There on that tree whose golden arms are filled?—
Or are they birds whose white notes glimmer through
The seven branches now that all is stilled?
What—Friday night again and all my songs
Forgotten? Wait . . . I still can sing—
*Sh'ma Yisroel Adonai Elohenu,
Adonai Echod . . .*

Mouche—Mathilde . . .

Louis Untermeyer

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COMMENT

NEWSPAPER VERSE

A RECENT editorial in the *Washington Herald* begins with the following paragraph:

Literary editors of newspapers know that some of the best verse brought out in America first sees the light of day in the columns of the press. Morocco binding and hand-drawn initials don't insure excellence, nor have the higher-class magazines any monopoly on truly good poetry.

And corroborative evidence is offered from the *Atlanta Constitution*, which says:

Some of the best poetry written in this country today appears first in the columns of the daily or weekly press. The literary magazines have never had a monopoly of it—and they never will.

In discussing newspaper verse it is hardly fair to include the "weekly press"; for our only purely literary reviews, or reviews largely devoted to current literature—such papers as *The Literary Review* of the *New York Evening Post*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The Freeman*, the *New York Times Magazine*—are weeklies, and as a rule they are much more progressively edited, so far as modern poetry is concerned, than most of the monthlies. *Reedy's Mirror*, for example, under the editorship of a remarkable man, was a much more "literary magazine" in its day than *The Century*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, or any other alleged "higher-class magazine"; and it had more "discoveries" to its credit, in both verse and prose,

than all these New York respectables combined. In fact, the weeklies have been more hospitable to modern poets, to "the new movement," than any of the monthlies except *The Dial*, *The Masses* with its successor *The Liberator*, and the magazines which, like POETRY, are the special organs of the art.

Therefore we shall confine our part of the present discussion to newspaper verse, to those "colyumists" and other poets—and poetasters—who have got their start, and won their fame, through broad-cast publication in the daily papers. On this basis let us inquire whether "some of the best verse" is thus introduced.

The best light verse—yes, unquestionably. The wittily rhyming commentator on life and letters, appearing from day to day in *Sharps and Flats*, *A Line o' Type or Two*, *The Conning Tower*, *The Periscope*, and other columns less familiar to this editor, has added to our literature masterpieces in this kind. Eugene Field began it with poems like *The Bibliomaniac's Prayer* and *The Truth about Horace*, each of which started a fashion. Bert Leston Taylor continued it with such incisive satires as *In the Gallery* and *The Kaiser's Farewell to Prince Henry*. And more recent Chicago philosophers are living up to the tradition. Who could show a nimbler wit or a keener critical insight than Keith Preston in many poems now reprinted from *The Periscope* in his new book, *Splinters?*—for example, this one, entitled *Effervescence and Evanescence*:

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We've found this Scott Fitzgerald chap
A chipper, charming child;
He's taught us how the flappers flap,
And why the whipper-snappers snap,
What makes the women wild.
But now he should make haste to trap
The ducats in his dipper—
The birds that put him on the map
Will shortly all begin to rap
And flop to something flipper.

And if Mr. Preston wields a rapier, listen to the blows of Guy Lee's bludgeon—in honor of that noble animal, the frog, who has to keep his mouth shut in order to breathe. We quote from a *Chicago Tribune* of recent date:

When I hear the politician spouting hot air by the ton,
When I note the silly twaddle of the genus Native Son,
When I'm sentenced to a banquet where a war of words ensues,
When a socialist gets near me and begins to shout his views,
When a bore essays a story that has neither point nor end,
When a highbrow author's ego by his voice starts to extend,
When a woman with a grievance (or without one) launches out
On a marathon of language o'er the conversation route,
I ponder on this habit of mankind to squeak and squawk
In a never-ending serial of talk and talk and talk;
And I figger, as we flounder in the vocalistic bog,
It's a pity human beings are not fashioned like the frog!

Such humor as these things from our newspaper poets is straight American stuff, expressive of our kind of smiling common-sense, our special good-natured chuckle, over the piffle and burble, the mawkishness and pretense which encumber our every-day life. Such wit from the colyum-

ists is a shaft of sunlight on the breakfast-table—it clears the air and gleams on the sharpened edge of the mind.

