CONTENTS

The Death of Agrippina . . John G. Neihardt

Editorial Comment
TRADITION—IN DANGER—POETIC
PROSE AND VERS LIBRE

Reviews—Notes and Announcements

543 Cass Street, Chicago

Copyright 1913 by Harriet Monroe. All rights reserved
The University of Chicago Library

Gift of
Robert Scholes

on Behalf of the
Modernist Journals Project
THE DEATH OF AGrippina

I

[The courtyard of the Imperial villa at Baiae. A moonlit night in late March. Occupying the left half of background is seen a portion of the villa. A short, broad flight of steps leads through the arched doorway to a pillared hall beyond, vague, but seeming vast in the uncertain lights that flicker in the draught. To the right of the doorway is a broad open window at the height of a man’s head from the courtyard. An urn stands near window in the shadow to the right. From within harp music is heard, threading the buzzing merriment of a banquet that is being given to celebrate Nero’s reconciliation with his mother. To the right of stage a glimpse of the moonlit sea is caught through trees.]

[Enter from left, walking toward the sea, Anicetus and the Captain of a galley.]

Captain. [Pointing toward sea.] Yon lies the galley weltering in the moon.
A fair ship!—like a lady in a swoon
Of languid passion. Never fairer craft
Flung the green rustle of her skirts abaft
And wooed the dwindling leagues!

Anicetus. A boat's a boat!
And were she thrice the fairest keel afloat,
Tonight she founders, sinks—make sure of that!

Captain. And all to drown one lean imperial cat
With claws and teeth too sharp despite the purr!
Ah, scan the graceful woman lines of her!
Fit for the male Wind's love is she—alas!
Scuttled and buried in a sea of glass
By her own master! It will cost me pain.
Better a night of lightning-riven rain
With hell-hounds baying in the driven gloom!

Anicetus. The will of Nero is her wind of doom—
Woe to the seaman who defies that gale!
Go now—make ready that we may not fail
To crown the wish of Caesar with the deed.

Captain. Aye, Master!

[Exit Captain toward sea.]

Anicetus. And no brazen wound shall bleed
Red scandal over Rome; the nosing mob
Shall sniff no poison. Just a gulping sob
And some few bubbles breaking on the swell—
Then, good night, Agrippina, rest you well!
And may the gods revamp the silly fish
With guts of brass for coping with that dish!

[34]
The Death of Agrippina

[A muffled outburst of laughter in banquet hall. Anicetus turns toward window. Uproar dies out.]

They're drinking deep—the banquet's at its height
And all therein are kings and queens tonight.

[Goes to urn, mounts it and peers in at window.]

A merry crew! Quite drunk, quite drunk I fear,
My noble Romans!—Burrus' eyes are blear!
One goblet hence, good Burrus, you will howl!
E'en Seneca sits staring like an owl
And strives to pilot in some heavy sea
That wisdom-laden boat, his head. Ah me,
Creperius Gallus, you are floundering deep
In red Falernian bogs, so you shall sleep
Quite soundly while your mistress takes the dip!
Fair Acerronia thinks the place a ship
And greenly sickens in the dizzy roll!
There broods Poppaea, certain of her goal,
Her veil a sea-fog clutching at the moon,
A portent to wise sailors! Very soon
The sea shall wake in hunger and be fed!
She smiles!—the glimmer on a thunderhead
That vomits ruin!—What has made her smile?
Ah, Nero's wine is sugared well with guile!
So—kiss your mother—gently fondle her—
Pet the old she-cat till she mew and purr
Unto the tender hand that strokes her back;
So shall there be no sniffing at the sack!
Would that her eyes, like his, with wine were dim!

[ 35 ]
Gods! What a tragic actor died in him
To make a comic Caesar!
I surmise
By the too rheumy nature of your eyes,
Divine, imperial Nero, and their sunk
Lugubrious aspect—pardon!—but you're drunk,
Drunk as a lackey when the master's out!
O kingly tears that down that regal snout
Pour salty love upon a mother’s breast!
So shall her timid doubts be lulled to rest!

[Bustle within as of many rising to their feet.]
They rise! The prologue's ended—now the play!

[He gets down from urn and goes off toward sea.]
Heralds. [Crying within.] Make way for Caesar! Ho!
Make way! Make way!

