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Vol. XV

No. I

oetry

A Magazine of Verse  
Edited by Harriet Monroe  
October 1919

Pecksniffiana

by Wallace Stevens

Baker Brownell, Mark Turbyfill,  
Marjorie Seiffert, Maurice Browne

Recent French Poetry

by Richard Aldington

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Molokai

You have got all the other magazines imitating your experiments. I never miss reading POETRY. It is amazing how you keep up its interest.

H. L. Mencken

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No. I

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 **oetry**  
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XV  
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OCTOBER, 1919

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PECKSNIFFIANA

FABLIAU OF FLORIDA

Barque of phosphor  
On the palmy beach,

Move outward into heaven,  
Into the alabasters  
And night blues.

Foam and cloud are one.  
Sultry moon-monsters  
Are dissolving.

Fill your black hull  
With white moonlight.

There will never be an end  
To this droning of the surf.

[1]

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HOMUNCULUS ET LA BELLE ETOILE

In the sea, Biscayne, there prinks  
The young emerald, evening star—  
Good light for drunkards, poets, widows,  
And ladies soon to be married.

By this light the salty fishes  
Arch in the sea like tree-branches,  
Going in many directions  
Up and down.

This light conducts  
The thoughts of drunkards, the feelings  
Of widows and trembling ladies,  
The movements of fishes.

How pleasant an existence it is  
That this emerald charms philosophers,  
Until they become thoughtlessly willing  
To bathe their hearts in later moonlight,

Knowing that they can bring back thought  
In the night that is still to be silent,  
Reflecting this thing and that,  
Before they sleep.

It is better that, as scholars,  
They should think hard in the dark cuffs  
Of voluminous cloaks,  
And shave their heads and bodies.

It might well be that their mistress  
Is no gaunt fugitive phantom.  
She might, after all, be a wanton,  
Abundantly beautiful, eager.

Fecund,  
From whose being by starlight, on sea-coast,  
The innermost good of their seeking  
Might come in the simplest of speech.

It is a good light, then, for those  
That know the ultimate Plato,  
Tranquillizing with this jewel  
The torments of confusion.

THE WEEPING BURGHER

It is with a strange malice  
That I distort the world.

Ah! that ill humors  
Should mask as white girls.  
And ah! that Scaramouche  
Should have a black barouche.

The sorry verities!  
Yet in excess, continual,  
There is cure of sorrow.

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Permit that if as ghost I come  
Among the people burning in me still,  
I come as belle design  
Of foppish line.

And I, then, tortured for old speech—  
A white of wildly woven rings;  
I, weeping in a calcined heart—  
My hands such sharp, imagined things.

PETER PARASOL

*Aux taureaux Dieu cornes donne  
Et sabots durs aux chevaux . . . .*

Why are not women fair,  
All, as Andromache—  
Having, each one, most praisable  
Ears, eyes, soul, skin, hair?

Good God! That all beasts should have  
The tusks of the elephant,  
Or be beautiful  
As large, ferocious tigers are.

It is not so with women.  
I wish they were all fair,  
And walked in fine clothes,  
With parasols, in the afternoon air.

EXPOSITION OF THE CONTENTS OF A CAB

Victoria Clementina, negress,  
Took seven white dogs  
To ride in a cab.

Bells of the dogs chinked.  
Harness of the horses shuffled  
Like brazen shells.

Oh-hé-hé! Fragrant puppets  
By the green lake-pallors,  
She too is flesh,

And a breech-cloth might wear,  
Netted of topaz and ruby  
And savage blooms;

Thridding the squawkiest jungle  
In a golden sedan,  
White dogs at bay.

What breech-cloth might you wear—  
Except linen, embroidered  
By elderly women?

PLOUGHING ON SUNDAY

The white cock's tail  
Tosses in the wind.

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The turkey-cock's tail  
Glitters in the sun.

Water in the fields.  
The wind pours down.  
The feathers flare  
And bluster in the wind.

Remus, blow your horn!  
I'm ploughing on Sunday,  
Ploughing North America.  
Blow your horn!

Tum-ti-tum,  
Ti-tum-tum-tum!  
The turkey-cock's tail  
Spreads to the sun.

The white cock's tail  
Streams to the moon.  
Water in the fields.  
The wind pours down.

BANAL SOJOURN

Two wooden tubs of blue hydrangeas stand at the foot of  
the stone steps.  
The sky is a blue gum streaked with rose. The trees are  
black.

The grackles crack their throats of bone in the smooth air.  
Moisture and heat have swollen the garden into a slum of  
bloom.

Pardie! Summer is like a fat beast, sleepy in mildew,  
Our old bane, green and bloated, serene, who cries,  
"That bliss of stars, that princox of evening heaven!" re-  
minding of seasons,

When radiance came running down, slim through the bare-  
ness.

And so it is one damns that green shade at the bottom of  
the land.

For who can care at the wigs despoiling the Satan ear?  
And who does not seek the sky unfuzzed, soaring to the  
princox?

One has a malady, here, a malady. One feels a malady.

THE INDIGO GLASS IN THE GRASS

Which is real—

This bottle of indigo glass in the grass,  
Or the bench with the pot of geraniums, the stained mat-  
tress and the washed overalls drying in the sun?

Which of these truly contains the world?

Neither one, nor the two together.

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ANECDOTE OF THE JAR

I placed a jar in Tennessee,  
And round it was, upon a hill.  
It made the slovenly wilderness  
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,  
And sprawled around, no longer wild.  
The jar was round upon the ground  
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.  
The jar was gray and bare.  
It did not give of bird or bush,  
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

OF THE SURFACE OF THINGS

I

In my room, the world is beyond my understanding;  
But when I walk I see that it consists of three or four hills  
and a cloud.

II

From my balcony, I survey the yellow air,  
Reading where I have written,  
"The spring is like a belle undressing."

III

The gold tree is blue.  
The singer has pulled his cloak over his head.  
The moon is in the folds of the cloak.

THE CURTAINS IN THE HOUSE OF THE METAPHYSICIAN

It comes about that the drifting of these curtains  
Is full of long motions; as the ponderous  
Deflations of distance; or as clouds  
Inseparable from their afternoons;  
Or the changing of light, the dropping  
Of the silence, wide sleep and solitude  
Of night, in which all motion  
Is beyond us, as the firmament,  
Up-rising and down-falling, bares  
The last largeness, bold to see.

THE PLACE OF THE SOLITAIRES

Let the place of the solitaires  
Be a place of perpetual undulation.  
  
Whether it be in mid-sea  
On the dark, green water-wheel,  
Or on the beaches,  
There must be no cessation

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Of motion, or of the noise of motion,  
The renewal of noise  
And manifold continuation;

And, most, of the motion of thought  
And its restless iteration,

In the place of the solitaires,  
Which is to be a place of perpetual undulation.

THE PALTRY NUDE STARTS ON A SPRING VOYAGE

But not on a shell, she starts,  
Archaic, for the sea.  
But on the first-found weed  
She scuds the glitters,  
Noiselessly, like one more wave.

She too is discontent  
And would have purple stuff upon her arms,  
Tired of the salty harbors,  
Eager for the brine and bellowing  
Of the high interiors of the sea.