But what about the more serious verse of the newspaper poets? To be sure, Eugene Field's finest poems—such as *Little Boy Blue* and *Wynten, Blynken and Nod*—first saw the light in his *Sharps and Flats*; Frank Stanton achieved one now and then in Atlanta; and a few slyly delicate poems by Bert Taylor adorned the *Line*. But the successors of these men have been less inclined to favor the unsmiling muse, or she to favor them; and the songsters they admit to their columns are usually about as adventurously lyric as a chirping sparrow. If “some of the best verse first sees the light of day” in these columns of cheer, the present writer has missed it. Yet here may be found, as a rule, the best of the newspaper verse—at least these column sparrows are honest, and their saltily humorous environment keeps them from rot and reek.

But what shall be said of certain other kinds of seriously intended newspaper verse — of the placid rhyming journalese of Walt Mason or the syndicated moralizings of Edgar Guest? The former may be harmless; his endless reeling of facile observations has sometimes a faint trace of savor—the tireless crank is turned by a mild old busybody at least humanely observant. But the stickily sugary Mr. Guest is not only a blight but a menace. His molasses factory proves profitable in more ways than one; so, like other wide-awake business-men, he spreads its products over the land. Syndicated in hundreds of

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newspapers, crowded with platform engagements, this favorite of fortune, journeying to Denver, is met at the station by the whole Colorado legislature, adjourned in his honor and celebrating his greatness with a brass band. And the school-children of many cities are stimulated by his example toward the high rewards, financial and glory-coronal, of poesy.

Let us examine Mr. Guest's style—here is a recent and typical example, entitled *For the New Year*:

This I would like to be—braver and bolder,
Just a bit wiser because I am older,
Just a bit kinder to those I may meet,
Just a bit manlier taking defeat.
This for the New Year my wish and my plea:
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be—just a bit finer,
More of a smiler and less of a whiner;
Just a bit quicker to stretch out my hand
Helping another who's struggling to stand.
This is my prayer for the New Year to be:
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be—just a bit fairer,
Just a bit better and just a bit squarer,
Not quite so ready to censure and blame,
Quicker to help every man in the game.
Not quite so eager men's failings to see—
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

This I would like to be—just a bit truer,
Less of the wisher and more of the doer;
Broader and bigger, more willing to give,
Living and helping my neighbor to live.
This for the New Year my prayer and my plea:
Lord, make a regular man out of me.

What do those Colorado legislators think they find in such sermonizing twaddle as this? Poetry?—if such a fond allusion is possible, how do they define poetry? In what department of their minds do they receive its proud appeal? Wisdom?—if they are honoring a sage, what high truth is he telling them? To what clear heights is he leading their souls? Do they discover beauty in this cheap rattle of foot-rule rhymes, emotion in this sickish slobber of easy virtue? Is it this rhymester or themselves they are stultifying when they offer him public homage, and thereby inform the rising generation that he is their ideal of a great man of letters?

Mr. Guest is not the only one of his kind—alas!—but he is conspicuous and typical. These syndicated rhymers, like the movie-producers, are learning that “it pays to be good,” that one “gets by by giving the people the emotions of virtue, simplicity and goodness, with this program paying at the box-office.” And it pays very well.

B. L. T. hit off the situation a decade or more ago, saying:

Lives of poets oft remind us
Not to wait too long for time,
But, departing, leave behind us
Obvious facts embalmed in rhyme.

Poems that we have to ponder
Turn us prematurely gray;
We are infinitely fonder
Of the simple heartfelt lay.

Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is odious,
Browning's *Ring and Book* a bore.

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Bleat, ye bards, in lines melodious,
Bleat that two and two is four!

Today he might have added:

Bleat, ye bards, of home and mother,
Pray to be a regular man.
Treacle mixed with tears is golden—
Pile the shekels while you can.

Let the newspaper poets be true to the muse of laughter.
We need their salt in our daily food, lest the maudlin
adulterations of pseudo-literary profiteers poison our
in'ards! H. M.

REVIEWS

MISS LOWELL'S LEGENDS

Legends, by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Too many legends are getting lost and forgotten. To tell any of them over again and save them from the dust and ashes of the dead is a good thing; but even better to tell them so people will listen. To most of Miss Amy Lowell's *Legends* it is not easy to listen intently—they are too crowded with adjectives, with ornament, with imagery; they are obese with adornment. So they do not cut into you the way even the bare outline of a story may do in some textbook of mythology, or the way voices of a legendary day sometimes still reach you through old men and old women bridging two epochs.