[The musicians within strike up a martial strain. After
a few moments, within the hall appear Nero and Agrippina,
arm in arm, approaching the flight of steps. Nero is robed
in a tunic of the color of amethyst, with a winged harp
embroidered on the front. He is crowned with a laurel
wreath, now askew in his disordered hair. Agrippina
wears a robe of maroon without decoration. Nero endeavors
to preserve the semblance of supporting his mother, but in
fact is supported by her, while he caresses her with con­siderable extravagance. They pause half way down the
steps, and the music within changes to a low melancholy air.]

Agrippina. [Lifting her face to the moon seaward.]
How fair a moon to crown our happy revel!

[36]
The Death of Agrippina

Nero. [Gazing blankly at the moon.] Eh? Veil the hussy!
Agrippina. Son, son!
Nero. She's a devil!

Agrippina. [Placing a loving arm closer about Nero.] Just such a night 't was, Lucius—you remember?—
When Claudius' spirit like a smouldering ember
Struggled 'twixt flame and ash—do you forget?
Nero. Ha ha—'t was snuffed—ho ho!

Agrippina. [Stroking his hair.] 'T was then I set
The imperial circlet here; 't was then I cloaked
My boy with world-robcs!

Nero. [Still staring at moon and pointing unsteadily.] Have that vixen choked!

Her staring makes me stagger—where's her veil?

Agrippina. It all comes back like an enchanted tale—
The moon set and the sun rose—
Nero. Dead and gone—
The sun set and the moon rose—

Agrippina. Nay, at dawn
The blear flame died, the new flame blossomed up.
Nero. Did someone drop a poison in my cup?
The windless sea crawls moaning—

[They move slowly down steps, Nero clinging to his mother.]

Agrippina. Son of mine,
Cast off the evil humors of the wine!
I am so happy and was so forlorn!

[37]
Ah, not another night since you were born
Has flung such purple through me! Son—at last
The haggard hours that parted us are past;
I've wept my tears and none are left to shed!
I live—I live—I live! And I was dead.

_Nero._ [Clinging closer.] Dead—dead—what ails the sea—'tis going red—

[Laughter in banquet hall.]

Who's laughing?—Mother—scourge them from the place!
Who gave the moon Poppaea's dizzy face
To fright the sea?

_Agrippina._ Your message gave me life!
Ah, Lucius, not for us to mar with strife
A world so made for loving!

Lucius dear,
I was too harsh, perhaps; the fault was here.

[Placing hand on heart.]

_Nero._ [Staring into his mother's eyes.] Too harsh perhaps—

_Agrippina._ Yea, so we mothers err:
Too long we see our babies as they were,
And last of all the world confess them tall.
They stride so far—we shudder lest they fall—
They toddle yet.

And she who bears a son
Shall be two women ever after; one
The fountain of a seaward cooing stream,
And one the shrouded virgin of a dream
The Death of Agrippina

Whom no man wooes, whose heart, a muted lyre,
Pines with a wild but unconfessed desire
For him who—never understands, my son!
I'll be all fountain—kill that other one!

Nero. That other one—

Agrippina. Oh, like a wind of Spring
Wooing the sere grave of a buried thing,
Your summons came! Such happy tendrils creep
Out of me, in that old ache rooted deep,
To blossom sunward greener for the sorrow.
And, O my Emperor, if on the morrow
Your heart could soften toward that gentle one,
That frail white lily pining for the sun,
Octavia, your patient little wife,
Smile, smile upon that flower and give it life!
Make of my Lucius emperor in truth,
Not Passion's bondman!

'T is the way of youth
To drive wild stallions with too slack a rein
Toward fleeing goals no fleetness can attain!
Oh splendid speed that fails for lack of fear!
The grip of iron makes the charioteer!
The lyric fury heeds the master beat
And is the freer for its shackled feet!
You who are Law shall be more free than others
By seeming less so, Lucius.

Nero. Best of mothers,
Tomorrow—yes, tomorrow—Mother, stay!

[39]
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

You must not go so far, so far away!

    Agrippina. Only to Bauli.

[They have reached the extreme right of stage. The guests now begin to come out of banquet hall, scattering a rippling laughter. Nero is aroused by the merry sound, looks back, gathers himself together with a start.]

    Nero. Ah! The moon is bright!
The sea is still! We'll banquet every night,
Shall we not, Mother?

    Certain cares of state
Weigh heavily—'tis awful to be great—
Nay, terrible at times! Can I be ill?
It seemed the sea moaned—yet 'tis very still!
Mother, my Mother—kiss me! Let us go
Down to the galley—so.