The wind speeds her,  
Blowing upon her hands  
And watery back.  
She touches the clouds, where she goes,  
In the circle of her traverse of the sea.

Yet this is meagre play  
In the scurry and water-shine,  
As her heels foam—  
Not as when the goldener nude  
Of a later day

Will go, like the centre of sea-green pomp,  
In an intenser calm,  
Scullion of fate,  
Across the spick torrent, ceaselessly,  
Upon her irretrievable way.

COLLOQUY WITH A POLISH AUNT

*Elle savait toutes les légendes du Paradis et tous les contes  
de la Pologne. Revue des Deux Mondes*

*She*

How is it that my saints from Voragine,  
In their embroidered slippers, touch your spleen?

*He*

Old pantaloons, duenna of the spring!

*She*

Imagination is the will of things . . . .  
Thus, on the basis of the common drudge,  
You dream of women, swathed in indigo,  
Holding their books toward the nearer stars,  
To read, in secret, burning secrecies . . . .

*Wallace Stevens*

STONES FOR RUSSIA

Stones we have, Russia,  
Stones to break your teeth,  
To batter shut your hunger-widened eyes;  
Stones and the silver stab of bayonets,  
The skilled jab, the clubbed gun  
Of our northern-bred guards: these  
We have, Russia. A greeting,  
Russia, to you the groper  
Struggling out of the pit of centuries,  
Uprising from primeval death, groping  
To a dazed, uncertain day; a greeting,  
Russia, drunken one, drunken with misery—  
A greeting with stones!

To you who have known only death till now,  
Russia, a welcome to new torture,  
To life, to a mad fact of living;  
A welcome, Russia, lurching from death's stupidity,  
From torpor, into tortured consciousness; welcome  
By this western people, stones and the butts of guns.  
Which do you wish? Which do you wish,  
Russia, death or this resurrection?

Chosen people, chosen from the sad soil  
To clasp anguished visions where our bland blindness fails;  
*Sufferer of earth's anguish, of the profound fate of being,*

*Baker Brownell*

Finding in primeval murk, in dusky fires, truth.  
Truth, mystic Russia, seeing, seeing! Here are stones.

Misery has wrought you, Russia.  
Your passion sweeps gigantic darkness  
Over our pagan bulbs, our cool illuminations,  
Our peace; and wreaks massive terror. Fear  
Hurls our stones, Russia.  
Dark prophet with unkempt, terrible gesture,  
Envisioned folk, exponent of unknown fate,  
Where is your truth, truth beyond reason, taught you  
By misery, truth unseen to us, feared?

Here are stones, miserable ones,  
Stones to quench your misery; brilliant steel,  
Delicately strong, cruel. A greeting, Russia!

*Baker Brownell*

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JOURNEYS AND DISCOVERIES

CHICAGO

O city of beauty,  
They have spoken without understanding;  
They have called you evil!

O city of beauty,  
Maybe it is only my heart you have shaken  
With your sadness of rose evenings,  
And the shadows falling  
In the misty evening  
Under the bridges.

Your avenues are velvet and symmetrical,  
As speech slow-moving.

O city of beauty,  
I come not with vain enumeration!

For in the untrod night  
I have looked upon your rapt  
Presence.

There was a whiteness  
as of wings stirring.



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WORDS ABOUT LOVE

I cannot tell you what it is waits beyond love;  
Nor what it means, the still hour after.

I can think only of a wide field of poppies afire  
On driven stems, dashed in the gale.

I cannot touch you now.  
I lie beside you chill. My heart has waned cold.  
A high white mountain has breathed upon my heart.

Let us gather out of our thoughts a poppy cloak  
To draw about this strangeness.

I cannot tell you what it is waits beyond love;  
Nor what it means, the still hour after.

JOURNEY

Life is more sweet than I  
Knew: the shifted scene  
Less wavered, more trimmed with light,  
Than the years before.  
Look down. People pass over the ice  
As a file of thin ghosts creep,  
And fade beyond a hill.  
You, and you, and you—  
Small souls, shrinking away.

*Mark Turbyfill*

And you, and you, and you,  
Bearing lights in your hands,  
Approaching eternally. . . . Life is  
More sweet than I knew.

*Mark Turbyfill*

### THE ORCHARD

The swiftness of blown youth, swiftness of death,  
Are in the orchard bloom and blossom-fall.  
And in a little while is none at all  
Of this cool-flaming glory. Like a breath  
Blown on the pane, it fades without a trace  
To dim new leaves that hide the nesting bird.  
I think there is not any quickest word  
So swift as beauty's passing from its place.

Yet we who dwell in love beneath this bough  
Know neither fading nor the falling flower.  
Our immortality is all-secure  
As Beauty's, ruling still the Then and Now,  
Careless what fleeting error stains the hour—  
Child of the fragile phantoms that endure.

*John Towner Frederick*

THREE POEMS

TO MY HEART

*Desiderio captum, sive suo sive aliorum*

Caged bird, prisoner, on thine own heart feeding,  
What shall I say to thee? What comfort is in me  
For thee, whose wings, whose heart, are bleeding, bleeding,  
From the hands that clipped and the unsatisfied mouth  
    feeding  
Angrily, hungrily?

Caged bird, prisoner, insatiately feeding,  
What have they done to thee? whose were the hands that  
    caged thee,  
Clipped thy wings, thy wings, and left them bleeding,  
Pinionless, powerless of flight from the mouth feeding  
Hungrily, wearily?

Caged bird, prisoner, wingless and weary of feeding,  
Whence did they capture thee? what heaven heard thy  
    rapture  
First, ere captivity set thy small heart bleeding,  
Bleeding, unconsumed beneath the sad mouth feeding  
Wearily, ceaselessly?

Caged bird, prisoner, when done thy woeful feeding,  
Whither wilt thou fly? in what deep, what height,

Hide thy maimed body, thy mouth stayed from feeding,  
Thy songless mouth, thy heart bleeding, bleeding  
Deathlessly, hopelessly?

TO HER WHO PASSES

Her footsteps fall in silent sands;  
Her hands are cool like growing leaves;  
The fingers of her hovering hands  
Touch lightly, pass; and time bereaves  
The benison of her caress  
Of peace, or pain, or bitterness.

The kisses of her mouth like dew  
Rain gently down; if she has sinned,  
That she had sinned she never knew;  
Lightly she walks upon the wind,  
And like the wind she leaves no trace  
Upon the quiet of this place.

LOVE IS MORE CRUEL THAN DEATH

*For H*

If your heart's desire were an apple,  
I would place it in your hand;  
From the tree of life I would pluck it  
In Eden land.

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If your heart's desire were a sword of steel,  
I would fashion it in the flame  
And inlay letters upon it  
And a star's name.

If your heart's desire were carven jade,  
I would grave for you with my pen  
The learning and loneliness and yearning  
And wisdom of men.

But your heart's desire is my friend,  
My mother's son, the brother of me,  
The friend I wear in my heart,  
For fair is he;  
He is fair, but far to seek,  
And free.

And I have no power in my hands,  
No help, no healing, no gift for you,  
Nothing, nothing, save no word spoken  
Between us two.