In *Legends* Miss Lowell has sought alliance with Aztec, Cantonese, Indian, and English; but has not, it seems, become one with any of them. Their grief is not her grief, their passion not her passion. At their feasts and funerals she revels more like a tourist in the surprises of intricate ancient rites. She lays no claim, it is true, to accuracy; she has "changed, added, subtracted, jumbled several stories together," she says, "at will to suit her particular vision." But she has not made them over with a vision acute enough to equal the origin of primitive lore. She has not made them with an economy of means that comes of violence.

As a vendor of foreign goods she resorts to selling-talk, with sometimes the taint of a conflicting code of morals or manners upon it. So in the Aztec story of a fox assaulting the moon, the print of a fox's paws on the disc of the moon is labeled as "obscene." She labels these characters, the fox and the moon, instead of making them sheerly exist.

It is a pity, the way this book has of calling things by so many names that they cease to be named at all. One is aware of passing by almost with indifference succinct, polished song and picture which in more spare surroundings might make an instant appeal, a quick thrust. This passage for one:

A stream flowed in a sunwise turn across the prairie, and the name of the stream was Burnt Water, because it tasted dark like smoke. The prairie ran out tongues of raw colors—blue of camass, red of geranium, yellow of parsley—at the young green grass. The prairie

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flung up its larks on a string of sunshine, it lay like a catching-sheet beneath the black breasts balancing down on a wind, calling, "See it! See it!" in little round voices.

If you consider each legend in the book as a unit of art, it is easy to remember only the two last poems—*Before the Storm* and *Four Sides to a House*. One of these is New England legend; the other, not labeled, seems as real and as native to Miss Lowell. The ghosts of a man and child driving a high yellow chaise and a white horse before wind and rain, unwind, as the wheels whirl, a keen impetuous movie of New England. *Four Sides to a House* is a beautiful ballad—the crying of an old man, murdered, buried in a well. Words, rhymes, stanzas fall into place; the sound is true; the design complete and haunting. Here is one bead of the ballad string quoted for the pleasure of quoting:

Around the house, and around the house,
With a wind that is North, and a wind that is South,
Peter, Peter.
Mud and ooze and a dead man's wrist
Wrenching the shutters apart, like mist
The mud and the ooze and the dead man twist.
They are praying, Peter.

This is a poem with intangible quality. Many of the others disobey the laws of measure and contrast, which are bound up with mysteries, and which rule that shadows will be sure to count against a blaze of light or a blaze of incident, that brilliants come to life across a dark sky, that a dance is figured also by its pauses, and objects by the space they keep around them. *Dorothy Dudley*

Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower

SPEAR-SHAFT AND CYCLAMEN-FLOWER

Hymen, by H. D. Henry Holt & Co.

It is difficult to write an appreciation or criticism of modern literature because words have altered slowly during the past century and have lost their rightful meaning. Beauty, wisdom, life—these terms have come to represent an indefinite standard of pedantry or the washed-out sentiment of some school-room text. Civilization has rendered the states that these words should express almost impossible of achievement. So there is discontent, a brooding rebellion—no new forceful words and the old ones blurred until the same sentence may evoke for different people entirely separate worlds.

Thus it has been said of H. D.'s earlier poetry that it was perfectly wrought but cold and passionless, and that it was concerned rather with the loveliness of a perished age than with the modern world or everyday emotions. But is it not simply the association of Greek with scholasticism, in the minds of these critics, that has led them astray in their consideration of the poet's work?

Perfectly wrought the poems are: the rhythms swoop in and out of the head as birds perch and flutter in and out of apple-branches. Lines haunt the ears as the sound of rain in the South. The use of some simple but unexpected syllable brings all the fragrance into a mood that the Ionian roses suddenly awaken, after some swift storm. But they are not cold, they are not passionless; and apart from the color of some Attic names how

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are these songs anything but the expression of the emotions and desires of an extremely present age?

To people born in England H. D.'s work is peculiarly American—American with a southern flavor and a singularly native strength. Call *Simaetha* any American name and nothing is lost but the impersonality of the far-off, silver-grey Greek syllables. Circe is any woman of intellect who, with the very sincerity of her vision, turns lesser minds "each to his own self." The children in *Hymen* are strange in their beauty only because the restrictions of school have not seized them too early nor crushed them into patterns.