[They pass out toward the sea, Nero caressing his mother.
The guests now throng down the steps into the courtyard. They are in various states of intoxication. Many are dressed to represent mythological figures: Fauns and Satyrs; Bacchus crowned with grape leaves, wearing a leopard skin on his shoulders; six Bacchantes; Psyche with wings; Luna in a spangled tunic with silver horns in her hair; Mercury with winged sandals and the caduceus; Neptune in an emerald robe, crowned and bearing the trident; Iris rainbow-clad; Silenus. Some are dressed in brilliant oriental garments. There are Senators in broad bordered togas with half moons embroidered on their sandals; Pages
dressed as Cupids and infant Bacchi; Officers of the Praetorian Guard in military uniform. Turbaned, half nude Numidian slaves, with bronze rings in their ears, come trotting in with litters, attended by torch-bearers. Some of the guests depart in the litters. The music continues in banquet hall.]

Neptune. [Staggering against Luna.] Who'd be a sailor when great Neptune staggers Dashed in the Moon's face!—Calm me, gentle Luna, And silver me with kisses!

Luna. [Fleeing from his outstretched arms, but regarding him invitingly over her shoulder.] Fie, you wine-skin! A hiccough's not a tempest! Lo, I glide, Treading a myriad stars!

[Neptune follows with a rolling gait.]

A Satyr. [Looking after them as they disappear.] Roll, eager Tide!

Methinks ere long the wooing moon shall fall!

[Those near laugh.]

First Senator. [To Second Senator.] Was Nero acting, think you?

Second Senator. Not at all. 'Twas staged, no doubt, but—

First Senator. Softly, lest they hear!

Second Senator. The mimic is in mimicry sincere— The role absorbed the actor. So he wept.

[They pass on, talking low.]
A Praetorian Officer. [To Psyche leaning on his arm.] 
Was it a vision, Psyche? Have I slept?
By the pink-nippled Cyprian, I swear
Our Caesar knows a woman! Gods! That hair!
Spun from the bowels of Ophir!

Psyche. Who’s so fair?

Praetorian. Poppaea!

Psyche. She?—A Circe, queen of hogs!
A cross-road Hecate, bayed at by the dogs!
A morbid Itch—

Praetorian. Sh!

Psyche. —strutting in a cloak
Of what she has not, virtue!

Praetorian. Ha! You joke!
All cloaks are ruses, fashioned to reveal
What all possess, pretending to conceal—
Who’d love a Psyche else?

[They pass on.]

Iris. [To a Satyr who supports her.] A clever wile
Her veil is! Ah, we women must beguile
The stupid male by seeming to withhold
What’s dross, displayed, but, guarded well, is gold!
Faugh! Hunger sells it and the carter buys!

Satyr. Consume me with the lightning of her eyes!

She’s Aphrodite!

Iris. Helen!

Satyr. Helen, then!
A peep behind that veil, and once again

[ 42 ]
The Death of Agrippina

The sword-flung music of the fighting men,
Voluptuous ruin and wild battle joy,
The swooning ache and rapture that was Troy!
Delirious doom!
   Iris. [Laughing.] O Sorcery of Night!
We're all one woman in the morning light!
   Satyr. [Laughing.] You're jealous!
   Iris. No, I rend the veil in twain!
   [They mingle with the throng.]
   Silenus. [To a Naval Officer.] The wind veers and the
   moon seems on the wane!
What bodes it—reinstatement for the Queen?
   Naval Officer. No seaman knows the wind and moon
   you mean;
Yet land were safer when those signs concur!
   [They pass on.]
   Mercury. [To a Bacchante.] 'T would rouse compas-
   sion in a toad, and stir
A wild boar's heart with pity!
   Bacchante. [Placing a warning hand on his mouth.]
   Hush! Beware!
   Mercury. Could you not feel the hidden gorgon stare,
The venom of her laughter dripping slow?
   [The musicians from within having followed the departing
   throng from the banquet hall, and having stationed themselves
   on the steps, now strike up a wild Bacchic air.]
   Bacchus. [Swinging into the dance.] Bacchantes,
   wreathe the dance!

[ 43 ]
Bacchantes. [From various parts of the throng.] Io, Bacche! Io!