*Maurice Browne*

## DESIRE

*For glad eternities*

*I make no prayer. . . .*

Only to drown in your deep eyes

(Eyes shy and strange, that haunt me night and day),

Leap with the young blood laughing through your veins—

One, one with you, as dew finds at last the sea—

*Thus to the dark gods' knees*

*I bring my prayer!*

*For length of happy days*

*I make no prayer. . . .*

When 'mid the tumult of strange seas

Or on a blood-red field beneath cold stars

Into the dark your glad young soul is blown,

One, one with you—I too, to the unknown goal—

*Thus to dark gods I raise*

*Ever my prayer!*

*Luella Stewart*

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SONG

Blue eyes, brown eyes, green-and-gold eyes,  
Eyes that question, doubt, deny,  
Sudden-flashing, cold, hard, bold eyes—  
Here's your answer: I am I.

Not for you and not for any  
Rode I into Camden town.  
Barkeep, here's my golden penny—  
Come who will and drink it down!

I'm not one to lend and borrow,  
I'm not one to overstay.  
I shall go alone tomorrow  
Whistling, as I came today.

*Floyd Dell*

APPEARANCES

They say that I am out at heels,  
And that my coat is shoddy.  
What would they say if they saw my heart?  
Don't tell anybody!

They say I am a ne'er-do-well,  
Ambitionless and lazy.  
What would they say if they saw my soul?  
Aren't people crazy?

*Marx G. Sabel*

## THE PAINTED SAINT IN THE WOOD

There is a saint in love with God,  
That I often sit and watch  
In the wood; and I cannot believe him,  
For I love what I see and touch.

Yesterday at this time  
Some heavy carts passed by;  
One peasant sang, as he passed,  
A wandering melody.

I was sitting and watching the saint  
Painted in white and red—  
I shall not understand him  
Till I am dead.

## DAWN

Houses, grey and greyish blue,  
With silent sightless eyes,  
Through the dawn press through.  
Light the color of stone  
Peers with pale surprise  
At those who sleep alone.

*M. Lyster*

AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

Come to me at the top of the world,  
O Mine, before the years spill  
All our love into Time's cup  
And give our will to Time's will.

My wide basin is full of starlight,  
My moon is lighted with new fire.  
I have lit every sun in the firmament  
With the hurting flame of my desire.

The worms there in the valley  
Die—to forget death;  
But here at the top of the world  
I laugh under my breath.

There is pain here, beloved,  
And tears, terrible tears;  
But the joys have warm mouths, and the madresses  
Dance downward with the years.

Come to me at the top of the world  
O Mine! The valley is deep;  
The valley is over-full with the dying,  
And with those that sleep;

But here wonderful winds blow,  
And the pines sing—one song.  
Come to me at the top of the world,  
Come quickly—I have waited too long.

NEVER ANY FEAR

I shall never have any fear of love—  
Not of its depth nor its uttermost height,  
Its exquisite pain and its terrible delight.  
Never, never shall I have any fear of love.

I shall never hesitate to go down  
Into the fastness of its abyss,  
Nor shrink from the cruelty of its awful kiss.  
I shall never hesitate to go down.

Never shall I dread love's strength  
Nor any hurt it might give;  
(Tender love is a sick fugitive),  
I shall never dread love's strength.

I shall never draw back from love  
Through fear of its vast pain,  
But build joy of it and count it gain.  
I shall never draw back from love.

I shall never have any fear of love,  
Nor shrink weakly from its touch;  
I have loved too terribly and too much  
Ever to have any fear of love.

*Elsie A. Gidlow*

THE SEARCHLIGHT

The searchlights over London  
Are like the fingers of a woman,  
Wandering over the dead form of a lover.

She had not thought to do that  
While he was living,  
To better know his loveliness;  
Or if she had  
He'd stopped her with his kisses.  
Now in her great grief  
Her fingers are to her  
Sight and sound and hearing.

By all the ways of sense  
She knows him lost to her,  
Yet cannot voice her grief.

Only can she raise white hands towards the heavens,  
And passionate cursings and great grief;  
Yet no sign comes, no portent.  
Oh, if one blistering tear might come from on high  
To crumple up and twist the earth,  
She'd know her nightly passion not so vain—  
When her first pang  
Burst the heavens with howling of guns!

*John Rodker*

## MAURA

### I

Maura dreams unwakened:  
The warm winds touch the bands  
That hold her hair;  
The call of a silver horn floats by;  
A lover tosses flowers into her hands.

Maura dreams unwakened:  
She joins the maidens in their dance,  
Her limbs follow slow rhythms;  
A lover leads her into the shade—  
She moves as in a trance.

### II

What dim confusion  
Troubles her dream?  
What passionate caress  
Disturbs her spirit's rapt seclusion?

Earth draws her close—how warm  
Is lover-earth! Like a sleeping bird  
She gives herself. . . . Then suddenly  
She is a leaf whirled in the storm.

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Somewhere in a quiet room  
Her soul, unstirred,  
Dead,  
Or sleeping,  
Through the blind tumult hears afar  
The note of a horn like a silver thread.  
She has given her soul to an echo's keeping.

III

Who knows the mountain where the hunter rides  
Winding his horn?  
Maura, who heard it in her dream,  
Wakens forlorn,  
Too late to catch the tenuous thread  
Of silver sound  
Which in the intricate, troubled fugue of earth  
Is drowned.

IV

Maura cannot follow over the hill;  
Her youth is land-locked as a hidden pool  
Where thirsty love drinks deep—  
A shining pool where lingers  
The color of an unseen golden sky,  
A pool where echoes fall asleep:

*Marjorie Allen Seiffert*

Until small restless fingers  
Trouble the waters cool,  
Snatch at reflected beauty, and destroy  
The mirrored dream. . . . The pool is never still  
And broken echoes die.

v

The silver call has gone; but there is left to her  
The gentleness of earth,  
The simple mysteries of sleep and death,  
Of love and birth. . . .  
There are faces hungry for smiles, and starving fingers  
Reaching for dreams.

And like a memory are the wind-swept chords of night,  
And the wide melody of evening sky  
Where gleams  
A color like the echo of a horn.  
There is a far hill where winds die,  
And over the hill lies music yet unborn.

VI

Maura lies dead at last;  
The body she gave to child and lover  
Now feeds flower and tree.

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Earth's arms are wide to her . . . what breast  
Offers such gentle sleeping?  
Her limbs lie peacefully.

From the dark West  
Comes down a note like the echoing cry  
Of one who rides through the dusk alone  
After the hunt sweeps by.

It fades—the night wind is forlorn—  
Music is still:  
But Maura has followed the silver horn  
Over the distant hill,  
Over the hill where all winds die.

TWO DESIGNS

A JAPANESE VASE WROUGHT IN METALS

Five harsh black birds in shining bronze come crying  
Into a silver sky.  
Piercing and jubilant is the shape of their flying;  
Their beaks are pointed with delight,  
Curved sharply with desire.  
The passionate direction of their flight,  
Clear and high,

Stretches their bodies taut like humming wire.  
The cold wind blows into angry patterns the jet-bright  
Feathers of their wings;  
Their claws curl loosely, safely, about nothingness—  
They clasp no things.  
Direction and desire they possess,  
By which in sharp, unswerving flight they hold  
Across an iron sea to the golden beach  
Whereon lies carrion, their feast: a shore of gold  
That birds wrought on a vase can never reach.