It is true that H. D. is concerned with life, which changes little from epoch to epoch, rather than with the exterior impressions of telephones or steel rails. She is very sensitive to the visible world, but it is not particularly Greek; her country is any stretch of sea-coast in Europe or America where there are sand and low pools and surge of heavy rocks. Compare the *Phaedra* and the *Hippolytus* series, which were actually written in Greece, with *Cuckoo Song*, *Thetis*, or *Evadne*. Apart from an added intensity of color—the "lizard-blue" water, the "red sands" of Crete—they are as independent as the poems written further north of any definite landscape.

Could anything be more modern of mood than these few lines from *At Baia*?

I should have thought
In a dream you would have brought

Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower

Some lovely, perilous thing—
Orchids piled in a great sheath,
As who would say (in a dream),
I send you this
Who left the blue veins
Of your throat unkissed.

The song is too long to quote in full, but it expresses perhaps more perfectly than any other recent poem, the disappointment and yet the sympathy which come when some personality one has admired fails to fulfil both its promise and its task.

It is not easy to be true to any faith in a war-torn world. Perhaps the most difficult test of all is to keep faith in beauty. But there is no sentiment or weakness in the lines which follow—they are stark as a war-chant or as waves against a prow:

But beauty is set apart;
Beauty is cast by the sea,
A barren rock;
Beauty is set about
With wrecks of ships
Upon our coasts; death keeps
The shallows—death waits
Clutching toward us
From the deeps.

Beauty is set apart;
The winds that slash its beach
Swirl the coarse sand
Upward toward the rocks.

Beauty is set apart
From the islands
And from Greece.

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Life is a fact to the poet, not a dream. But she has a trick of hiding a difficult thought under a beautiful phrase until the eyes read the song carelessly, and only with the ripening of personal experience is the truth uncovered behind the vivid words. A psychological state that a scientist might take a volume to describe is crystallized into a couple of pages. And she can turn and write songs such as the one which follows, simple as any Elizabethan lyric and without the sixteenth-century mannerisms.

From citron-bower be her bed,
Cut from branch of tree a flower
Fashioned for her maidenhead.

From Lydian apples, sweet of husk,
Cut the width of board and lathe.
Carve the feet from myrtle-wood.

Let the palings of her bed
Be quince and box-wood overlaid
With the scented bark of yew.

That all the wood in blossoming,
May calm her heart and cool her blood
For losing of her maidenhood.

Her psychology is never once at fault. Thetis, proud, beautiful and alone; Simaetha, wrecked by war; Phaedra, smashed by alien forces—it is only their names (perhaps their personal beauty) that differentiate them from the individuals who struggle and suffer in this present world. They are not easily found, but personality is rare in an age of standardized opinions and patented emotions.

Spear-shaft and Cyclamen-flower

And perhaps the essential characteristic of these poems is their originality—they are cyclamen flowers caught on the spear-point of an analytical intellect.

Not cold, not passionless, but with emotion and thought perfectly balanced, *Hymen* can make even the “disenchanted days” of which the poet writes, bright with beauty.

W. Bryher

“A DISTINGUISHED YOUNG MAN”

The Living Frieze, by Mark Turbyfill. Monroe Wheeler, Evanston, Ill.

Mark Turbyfill is a young man, but has already been spoken of in print and out, and it is a pleasure to consider his poems as a whole in Mr. Wheeler’s excellently made book. One has already heard so much unfortunate talk of Mr. Turbyfill’s estheticism, that one is lucky to have a slight acquaintance with his work as it has appeared in the magazines before approaching this book by way of the reviewers. When a reviewer in our generation speaks of a poet as an “esthete” he is generally being sentimental about that poet’s sentimentality; and this is a lamentable condition for a good word to reach. As for reviewers, they are largely static.

For Mr. Turbyfill can indeed be sentimental, and that a good part of the time, his sentimentality being greatly patterned after the writings of that other esthete of late consideration, Richard Aldington. But it is not

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for this reason that he is one of the dozen or so living Americans who have done anything worth remembering. At his best, Mr. Turbyfill is the master of a certain fleeting precision that, like the finest of needles, strikes deep into one's being and is gone before it can be observed.

I am the surprised young man, light walker on night lawns,
he writes; and in a recognition and fuller exploitation of this fact will lie his greatness if he ever achieves it. This one sentence, unfortunately, is embedded in a long discussion of a love-affair which has few merits; and very often Mr. Turbyfill spoils an excellent passage by not knowing where to cut. Had this passage stood alone, it had been one of his finest poems.