[Pirouetting to the music, they assemble, circling about Bacchus, joining hands and singing. When the song is finished, the circle breaks, the dancers wheel, facing outward. Bacchus endeavors to kiss a Bacchante who regards him with head thrown back. The dance music becomes more abandoned, and the Bacchante flees, pursued by Bacchus, who reels as he dances. All the other Bacchantes follow, weaving in and out between pursuer and pursued. The throng laughingly makes way for them. At length the pursued Bacchante flings off in a mad whirl toward the grove in the background, followed by Bacchus and the Bacchantes. Fauns and Satyrs now take up the dance and join in the pursuit. The throng follows eagerly, enjoying the spectacle. All disappear among the trees. Laughter in the distance, growing dimmer. The musicians withdraw into the villa and disappear, their music dying out. The lights go out in the banquet hall. The stage is now lit by the moon alone, save for the draughty lamps within the pillared hall.

After a period of silence, re-enter Nero, walking backward from the direction of the sea toward which he gazes.]

Nero. Dimmer—dimmer—dimmer—
A shadow melting in a moony shimmer
Down the bleak seaways dwindling to that shore
Where no heaved anchor drips forevermore,
Nor winds breathe music in the homing sail:

[44]
But over sunless hill and fruitless vale,
Gaunt spectres drag the age-long discontent
And ponder what this brief, bright moment meant—
The loving—and the dreaming—and the laughter.
Ah, ships that vanish take what never after
Returning ships may carry.

Dawn shall flare,
Make bloom the terraced gardens of the air
For all the world but Lucius. He shall see
The haunted hollow of Infinity
Gray in the twilight of a heart's eclipse.
With our own wishes woven into whips
The jealous gods chastise us!—I'm alone!
About the transient brilliance of my throne
The giddy moths flit briefly in the glow;
But when at last that light shall flicker low,
A taper guttering in a gust of doom,
What hand shall grope for Nero's in the gloom,
What fond eyes shed the fellows of his tears?
She bore her heart these many troublous years
Before me, like a shield. And she is dead.
Her hand 'twas set the crown upon my head;
Her heart's blood dyed the kingly robe for me.
Dank seaweed crowns her, and the bitter sea
Enshrouds with realmless purple!

Round and round,
Swirled in the endless nightmare of the drowned,
Her fond soul gropes for something vaguely dear
That lures, eludes forever. Shapes that leer,
Distorted Neros of a tortured sleep,
Cry “Mother, come to Baiae.” Deep on deep
The green death folds her and she can not come.
Vague, gaping mouths that hunger and are dumb
Mumble the tired heart so ripe with woe,
Where night is but a black wind breathing low
And daylight filters like a ghostly rain!
O Mother! Mother! Mother!—

[With arms extended, he stares seaward a moment, then
covers his face, turns, and walks slowly toward entrance of
villa.]

Vain, 'tis vain!
How shall one move an ocean with regret?

[He has reached the steps and pauses.]
Ah, one hope lives in all this bleakness yet.
Song!—Mighty Song the hurt of life assuages!
This fateful night shall fill the vaulted ages
With starry grief, and men unborn shall sing
The mournful measure of the Ancient King!
I'll write an ode!

[He stands for a moment, glorified with the thought.]

Great heart of Nero, strung
Harplike, endure till this last song be sung,
Then break—then break—

[Turns and mounts the steps.]
The Death of Agrippina

Oh Fate, to be a bard!
The way is hard, the way is very hard!

[A dim outburst of laughter from the revellers in the distance.]

II

[The same night. Nero's private chamber in his villa at Baiae. Nero is discovered asleep in his state robes on a couch, where he has evidently thrown himself down, overcome by the stupor incident to the feast of the night. Beside the couch is a writing stand, bearing writing materials. A few lights burn dimly. Nero groans, cries out, and, as though terrified by a nightmare, sits up, trembling and staring upon some projected vision of his sleep. He is yet only half awake.]

Nero. Oh—oh—begone, blear thing!—She is not dead! You are not she—my mother!—Ghastly head—Trunkless—and oozing green gore like the sea, Wind-stabbed! Begone! Go—do not look at me—I will not be so tortured!—Eyes burned out With scorious hell-spew!—Locks that grope about To clutch and strangle!

[He has got up from the couch and now struggles with something at his throat, still staring at the thing.]

Off! Off!

[In an outburst of terrified tenderness extends his arms as toward a woman.]

Mother—come Into these arms—speak to me—be not dumb!