LORENZO'S BAS-RELIEF FOR A FLORENTINE CHEST

Lust is the oldest lion of them all  
And he shall have first place;  
With a malignant growl satirical  
To curve in foliations prodigal  
Round and around his face,  
Extending till the echoes interlace  
With Pride and Prudence, two cranes gaunt and tall.

Four lesser lions crouch and malign the cranes.  
Cursing and gossiping, they shake their manes,  
While from their long tongues leak  
Drops of thin venom as they speak:  
The cranes, unmoved, peck grapes and grains  
From a huge cornucopia, which rains

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A plenteous meal from its antique  
Interior, a note quite curiously Greek.

And nine long serpents twist  
And twine, twist and twine—  
A riotously beautiful design  
Whose elements consist  
Of eloquent spirals, fair and fine,  
Embracing cranes and lions, who exist  
Seemingly free, yet tangled in that living vine.

And in this chest shall be  
Two cubic metres of space,  
Enough to hold all memory  
Of you and me. . . . .  
And this shall be the place  
Where silence shall embrace  
Our bodies, and obliterate the trace  
Our souls made on the purity  
Of night. . . . .

Now lock the chest, for we  
Are dead, and lose the key!

*Marjorie Allen Seiffert*

## COMMENT

### WHAT NEXT?

THE October number always brings "food for thought" to the editors of POETRY. This one, marking the magazine's seventh birthday, may be said to close a mystic cycle and shut its gate behind us. Therefore it is a moment appropriate, not for reminiscence, but for projection. We may inquire as to what is coming in this art—this persistent and imperishable art which the human race, at certain seasons, for certain periods, tries in vain to forget.

To begin with the technique, we suspect that more, rather than less, freedom of form is coming. It seems a quaint reaction that certain sages should be shouting, "Free verse is dead!" The sculptor might as well say that marble is dead, or the painter that oil colors are in their grave; bronze for the one and tempera for the other to be hereafter the only wear. Mr. Mencken's recent eloquent *hic jacet* for free verse doesn't last through the article which rears it, for he resurrects Sandburg and Oppenheim—a queer combination!—to overthrow the head-stone. If these two free-versifiers must continue to live, what becomes of Mr. Mencken's case? And are his epitaphs for Amy Lowell, and Masters, and Lindsay (why Lindsay in the free-verse *galère*?) based on critical ground more solid than Ezra Pound's epitaph for Milton?

One is moved often to wonder at the narrowness of the field still generally accorded to poets (in spite of our seven-

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year campaign!), as compared with the ample kingdoms reigned over by the other arts. A musical composer may choose between song, sonata, symphony, étude, rhapsody; between violin, piano, harp, drum, saxophone, jaz band or the whole grand orchestra; between soprano, contralto, tenor, bass, or combinations of these in duet, quartette, chorus or opera. The painter, from thumb-sketch to the decoration of a palace; the sculptor, from an ivory netsuke to a granite quadriga; the architect, from a log-cabin to a state-house: all these have space to dream in and the choice of a thousand modes. But the poet!— his domain was rigidly bounded by the ancients, and therein must he follow appointed paths. Epic, tragedy, comedy; ode, ballad, lyric—these he must serve up in proper blank verse or rhyme according to established forms and measures. And woe be to him if he break through hedges and try to sprint for the wilds!

No, as men release themselves from materialism and demand more and more from the arts, the arts must become more immediately responsive, their forms more fluid. Poetry especially can not wear the corsets, or even the chlamys, of an elder fashion. As Burton Roscoe put it in the *Chicago Tribune*:

Poetry is a succession of revitalizations, the introduction of novelty in an effort to escape anæmia: from the odic modifications of Horace, to the invention of rhyme, to the displacement of Pope's couplets, to the breaking of the tenuous and unwieldy alexandrine by Hugo, to its further splintering by Verlaine, to the eruption of Whitman, and to the forms of the present day.

Granted that much of the new poetry is bad, that it is unmusical, that it is graced neither by emotion nor by beauty, that it will perish in the oblivion that claims all bad stuff—and even much

that is good. What of it? The same is quite as true of poetry in the older established forms.

Shall we, who listen eagerly to Prokofieff, refuse to Wallace Stevens a hearing for his subtle and haunting compositions, as if with wood-wind instruments, in the present number?—rhythms as heavy with tragic beauty as a bee with the honey of purple roses! Shall we disdain Emanuel Carnevali's splashing rhapsody of last month because it isn't a sonata, nor yet a proper Miltonic ode? Shall not Vachel Lindsay play the organ, or even a jaz band, at his pleasure?—and is it for us to prescribe for him the harp or the flute? Hasn't Amy Lowell as much right as Bach to write a fugue of tumbling rhymes and elaborate interwoven harmonies? And shall Ezra Pound, composing nocturnes and fantasias as delicate as Chopin's, be reminded that the public prefers Strauss waltzes? Should Carl Sandburg, with a modern piano under his fingers, be restricted to Mozart's spinnet? May not Cloyd Head assail the Shakespearian tradition, even as Debussy assailed the Beethoven tradition, with modern tragedies as close in texture, and as mystically expressive of our innermost feeling and dream, as the Frenchman's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*? And shall Edgar Lee Masters, who, of all our modern poets, has the most epic vision—shall he be denied free symphonic range within his large horizon, even though staccato poets and careful critics object to his smashing paces?

One might pursue the analogy further. Is it a violin of finest quality that H. D. plays? Is Richard Aldington's *Choricos* sung from some high place to the thrilling notes of

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a harp? Does Carlos Williams prefer piccolo solos with whimsical twists and turns of half-humorous melody? Does H. L. Davis breathe through the wood-winds music of a mournful mysterious Brahms-like beauty? If Edna Millay sings to the lyre, and Sara Teasdale to the lute, must we be deaf to the delicately emotional lyric solos played on a reed by such younglings as Mark Turbyfill or A. Y. Winters—tunes of thistle-down texture? And shall the full poetic orchestra of the future be confined to the instruments, and the melodic methods, of Elizabeth's time, or Queen Anne's, or Victoria's, or even of all three?

Yes, we might pursue the analogy into wearisome detail, but enough has been said to present our point, which is, that the poetry of the future must have more freedom instead of less; and that, if the public is less tolerant of new methods in poetry than in music, painting or sculpture, it is because it is less educated in modern poetry than in the other modern arts—less educated and more obstinately prejudiced. When Leo Ornstein plays at a modern symphony concert, he confronts an audience which has been carefully led up to his iconoclasm through years of the most expert music both classical and modern. He gets intelligent sympathy from a large proportion of that audience, and the praise or dispraise they give him is based on knowledge. But when Wallace Stevens or Cloyd Head or H. L. Davis faces a modern poetry audience, most of his readers are as full of the past as the *Quarterly Review* was in the time of Keats, as firm for aesthetic canons and sanctities.