Perhaps his weakness is a conscience which drives him to do complete justice to his friends, loves and admirations, wherever they have acted as the original impetus of a poem. He forgets that a poem is a state of perfection at which a poet arrives by whatever means; and that the poem has no responsibility of any sort to ladies or lambrequins. It is a thing that begins somewhere and ends in itself.

In such poems as *Shapes* and *Fertile Gesture* Mr. Turbyfill has remembered, or not needed to remember, this fundamental truth. I quote *Shapes* intact, as an example of the poet at his finest:

Let us deliberately sit into design
With these elephant ears

“*A Distinguished Young Man*”

Stretched from the pot
Into green wax consciousness.

Let us exert
Our unused selves
Into other static
Sharpnesses.

In what fleet gestures
Have you found eternity?

His amber-painted torso
A Persian dancer
Has conceived into a leaf-line,
The head inclined.

Other poems that one remembers are *She Walks to Pisa*, *Fragment of Vision*, *Carved Mood*, *Burden of Blue and Gold*, *The Moments Halt a Little While before the Day*, and *End of Summer*. There are lines and passages scattered through other poems, the finest of these being the sentence already quoted, and the third stanza of *The Intangible Symphony*.

To estimate the magnitude of such a poet as Mr. Turbyfill is a difficult if not impossible task. This despite the fact that at least one word of magnitude has been spoken of him in this review. But one can accurately say that his five or six finest poems are perfectly executed, and entirely achieve that which they apparently set out to achieve. And perhaps this is the fullest praise that one can give to any poet.

Yvor Winters

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A PRIZE-WINNER

Heavens and Earth, by Stephen Vincent Benét. Henry Holt & Co.

(This book shared with Carl Sandburg's *Smoke and Steel* the Poetry Society's recent award of five hundred dollars to the best American verse published in 1920.)

Not long ago I heard Robert Frost remark laughingly before an audience that one could practically place a poet as major or minor according to the number of times he used the word *beauty*. By that gauge *Heavens and Earth* is indeed a large order.

The first section of the book is called *Two Visions of Helen*; it begins:

Slowly blanch-handed Dawn, eyes half awake,
Upraised magnificent the silver urn.

The word *morning* appears in italics in the margin to print on the mind a clear and single image. One need not demand of Stephen Benét that he be either Carl Sandburg or J. V. A. Weaver—many of the younger poets are turning away with tired eyes from the verities of modern life. But Victoria is dead—that, at least, has been definitely settled; it is too late to contest it and futile to look back.

The poet continues:

Beautiful monstrous dreams they seemed as they ran,
Trees come alive at the nod of a god grown mute!
Their eyes looked up to the sun like a valiant man;
Their bows clashed shrill on the loins and limbs of the brute!

The second line is quite plainly inserted to meet the exigencies of rhyme; the rest plainly a compromise with rhyme. An ultimate word exists that will do duty for both sense and sound. Is not art the pursuit of that word?

Laughing, rejoicing, white as a naked birch,
Slim as a spear in a torrent of moving towers,
Itys, the prince, ran gay in the storm of their search
Silverly shod on feet that outstripped the Hours!

Heavens and Earth so aptly illustrates the vices of its school that the exposé may as well be thorough now it is begun. Was the *towers* line added only to rhyme with *Hours*, since *white as a naked birch* conveys not only color but form? For me *slim as a spear* is, besides being poor economy, confusing; it leaves me with the blurred image of one who has stared for a long time at the same spot. Nature is admittedly prolix; it is left for that royal combination of gift and reason which determine the poet to model and trim beyond the possibility of confusion. Let the artist's scope be the universe, but let the artist hold the rein. It is admonitory to speculate on what the masters must have held in reserve in prunings alone, for they were all great economists. And who does not know that one thought leads to another?

Stephen Benét has imagination; otherwise—one fails to detect behind his art that significant struggle for the final syllable, the final image. Rather a quick acceptance of what the tempter, tradition, whispers into the ear.

We go on with *The First Vision of Helen* and meet with

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an interesting line. *He dreamed as a dog dreams, uneasily;* and another, *And how she smoothed her hair back with one hand,* the universal gesture of woman. But *The Visions of Helen* are not successful. What is the reason, if any, for the long symphonic arrangement? One has a right to expect that the form a poet uses justify itself. Many of Mr. Benét's changes of movement differ only in length of line; otherwise, the same overwrought design, the same lameness. Although both the Helen stories have a reasonable amount of inherent interest, one is left with the feeling that they might have been done carefully, in a page apiece, with more point.