[47]
Stare not so wildly—kiss me as of old!
Be flesh again—warm flesh! Oh green and cold
As the deep grave they gave you!
’Twas not I!
Mother, ’twas not my will that you should die—
’Twas hers!—I hate her! Mother, pity me!
Oh, is it you?—Sole goddess of the sea
I shall proclaim you! Pity! I shall pour
The hot blood of your foes on every shore,
A huge libation! Hers shall be the first!
I swear it! May my waking be accursed,
My sleep a-swarm with furies if I err!

[He has advanced a short distance toward what he sees, but
now shrinks back, burying his face in his robe.]
Go!—Spare me!—Guards! Guards!
[Three soldiers, who have been standing guard without
the chamber, rush in and stand at attention.]
Seize and shackle her!
There ’tis!—eh? [He stares blankly, rubs his eyes.]
It is gone!
[Blinks at soldiers, and cries petulantly.]
What do you here?

First Soldier. Great Caesar summoned us.
Nero. [Glancing nervously about.] The night is blear—
Make lights! I will not have these shadow things
Crawling about me! Poisoners of kings
Fatten on shadows! Quick there, dog-eyed scamp,
Lean offal-sniffer! Kindle every lamp!
The Death of Agrippina

[Soldier tremulously takes a lamp and lights a number of others with its flame. Stage is flooded with light.]

By the bronze beard I swear there shall be lights Enough hereafter, though I purge the nights With conflagrating cities, till the crash Of Rome's last tower beat up the smouldering ash Of Rome's last city!

So—I breathe again!

Some cunning, faneless god who hated men Devised this curse of darkness! What's the hour?

Second Soldier. The third watch wanes.

Nero. Too late! Too late! The power

Of Nero Caesar can not stay the sun!
The stars have marched against me—it is done!
And all Rome's legions could not rout this swarm Of venom-footed moments!

—She was warm

One little lost eternity ago.

[With awakening resolution.] 'Twas not my deed! I did not wish it so!

Some demon, aping Caesar, gave the word
While Lucius Ahenobarbus' eyes were blurred With too much beauty!

Oh, it shall be done!

Ere these unmothered eyes behold the sun, She shall have vengeance, and that gift is mine!

[To First Soldier.] Rouse the Praetorians! Bid a triple line
Be flung about the palace!

[To Second Soldier.] Send me wine—

Strong wine to nerve a resolution!

[To Third Soldier.] You—

Summon Poppaea!

[The Soldiers go out.]

This deed I mean to do

Unties the snarl, but broken is the thread.

Would that the haughty blood these hands will shed

Might warm my mother! that the breath I crush—

So—[clutching air] from that throat of sorceries, might

rush

Into the breast that loved and nurtured me!

The heart of Nero shivers in the sea,

And Rome is lorn of pity!

Could the world

And all her crawling spawn this night be hurled

Into one woman’s form, with eyes to shed

Rivers of scalding woe, her towering head

Jeweled with realms aflare, with locks of smoke,

Huge nerves to suffer, and a neck to choke—

That woman were Poppaea! I would rear

About the timeless sea, my mother’s bier,

A sky-roofed desolation groined with awe,

Where, nightly drifting in the stream of law,

The vestal stars should tend their fires, and weep

To hear upon the melancholy deep

That shipless wind, her ghost, amid the hush!

[ 50 ]
Alas! I have but one white throat to crush
With these world-hungry fingers!

[From behind Nero, enter Page—a little boy—bearing a goblet of wine on a salver. Nero turns, startled.]

Ah!—You!—You!

Page. I bring wine, mighty Caesar.

[Nero passes his hand across his face, and the expression of fright leaves.]

Nero. So you do—

I saw—the boy Britannicus!—One sees—

Things—does one not?—such eerie nights as these?

Page. [With eager boyish earnestness.] With woozy heads?

Nero. [Irritably.] The wine!

[The Page, startled, presents the salver, from which Nero takes the goblet with unsteady hand. Page is in the act of fleeing.]

Stay!

[Page stops and turns tremulously.]

Never dare

Again to look like—anyone! Beware!

[Page's head shakes a timid negative. Nero stares into goblet and muses.]

Blood's red too. Ah, a woman is the grape
Ripe for the vintage, from whose flesh agape
Glad feet tonight shall stamp the hated ooze!
It boils!—See!—like some witch's pot that brews
Venomous ichor!—Nay—some angry ghost

[51]
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Hurls bloody breakers on a bleeding coast!—
'Tis poisoned!—Out, Locusta's brat!

[Hurls goblet at Page, who flees precipitately.]
'Twas she!