The public, we protest, should educate itself in this art and be less cock-sure in its verdicts. "To have read *Hia-watha* in the eighth grade" does not make a competent connoisseur, and one may not turn down the imagists because one can't scan them in finger-counted iambics. Poetry may be on the way toward as great variety as modern music enjoys, whether in the number, length and placing of notes (syllables) in the bar (the foot); in variety of rhythmic phrasing; in tempo—from *andante* to *scherzo*; in movement—from *staccato* to *legato*; in tone-color, timbre, and the countless other refinements which should make poetry, like music, infinitely expressive of the emotional life of our age. Music is a much younger art than poetry, yet in a few centuries it has gone far beyond poetry in the development and recording of rhythms. Music has had the two advantages of a universal language and a scientific system of putting on paper tune, pitch, rhythm, tempo, and all other details required for complete presentation; whereas poetry has been hampered by language-isolation, and by an antiquated system of metrics—a mediaeval survival in this scientific age, as empirical and misleading as astrology. Professor Patterson of Columbia is almost the first investigator to make a scientific study of speech-rhythms; and it may be reasonably hoped that such work as his will aid the poet of the future to study the past with more knowledge, to rid himself of hampering and artificial restrictions, and to discover new possibilities of beauty in his art.

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Indeed, we may look forward with some confidence to a widening of its range. Poetry is like to be recognized more generally as a vocal art, and to be used much more than formerly in connection with music and the dance, both lyrically and dramatically. In spite of postponements and disappointments, one may hope for a proud future, perhaps an almost immediate future, for the poetic drama. And this, if it comes, will bring poetry into close connection with the sister arts of color—whether in pigments, lights or costumes; and modelling—whether of sculpturesque or architectural forms; as well as the dance and music. It is more than probable that some poetic plays of the future will be produced with more or less static mimes, or even with puppets; for the pitiful incongruities of life, whether for tragedy or comedy, can be very appealingly suggested through such a conventionalization of the actor.

Thus there would seem to be good reason to hope for a richer period in the not distant future of poetic art in America. If much has been gained during the last seven years, we have reached merely a new viewpoint toward wider horizons. No art is static—it must go on or retreat. The poets must make the art more necessary to the people, a more immediate and spontaneous expression of their life, their dream. A people imaginatively creative enough to invent a telephone, an airplane, to build great bridges and skyscraper towers, is full of the spirit of poetry—the poets have only to set it free.

H. M.

THAT BOOKSHELF

There has been much talk about the "book-shelf of modern poetry" which Miss Lowell has made up for Doubleday, Page & Co. Of course, the omissions stir up the critics more than the inclusions, and Llewellyn Jones, of the *Chicago Evening Post*, lists thirty-two neglected names.

Well, any "definitive list" is like to be a joke to the next age; so each of us should imitate Miss Lowell's and Mr. Jones' hardihood by making up his own shelf of modern poets, and should then prove too eager a reader to keep the volumes shelved. Miss Lowell's list is somewhat narrowed by its intentional direct reference to the present American market, volumes out of print or unpublished in this country being excluded. Thus since its first appearance the names of Eunice Tietjens and Adelaide Crapsey have been added because of new editions of their books. Also, the list, being made up, no doubt, not for the use of specialists but to help create a larger public for modern poetry, must be regarded as *non-controversial*, as omitting certain names, certain volumes, which would be too "strong," in one way or another, for libraries or other purchasers.

Perhaps one should pause first to question that unlucky adjective "definitive"—surely more than Miss Lowell bargained for!—which has been tagged to the list by enthusiastic advertisers, and taken up by purveyors of literary news. And this ticketing adjective is symptomatic of the advertising effort which is being made to standardize the taste of a single

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individual among the libraries and other purchasers, and thus impose it on the public. The American tendency to get together and accept things ready-made, however convenient in business affairs, and economical of human brains, is hardly fortunate in aesthetics. And in the case of this list it works injustice to certain poets who are unmentioned and others who are over-emphasized; as well as to the readers of poetry who should make up their own minds.

Let us see how far we agree with it. The omission of Yeats and Hardy may be passed over because the list is hardly intended to stress names so important and long established. Of the more modern moderns, the most conspicuous omission is of course Ezra Pound; the list, minus his name, may not be quite "*Hamlet* without *Hamlet*," but it is obviously and curiously incomplete. If POETRY were to make a book-shelf, Pound's books would surely be on it, also Hueffer's *On Heaven*, Eliot's *Prufrock*, Kreymborg's *Plays for Poem-mimes* and also *Mushrooms*, Carlos Williams' *Al Que Quiere*, one or two of Arthur Ficke's volumes, Edith Wyatt's *Wind in the Corn*, and Tagore's *Gitanjali* and *The Gardener*, not to speak of the editors' own dearly beloved books; and, unless the shelf were very short, we should find space for certain small volumes by Frederic Manning, Robert Nichols, Harold Monro and Edward Thomas: all the above, except possibly Messrs. Eliot and Monro, having been published in America. And we should have to make an impromptu sheaf of as many of Wallace Stevens' poems as we could collect from POETRY

and a few other magazines; a fact which leads to the admission that POETRY'S fourteen volumes constitute, in themselves, a very good bookshelf of modern poetry.

It will be observed that our list of omissions is not so long as Mr. Jones', and Miss Lowell may feel that she has partly atoned for some of them by including *The New Poetry*, which contains certain poems by most of the omitted. Mr. Jones would place a number of British poets on his shelf—Abercrombie, Bottomley, Davies, Flecker, Flint, Hewlett, and ten or twelve others, some of whom, except for *Georgian Verse*, have not been published in America; but we rather agree with Miss Lowell that their volumes are not indispensable on a distinctively and representatively modern shelf.

So much for Miss Lowell's omissions. As for her inclusions, we are mostly with her. However, POETRY'S shelf could get along without Louis Untermeyer's books of verse, and without Bradley's *Old Christmas*, Drinkwater's *Poems*, Oppenheim's *War and Laughter*, Willard Wattles' *Lanterns in Gethsemane*; and it would certainly substitute Lowes' *Convention and Revolt* for Professor Phelps' amiably incompetent volume. Also, we should include only the earlier two of the three books each accorded to John Gould Fletcher and Witter Bynner; we should choose more closely among Gibson's *Collected Poems*; we should add Lindsay's first book, and Masters' latest one, to the two accorded to them; and we should prefer Margaret Widde-mer's first book, *Factories*, to her prize-winner.

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But today's list will be too easily shattered tomorrow for us to set it up in cold type. Already certain voices seem to be fading into the distance, and new ones are sounding ahead of us. Poetry?—it is a perfume wafted from fields beyond us.

H. M.

### REVIEWS

#### RECENT FRENCH POETRY

*Europe*, by Jules Romains. *Nouvelle Revue Française*. *Le Secret*, by André Spire. *Nouvelle Revue Française*. *La Vierge et les Sonnets*, by Francis Jammes. *Mercure de France*. *Les Enchanteurs*, by Paul Fort. *Mercure de France*. *Barbe Bleue, Jeanne d'Arc et Mes Amours*, by Paul Fort. *Chansons à la Gauloise*, by Paul Fort. Fasquelle.