Two at the Crossroads dallies with the delicious idea of the meeting of one Palomides and a stranger; Palomides riding furiously, his brain a black pin-wheel. He answers the stranger's inquiry after the sea-road with a maudlin account of his love for Iseult, and rides madly on. Then, the amusing dénouement:

Palomides was far.
And, settling well his harp upon his back,
With something of amusement in his mouth,
Tristram rode southward to the Breton ships.

But Mr. Benét is still without identity. In this instance it is a slightly chastened Tennyson. Many moderns write for the eye alone. H. D., William Carlos Williams, subordinate the oral to the visual, making a form akin in impression to the mural or bas-relief. The concern of the present poet is to grind out grand-

iloquent Victorian harmonies. Fortunately it has been proved, by Carl Sandburg among others, that one may write primarily for the ear and still retain the identity both of the individual and of the age.

Take *Three Days' Ride*, the old theme of elopement and tragic outcome, a story which depends for very existence upon the unique style of the artist and its relevancy to period and locality. Certainly no man who takes pride in his modernity would have begun thus:

We had fled full fast from her father's keep,
And the time had come that we must sleep.

For the rest, it is to be remembered that, as we live in the age of the superlative, hyperbole no longer has force behind it. To exaggerate in the hope of heightening the effect of drama is to frustrate oneself in advance. Simple statement of fact is more impressive.

The Kingdom of the Mad, the last section, a series of sonnets in a less serious humor, is more felicitous. The poet seems not quite so young and chaotic. He detaches himself and begins to speak in order with urbanity.

"Books should be tried by a judge and a jury as though they were crimes, and counsel should be heard on both sides," says Samuel Butler in his *Note Books*. On my side, I am left with the unsatisfactory sense that Stephen Benét's verses are melodramatic accidents of rhythm and rhyme. I look in vain for volition, for image and thought too sacred to have been lightly changed.

Pearl Andelson

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A LUTE OF ONE STRING

The Lifted Cup, by Jessie B. Rittenhouse. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This small book of forty or more very brief poems is a soft-voiced little lute of one string. So restricted a lyric range seems scarcely possible from a woman who has traveled about this varied world; and the emotional experience it records is too narrow to be easily accepted as the whole truth. It is rather an unconscious yielding to a convention—the presentation of a wistful and sensitive feminine type as men and women of richer experience expect to find it. We have it caught to perfection in a number of these poems, for example *The Door*:

There was a door stood long ajar
That one had left for me,
While I went trying other doors
To which I had no key.

And when at last I turned to seek
The refuge and the light,
A gust of wind had shut the door
And left me in the night.

Perhaps the following poem comes nearer escaping the convention than any other in this book—has a brighter bloom. Its first line is its title:

We who give our hearts in spring,
Putting all the old life by,
We shall start with everything
Keen and glad beneath the sky.
We shall know the urge of grass
Parting each detaining clod,

A Lute of One String

Know the one sweet day they pass—
Flowers, the spirit of the sod.

We are caught into the flame
Where the golden fire runs—
All its ardor is the same,
In the flesh and in the suns.

H. M.

A POET IN EMBRYO

Archways of Life, by Mercedes de Acosta. Moffat, Yard
& Co.

This book shows a distinct advance over *Moods* in poetic technique, although most of the poems still leave much to be desired. The author has certain gifts of the poet—quick feeling, a degree of imaginative insight, and eagerness to pour out her soul, to express the beauty and strangeness of life, to give herself away. She says what she has to say with a forthright simplicity and directness; and in such poems as *Platitudes* and *Your Face* she says a fine thing, with refreshment in it.

But she is just beginning to learn her trade. She shows a promising capacity to learn it in three or four poems—*Unreality*, *Poor Fools*, *To Vouletti*—in which there is a suggestion of poetic rhythm. Sometimes she uses rhyme—usually the irregular, half-veiled rhymes now so much in vogue; but not yet with quite the air of an adept. Occasionally she should give another thought to such details as grammar: one can stand *will* for *shall*—all of us do that—but not “the maddest of we three.”

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However, one may forgive much to a book which reveals a fresh and ardent personality. And one may hope that after a few more experimental sheaves the art will respond to the impulse. H. M.

RHETORIC UNASHAMED

Ireland Unfreed: Poems of 1921, by Sir William Watson.
John Lane Co.