After a long period during which the production of books in France was severely restricted and the subject of those published was almost exclusively war, Paris has again begun to issue works which are of literary rather than of topical interest. It is safe to say that never before has nationalism so possessed a nation, never before has everything, every effort, not concentrated on the one object of national defence, been so severely discountenanced as in France during the past years. Literature has tried to make some show and books not on the war have been published; but the public mind was so obsessed by this one subject that hardly anything else was thought of. The greatest popular literary

success of the last five years—Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu*—was purely a war book. Georges Duhamel has already protested against this fashion, asking plaintively how many more "poets" are going to tell him that the line ran from Switzerland to the sea! The same phenomenon occurred in England, where an incredible number of books of war poems fell still-born from the press.

But the war is too big a thing to be shelved. Duhamel himself has written three books about it and in a recent manifesto the writers of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* protested against any dillettante ignoring of the problems of war. So it will be found that even the finest minds in France are still pre-occupied with this subject, and if they protest it is against a misuse, an exploitation for cheap or trivial purposes, of the calamity. All the books of poetry published during the "armistice period" and here noticed will be found to be affected by the war in varying degrees.

M. Romain's *Europe* was first issued in 1916 in a very limited edition, so that this second publication is for all practical purposes the first. He has written a reflective, rather aloof sort of book, yet a book full of emotional pleading. He is against war, he is passionately against war; so much so that he seems to take its existence as almost a personal affront. He is emphatically free from that dangerous and rather contemptible passion "civilian war-fever," and he has not the resentment and detailed knowledge of a soldier like Barbusse or of a military doctor like Duhamel. He writes as a civilized spectator raising an unheeded voice

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in protest, like an old lady in a street fight. It is curious, as one critic has acutely remarked, that of all the "groups" which offer themselves to the Unanimiste poet the nation has been most neglected by M. Romain. Is it an accident or choice? One would have thought that the psychology and passions of a nation at war would have given an Unanimiste a singularly rich subject. M. Romain has chosen not the small coherent group, France, but the large conflicting group, Europe. The choice is significant.

It cannot be denied that M. Romain has written a fine book, without clap-trap and sentimentality and egoism, a book which, though "difficult" and subtle, escapes the deadly vice of declamation which is the cardinal fault of so much modern French writing. Rhetoric, stupid cold rhetoric, is as much a danger to French poets as decorative adjectives and pomposity are the dangers of the Shakespearean tradition of English poetry. *Europe* is not a book for an ardent militarist, but it is a book admired by soldiers who have returned from hell a little disillusioned by the experience.

Je témoigne que le soldat,  
Qui vient de reposer son verre,  
Ne veut pas entrer dans la gare,  
Ne veut pas monter dans le train.

Il ne veut pas qu'un wagon morne  
Le bouscule toute la nuit;  
Il ne veut pas qu'on le réveille  
Sous un hangar plein de caissons.

Il ne veut pas d'un tas de paille  
Dans la mesure bombardée,  
Ni de l'encoignure de glaise  
Qui se dérobe sous les reins.

Il n'a ni haine ni courage  
Et pas une bribe de joie,  
Bien qu'il ait bu dès le matin,  
L'ivresse lui est refusée. . . . .  
Ce qu'il veut—à en défaillir,  
A s'en laisser couler par terre—  
C'est être chez lui, ce soir même,  
Chez lui, dans la pièce du fond. . . . .

M. Spire's *Le Secret* is less didactic in purpose and much less "of the war" than *Europe*, a large portion of it having been written before August, 1914. This book, which contains many delicate little poems that might be called "imagist," and some bitter war poems, is a good example of what poetry generally has gained and lost by the war. M. Spire has lost gaiety, a warm sense of life, delight in beauty; he has gained energy, harshness, cynicism. Like many other poets he is tending towards satire. (The poetry of the next decade will very largely be satirical.) There is a disgust, a disillusion, in Europe generally, significant and terrible; any art which is disinterested, which seeks only to create beauty, is doomed to meet indifference if not hostility.

M. Spire is a poet of great talent, and his work is being slowly recognized in France. He works quietly; he has none of those tricks of "literary strategy" which secure the momentary interest of a large public continuously yearning for the "latest stunt;" he has produced a body of fine careful poetry which will outlast many more clamorous works. This is a short specimen of his pre-war manner:

Volupté de regarder le soir  
Couvrir de velours prunelle  
Les batailles du cap et de la mer;

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Volupté de contempler la nuit,  
Et, dans ses clignotantes lumières,  
De voir rire les yeux d'un enfant;

Volupté de penser, volupté de parler,  
Parfois de ne pas dire tout ce qu'on pourrait dire,  
D'avoir dans son cœur plus d'un coin secret. . . .

This is his later manner :

On tue, on assassine!  
Ce n'est pas ton affaire, crois-tu,  
Pense à ta petite besogne,  
Et fais-y ton gain si tu peux.

Cache-nez, chandails, chaussures,  
Piles de poches, bougeoirs de tranchées,  
Chaussettes, plastrons, couvertures,  
Savon en tubes, alcool solide,  
Voilà ton petit domaine;  
Fais-y ton gain si tu peux.

Calcule, calcule juste—  
Un gramme, un centimètre, un centime  
De plus ou de moins change tout.

Tes fils tuent, on les assassine—  
Fais-y ton gain si tu peux.

The difference needs no insistence. Speaking personally, I hope that M. Spire will not proceed with satire, though as things are it seems fairly hopeless to desire a return to his former and more happy style.

Readers of POETRY will be familiar with the name of Francis Jammes. He has been praised for a certain simplicity of style and freedom from rhetoric. Books like *Le Triomphe de la Vie* and *De l'Angélus de l'Aube à l'Angélus du Soir* were admirable as pictures of life. M. Jammes was a poet who could be realistic without being either dry or

slap-dash. The "was" is significant; in recent years he has become more and more absorbed in religion; his realism tends to the vapid, his simplicity seems artificial, his emotion has slipped imperceptibly into sentimentality. M. Jammes can still write—the English-speaking countries have no poet of his calibre in his genre. But whether one is brutalized by the war, or tired of his repetitions, or whatever cause, he now appears singularly lacking in charm and *éclat*. *La Vierge et les Sonnets* has had a fairly large sale (four or five editions), but there is no life in it as in the earlier Jammes. The following sonnet is a fairly average specimen, neither better nor worse than a score of others:

C'est Dieu que j'invoquais sur ma flûte rustique.  
Il est venu par le doux chemin villageois,  
Ainsi qu'un laboureur, tout au long d'un pavois  
De campanule et d'angélique.

Il est venu par le blé mûr des catholiques.  
Les perdrix, les enfants le rappelaient à la fois.  
Les joubarbes faisaient, aux descentes des toits,  
Des sculptures de basilique.

Au-dessus des fronts ceints de neige et de douceur  
On lisait tout en or sur la pauvre bannière:  
"O mon fils! donne-moi ton cœur!"

Et, voyant ruisseler ces mots dans la lumière,  
Je répondais, comme en silence font les fleurs:  
"Donnez-moi votre cœur, O Père!"