Rhetoric here marches unashamed across the cluttered stage of the world's affairs—rhetoric, flaunting exaggerated gestures under its shabby outworn toga, stubbing the toe of its stiff buskin against

rapine masked as order, his vast maw
With Vengeance still unclayed.

Is it possible that this kind of thing is still masking as poetry?—here begins a sonnet *To the Prime Minister yet again*:

Like your renown-clad namesake, who did slay,
Far across Time and its vast charnels drear,
If only with a legendary spear,
A fabled dragon, you in your midday
Did unto ravening things give battle, and they
Felt your light lance through all their scales!

Now, so we are informed, that spear is “pointed at the captive maiden's breast”—and so on to the end, reading a bit out-of-date today. May the kind fates deliver Ireland from her friends! H. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CODE OF MINORITY

Everybody is sentimental, even Mr. Yvor Winters. Emily Dickinson, he says, is dowdy; Emerson, sentimental; Whitman, an eventual dull vacuum; Sandburg, plasmodial delirium. I am not used to defending old gods, or new ones; but I can show, I think, that these adjectives indicate a sentimentalism that is not only Mr. Winters' but the characteristic of the larger group of modern noticeable poets. It is not expansive Germanic sentimentality, to be sure; it is protective sentimentality, hard and slender. But it is no less sentimental, for it is based on a conceit, on a vain study of approach and manner. Its mode is not determined by content.

Whether New England hardness, which Mr. Winters reviews in *A Cool Master* in the February POETRY, is really the hardness that Mr. Winters is thinking about is doubtful. Whatever its hardness, the New England idea is primarily earnest—earnest frankly in the content of poetry—as Mr. Winters, to judge from his adjectives, can never be. When he can say cleverly, “This man has the culture to know that, to those to whom philosophy is comprehensible, it is not a matter of first importance; and he knows that these people are not greatly impressed by a ballyhoo statement of the principles of social and spiritual salvation,” it is clear that he is not expounding New England hardness, nor anything like it, but the

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assumed hardness of sophisticated Gallic reaction. Poets—Emerson, Whitman, Sandburg—in whom the idea-content has a burning importance, may well seem to him blathering or sentimental, or beside the poetic point. In them the serious idea is not only an intellectual factor but a definitely esthetic component of the poem. Nor does Mr. Winters, in the face of the overwhelming human response to ideas, give any good reason why it should not be. Ideas have beauty.

Whence this solemn authority that the poet may tell only what he sees, not what he thinks? It comes from a protective, contractile impulse. Fear of the world beyond the near perceptions, or failure to appreciate, is its basis. It is "safety first" in poetry. Blunder and bathos threaten the poet who risks being bigger than his sensations, and these too often do overwhelm him; but the naive exposure that he makes in extending himself beyond protective certainties is necessary. He is "sentimental" perhaps, a "preacher," a "philosopher," a "peddler," because he cannot always fuse his own being with that of his subject matter. He opens himself, as Emerson, Whitman and Sandburg unquestionably do, to the sarcasm of the tight, cool, hard poets who take no risks, but he also escapes their inevitable minority. As a productive unit, as an initiative, the poet will never be thus pigeonholed. All that is humane and interesting is poetic. All material waits only the poet with capacity and power to use it.

The Code of Minority

“A pigeon’s wing may make as great an image as a man’s tragedy,” says Mr. Winters. But the profound truth of the sentence is not the theme that Mr. Winters is defending in it. Emerson and Whitman, or for that matter the Vedas, reiterate this truth. It is the most beautiful of man’s comprehensions; and, as the identity of all things, is the very being of art and life. But Mr. Winters means nothing of this sort by his pronouncement. That would be to “sentimentalize,” to preach, and to enter untastefully into the idea-content of poetry. Mr. Winters means by his sentence that greatness lies not in those things of which the poet has written, “but in the perfect balance, the infallible precision, with which he has stated their cases.”

I use Mr. Winters for illustration because he reveals, rather more articulately than is usually considered good taste in his group, the ideational background of probably the larger number of modern poets. Theirs is an ungenerous principle from which there can be no great progress. It is an assumption for the protection of minority. And because these presumed limitations are emotionalized somewhat, I am justified, I think, in calling the hard, cool minorists—the modern French, our American expatriates in England, Mr. Winters, even Wallace Stevens—protectively sentimental. It is the cult of the craft, not of great art.