Last on the list come three books by the indefatigable Paul Fort. M. Fort is probably one of the best known of living French poets. It is certain that he has written some good books, among which *Le Roman de Louis XI*

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wears better than any. But these last three books are rather a disappointment. The poet seems to be tired, as if he were forcing himself to write. He produces in such quantities that the reader grows fatigued and bewildered. Three books in a year; twenty-five books in twenty years; rather an overpowering output! So many of these recent poems are merely pleasant words; so few are really stirring; none have any "evidences of immortality." There is no need for quotation. Everyone has read something of Paul Fort; well, he has just done the same thing over again.

This review, although concerned only with acknowledged writers, will probably seem pessimistic. André Spire's pre-war poems seem to me the best of the lot; the rest are all *distracts*, weary, without energy. These men have nothing new to say, and the war seems to have brought them only disillusion and bitterness. What the next months will bring from France one cannot tell, but in spite of many signs of activity there appears to be little worthy of the tradition of French literature.

*Richard Aldington*

BENÉT AND THE ZODIAC

*The Burglar of the Zodiac*, by William Rose Benét. Yale University Press.

Among American poets, Mr. Benét has a genre all his own: he is a prestidigitator making magic with unflinching precision and adroitness. His readers sit in the audience immensely entertained, "pretending" as docilely as a child that

the show going on before them is not play-acting but reality. And, just as the prestidigitator's magic of cards and mirrors and colored veils is symbolic of the huge inexplicable magic of the universe, so one may infer large meanings, tragic dignities, behind this poet's tossing of balls and waving of gay-colored scarfs.

He knows there are dark pits and flashing heights, but he does not dare look into them, for that way madness lies. "Blake was mad, they say," he confesses:

I, they say, am sane, but no key of mine unlocks  
One lock of one gate wherethrough heaven's glory is freed.  
And I stand and hold my breath, daylong, yearlong,  
Out of comfort and easy dreaming evermore starting awake.  
Yearning beyond all sanity for some echo of that Song  
Of Songs that was sung to the soul of the madman, Blake.

"Comfort and easy dreaming"—that is what one finds in this book, in all Mr. Benét's books. It is

A wraith-like script that curiously  
Seemed to write "Romance" when its seething glitter ate  
Into the dark.

The book writes "Romance" on everything—on the quick-lunch counter, the movies, cowboy riders, city smoke, skyscrapers, Sunday holidays; it ties them up to Haroun-al-Raschid, Pegasus, Jaldabaoth, and all the other creatures of dream who, of course, are not more wildly incredible. Rarely does the poet stop to think or even to question—why should he when just ahead,

I'll open my eyes on a flashing horn  
And see the Unicorn!

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He even scorns his cynic neighbor at the movies who, cold to "these obvious heart-throbs" of the crowd, rages at them and

Their maudlin mess of hopes and fears,  
Blind to all proud insurgent art  
And the subtle nobilities of the heart.

The poet answers:

Here is the pith of all budded theme,  
Man's glamorous fundamental dream.

Not quite "man's fundamental dream" is revealed in this book. Whatever the poet suspects in regard to the voyage, he is content to stay safely ashore and send out paper boats. But some of these are iridescent in the sunlight, and sail away bravely. *The Singing Skyscrapers* should be quoted entire, for although New York is gathering a large anthology, this poem is the most spectacular tribute of all to

The city that is Heaven,  
The city that is Hell.

The poet hears them all singing—the Flatiron, the Metropolitan, the Singer Building, the Woolworth tower:

Ninevah they sang,  
New York they sang!  
In surcoats of stone,  
Like huge knights at vigil,  
Each alone  
Sealed with the sigil  
Of the glories of the Throne  
That wakes this Memnonian  
Music eternal  
In the clay and the compost,  
The steel, the stone.

Probably this poem was written before the erection of the most beautiful tower in New York, that of the Bush Terminal Building on West Forty-first street. But that deserves a poem all its own, and Carl Sandburg—let us whisper the news—has written it.

As "the burglar of the zodiac," Mr. Benét has made a rattling good haul. H. M.

CLEMENT WOOD'S NEW BOOK

*The Earth Turns South*, by Clement Wood. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Mr. Wood's poetry is never fierce, though the paper wrapper of the book proclaims him "fiercely fond of this blossoming earth of ours." His is a placid and reflective muse, pleasant, philosophical, sometimes prosy; but never violent. He is an optimistic poet, a gentleman and scholar, not one of those haunted souls who are so bewitched by beauty and mystery that they are "like to die of it." *The Earth Turns South* makes a varied offering of love poems, nature poems, philosophical poems, and some for which I can find no other adjective than "cosmic." These are the slowest reading. There are some charming lyrics, and I find Mr. Wood at his best when he sings simple songs in rhyme. He has a delicacy of feeling fitted for such expression, but his emotion is spread too thin when it covers the entire astronomical universe. It was startling to find so enchanting a love poem as *The Silver Way* hidden among so many poems which though dignified and thoughtful, are hardly stimulat-

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ing. It is too long to print entire, so I quote only the last part of it:

Silent you sleep—  
The black womb of the sky  
Aches to push forth its silver child.

I am the thin sickle edge of light,  
Cleaving the darkness to you.

I am the round silver eye,  
Rapt with your helpless beauty.

I am the golden arms stretched down  
From the late low moon,  
Lifting you.

It is the darkness. . . .  
And we are one.

The Negro poems are excellently done. Besides the faithful transcription of the dialect there is a keen knowledge of Negro psychology. But they are not as imaginative as Lindsay nevertheless. There is very little of the provocative in Mr. Wood's art. Though there is no doubt in anyone's mind after reading the book that he does love earth, he doesn't make his feeling sing for us. There is frequently an infelicity of expression, and not enough steam up to carry us over the jounce. We stop, discomfited.

The book is the expression of a contented and happy spirit, sometimes seeking, but always finding a solution.

Pass on, up-spiraling earth!  
What seeds you have, you will bring to fruitage,  
O lonely, grey-misted wanderer,  
Warmed by the dying glow of the sun,  
Steered and steering to the hidden next of things!

With this stanza Mr. Wood brings his book to a close. It would be cruel to wish that he should experience sorrow, or tragic, bewildering perplexity; yet from calm certitude, or willing quiescence such as his, no great poetry can be born.

*Marjorie Allen Seiffert*

WHEAT AND CHAFF

*First Poems*, and *Second Poems*, by Edwin Curran. Published by the author, Zanesville, Ohio.

Two years ago the first of these sheaves arrived, reminding us of a poem by its author which POETRY had printed. Unfortunately the thin pamphlet disappeared, and an order for another brought no result, so it was left to Louis Untermeyer to say the first word of praise. Now the coming of a second sheaf, and the resurrection of the first, enables us to offer a long-delayed welcome to a poet of promise.

The welcome is not easily phrased, because the poet is so incredibly crude; because the second sheaf, like the first, contains utterly conscienceless banalities which the author of certain fine passages should be incapable of. Apparently he is too isolated, or too self-willed, to accept training or to discipline himself; and thus it is doubtful whether he will ever hammer out a serviceable technique, or learn certain first principles of poetic art. Here is a quatrain, one of many which are quite unworthy of a ten-year-old child:

The world is safe at last for peace,  
Safe upon the land and seas;  
Safe for love and dreams and arts.  
Praised by God from all our hearts!