Let me suggest the code. First: Say little, but say it beautifully. Second: Be delicate; nicety is first. Third:

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Be fragmentary; it indicates detachment; a frail wisp of fact, a plaintive, inarticulate thread of feeling is enough. Fourth: Be cool; sympathies are vulgar. Fifth: Be careful; the limitations of the poetic milieu are fixed. This is the minor code or something like it, the world over. It is not classical, for its restraint has neither the amplitude nor the objectivity of the greater classic school. It is an introspective restraint, the last reserve of a decayed and romantic egoism. It is a hang-over, I think, from ante-bellum France. The indifferentism assumed by these poets is neither spiritual nor spacious; it is the cold chrysalis of individualism from which the butterfly has flown.

Devotion, not detachment, is the foundation of art, and devotion these modern minors have not. They have ignored the artistic value of ideas. They have tatted gracefully in silk, but they have hammered no rhythms in steel. Ideas—even moral ideas, and character, though abused and betrayed in much Victorian poetry, remain primary components of great work. They will remain so, despite Mr. Winters and his perceptualists, simply for the reason that their Platonic as well as their human beauty persists.

At least two major poets are writing today. They are Sandburg and Tagore. Different as they are, every poem of theirs, in its fusion of great and earnest content with personal form, denies Mr. Winters' thesis.

Baker Brownell

A NEW POETRY SOCIETY

It would be difficult to enumerate the various evidences of increasing public interest in poetry, of at least a desire to give the art closer attention and better appreciation than it has had hitherto. The Poetry Lovers of America, a society inaugurated last year in Chicago, is one such evidence. Under the presidency of Mrs. D. Harry Hammer, it has had an auspicious and interesting first season, with five or six meetings at which modern poetry was read, and discussed from various points of view, the history, traditions and technique of the art being considered as well as its modern influences and aims. The club's correspondence indicates wide interest in the subject, and other groups, through the Middle West especially, show a desire to be affiliated with it. The membership, of two hundred or more men and women, includes both professionals and amateurs. F. P.

NOTES

The April number of POETRY will be a Southern Number, the contributors representing the south-eastern section of the country, whose activities in poetry have been encouraged and stimulated during the past year by the Poetry Society of South Carolina, centering in Charleston. In addition to the poems, an editorial by Messrs. Du Bose Heyward and Hervey Allen will present the artistic point of view of the new-old South. These two poets will contribute a group of *Carolina Chansons*—ballads from the romantic history of the region; Miss Beatrice Ravenel, also of Charleston, will be represented, Mrs. Craig Barrow of Savannah, Mr. Marx G. Sabel and Mrs. Frances D. Pinder of Jacksonville, and others.

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Mr. Carl Sandburg, of Chicago, will publish his fourth book of poems in May, through Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Mr. Louis Untermeyer, of New York, also needs no introduction. His new book of poems, to be called probably *Roast Leviathan*, will be published in the late spring or autumn.

Hortense Flexner (Mrs. Wyncie King) has recently removed from Louisville to Philadelphia, her husband having accepted a job as cartoonist for the *Public Ledger*.

Mr. Morris Bishop, who is now living in Ithaca, N. Y., has appeared in POETRY before. Also Miss Sarah Unna, now resident in New York, who was a member of Mr. Bynner's poetry class at the University of California three years ago.

Miss Marion Strobel, of Chicago, has been for two years associate editor of POETRY.

Miss Ruth Harwood, a native of Salt Lake City and now resident in Oakland, California, appears for the first time in POETRY. Miss Harwood took a poetry prize at the University of Utah in 1920, and the Emily Cook poetry prize at the University of California in 1921.

Alison Buchanan is a pseudonym.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Sour Grapes, by William Carlos Williams. Four Seas Co.

Verses, by Eulalie Andreas. Privately printed, New York.

The Quiet Courage and Other Songs of the Unafraid, by Everard Jack Appleton. Stewart Kidd Co., Cincinnati.

New Altars, by Ethel Talbot Scheffauer. Wm. Kupe, Berlin, Germany.

Depths and Shallows, by Sally Bruce Kinsolving. Norman Remington Co., Baltimore.

Shafis of Song, by James Latimer McLane, Jr. Norman Remington Co.

Songs from the Lyric Road, by Ruth Harwood. Privately printed.

The World-hoax and *The Disillusioned Genius*, by C. A. Paul Dachsel. Privately printed, Portland, Ore.

Poems, by Eunice Browning. Privately printed, Sacramento, Cal.

Later Poems, by Bliss Carman. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Poems: New and Old, by Henry Newbolt. E. P. Dutton & Co.

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