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Yet this mars a *Victory Song* which has some swinging lines—these about guns, for example:

    Their great tongues sleep,  
    And they bay no more  
    In the chase, or leap  
    To the hunt of war!

Hardly a poem, in either pamphlet, runs to the end without tripping, though many contain passages one would like to save from the rest. Like this from *Autumn*:

    What grief, what crying of the dead,  
    Has brought this sorrow on the world!

*A Cemetery in France*, from the second volume, has passages of vivid beauty, and asks less blue-pencilling than most of the poems. We quote over half of it:

Dawn takes the everlasting skies  
And shoulders out the stars; and eyes  
Of night are closed; and, dreaming,  
The sunbeams gallop gleaming  
Upon the wings of the morning. Light  
Has set upon the hills its white  
And beautiful wonder. There is peace  
Among a thousand silences.

Winds pace in the clouds, and the dew  
Is dripping over the edge of the blue  
From off the eaves of heaven. Deep  
Are the woodland shadows where they sleep.  
Against the lily and the rose,  
And fair is the meadow where blows  
The star flowers. Love has found  
The shadows that lie under the ground.

A hill tips to the sky with its dead:  
A slope of crosses in marching silver stairs  
That walk to the heaven in snowy pairs  
And step off into the blue overhead.

*Wheat and Chaff*

They hear the sweet high voice of the sky  
Sing the west wind, and the golden mirth  
Of soft rain when the fourth month with a cry  
Puts its great heart down against the earth.

Here Laughter combs back her radiant hair  
And Love has tossed her music high. Fair  
Beauty dreams near, but what to these  
Is all the wonder of eternities?  
For they know not, and dream but less,  
Lost in their darkling wilderness.

Let them sleep. They love us. We love them.  
It is enough that they have fought and died.  
Their glory is their monument above them,  
They are at peace and satisfied.

This poem is the best, and the least marred, that Mr. Curran has done as yet. Much may be hoped of a young man who can achieve its quality and melody. *H. M.*

A YOUNG LONDON POET

*Linnets in the Slums*, by Marion Pryce. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford; Longmans Green & Co., New York.

I hope Marion Pryce is young, for her book contains the promise of future achievement rather than assured poetry. So many influences seem at work here, that the authentic voice of the poet is only felt as an expiring breath overlaid with outside influences. Yet the book is of much interest, in showing that contemporary verse may be as formative to the youthful poet as the usual classical foundation without which, it is assumed, no poetry can possibly be written.

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I do not, of course, mean that Miss Pryce has ignored the past; but the vitality of her stuff, where it occurs, seems to me to be due more to modern than classical influences. Though still retaining conventional forms, save in rare instances, reminiscences of Browning, Aldington and the "Georgians" occur constantly, and between and around such recurrences, but hardly definite as yet, the voice of the poet is audible.

Out of the usual somewhat mediocre *mélange* of the average first book, emerge *The Yellow Trees*, *The Lemur*, *Love Swallow* and *The Landlady*; and from these one may with almost assured certainty predict for the poet a place among the "major minor" poets of her time. *Love Swallow* is quite as good as some things in the Georgian Anthology (and those not the most trivial), while *The Landlady*, developed as a *veine* and tightened up, would certainly put the "new school" on her track. It is of course entirely absurd to predict in so uncertain an art as poetry; but, given the necessary application and the eternal "tightening," Miss Pryce must make her mark.

John Rodker

### OUR CONTEMPORARIES

#### "POETRY AND DRAMA" REDIVIVUS

It is a pleasure to welcome *The Monthly Chapbook*, a new series of *Poetry and Drama*, the English quarterly, which was obliged to suspend publication at the beginning of the war. The new magazine, like the old, is edited by

Harold Monro and published by the Poetry Bookshop. The first number, July, which reached us at the end of August, is entitled *Twenty-three New Poems by Contemporary Poets* (evidently the "twenty-three" carries no perverse magic in England!).

The first issue has a distinctly Georgian flavor, although two or three of the twenty-three poets have been more conspicuous hitherto on the Blackwell lists than those of the Poetry Bookshop. Among the better known names are H. D., Messrs. Lawrence, de la Mare, Sturge Moore, Sassoon, Nichols, Monro, Davies, Manning, Flint and Aldington.

#### NOTES

Mr. Wallace Stevens, who is a lawyer residing in Hartford, Conn., has contributed to certain of the special magazines during the last five years, but has not yet published a volume. Three years ago the staff of POETRY awarded the prize in its play contest to his one-act play, *Three Travellers Watch a Sunrise*, printed in POETRY for July, 1916.

Mr. Maurice Brown, who is now living in Seattle, has published one or two books of verse through the Samurai Press.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert (Mrs. Otto S.), of Moline, Ill., will soon publish, through Alfred A. Knopf, her first book of verse.

Mr. John Rodker, of London, who is the present foreign editor of *The Little Review*, will soon issue, through his Ovid Press, a new book of poems.

Mr. Mark Turbyfill, of Chicago, and Mr. Baker Brownell, of St. Charles, Ill., both recently demobilized from the army, have appeared in POETRY and one or two other magazines, but not yet in volumes.

Mr. Floyd Dell, of New York, is well known as one of the editors of *The Liberator*, and Mr. John Towner Frederick as the editor of *Midland*, published at Moorhead, Minn.

Four poets are new to our readers:

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Miss Elsie A. Gidlow, born in England about 1900, has lived since childhood in Montreal and contributed only to local papers.

Miss Luella Stewart, now in the civil service in Brooklyn, has written more or less for newspapers and popular magazines.

Mr. Marx G. Sabel, a lawyer of Jacksonville, Florida, has published verse in the special magazines.

M. Lyster is the pseudonym of an English poet who has appeared in *The Egoist* and other papers.

The editor regrets the misprint on the cover of the September number, whereby Miss Lowell's group was falsely entitled. The line should have read *A Group of Short Poems*.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

*Poems, with Fables in Prose*, by Herbert Trench. (Two volumes.)

E. P. Dutton & Co.

*Blue Smoke*, by Karle Wilson Baker. Yale University Press.

*Legends of the New World*, by William H. Babcock. Richard G. Badger.

*Singing Places*, by Margaret Barber Bowen. Cornhill Co.

*Songs of a Golden Age and Other Poems*, by Elizabeth F. Sturtevant. Richard G. Badger.

*Echoes of the Great*, by Blanche Finkle Gile. Richard G. Badger.

*Jehovah, God of Battles, Up to Date*, by Harvey M. Watts. John C. Winston Co., Phila.

*The Hills o' Hope*, by Will D. Muse. Privately printed, Memphis, Tenn.

*The Second Poems*, by Edwin Curran. Privately printed, Zanesville, O.

#### PROSE AND PLAYS:

*Judith—A Play in Three Acts*, by Arnold Bennett. Geo. H. Doran Co.

*The New Poetry—A Study Outline*, prepared by Mary Prescott Parsons. H. W. Wilson Co.

*Mummary*, by Gilbert Cannan. Geo. H. Doran Co.

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