The hand that flung my mother to the sea
Now pours me death!

Alas, great Hercules
Too long has plied the distaff at the knees
Of Omphale, spinning a thread of woe!
Was ever king of story driven so
By unrelenting Fate? Lo, round on round
The slow coils grip and choke—a mother drowned,
Her wrathful spirit rising from the dead—
A gentle wife outcast, discredited,
With sighs to wake the dread Eumenides!
Some thunder-hearted, vaster Sophocles,
His aeon-beating blood the stellar stream,
Has flung on me the mantle of his dream,
And Nero grapples Fate! O wondrous play!
With smoking brand aloft, the haggard Day
Gropes for the world! Pursued by subtle foes,
Superbly tragic 'mid a storm of woes,
The fury-hunted Caesar takes the cue!
One time-outstaring deed remains to do,
Then let the pit howl—Caesar sings no more!
Go ask the battered wreckage on the shore
Who sought his mother in a sudden sleep,
To be with her forever on the deep

[52]
The Death of Agrippina

A twin ship-hating tempest!

[Enter Anicetus excitedly.]

Anicetus. Lost! We're lost!
The Roman ship yaws rockward tempest-tossed
And Nero is but Lucius in the wreck!

Nero. Croak on! Each croak's a dagger in that neck,
You vulture with the hideous dripping beak,
The clutching tearing talons that now reek
With what dear sacred veins!

Anicetus. O Caesar, hear!
So keen the news I bear you, that I fear
To loose it like the arrow it must be.
I know not why such wrath you heap on me;
I know what peril deepens 'round my lord;
How, riven by the lightning of the sword,
The doom-voiced blackness labors round his head!

Nero. Say what I know, that my poor mother's dead—
So shall your life be briefer!

Anicetus. Would 't were so!

Nero. [A light coming into his face.] She lives?

Anicetus. Yea, lives—and lives to overthrow!

Nero. Not perished?

Anicetus. —And her living is our death!

Nero. She moves and breathes?

Anicetus. —And potent is her breath
To blow rebellion up!

Nero. [Rubbing his eyes.] Still do I sleep?
Is this a taunting dream that I may weep

[ 53 ]
More bitterly? Or some new foul intrigue?

Anicetus. 'Tis bitter fact to her who swam a league,
And bitter fact to Nero shall it be!

At Bauli now, still dripping from the sea,

She crouches snarling!

Nero. [In an outburst of joy.] Oh, you shall not die,

My best-loved Anicetus! Though you lie,

Sweeter these words are than profoundest truth!

They breathe the fresh, white morning of my youth

Upon the lampless night that smothered me!

O more than human Sea

That spared my mother that her son might live!

What bounty can I give?
I—Caesar—falter beggared at this gift

Of living words that lift

My mother from the regions of the dead!

Ah—I shall set a crown upon your head,

Snip you a kingdom from Rome's flowing robe!

I'll temple you in splendors! Yea, I'll probe

Your secret heart to know what wishes pant

In wingless yearning there, that I may grant!

[Pause, while Anicetus regards Nero with gloomy face.]

What sight thus makes your face a pool of gloom?

Anicetus. The ghost of Nero crying from his tomb!

Nero. [Startled.] Eh?—Nero's ghost—mine?

Anicetus. Even so I said.

The doomed to perish are already dead

Who woo not Fate with swift unerring deeds!
That breathless moment when the tigress bleeds
Is ours to strike in, ere the tigress spring!
What could it boot your servant to be king
While any moment may the trumpets cry,
Hailing the certain hour when we shall die—
Caesar, the deaf, and his untrusted slave?
Peer deep, peer deep into this yawning grave
And tell me who shall fill it!—Wind and fire,
Harness with thrice the ghost of her dead sire,
Your mother is tonight! She knows, she knows
How galleys founder when no tempest blows
And moonlight slumbers on a glassy deep!
The beast our wound has wakened shall not sleep
Till it be gorged with slaughter, or be slain!
Lull not your heart, O Caesar! It is vain
To dream this cub-lorn tigress will not turn.
Lo, flaring through the dawn I see her burn,
A torch of revolution! Hear her raise
The legions with a voice of other days,
Wording with pangs to fret their ancient scars!
And every sword-wound of her father’s wars
Will shriek aloud with pity!

Nero. [During Anicetus’ speech he has shown growing fear.]
Listen!—There!
You heard it?—Did you hear a trumpet blare?

Anicetus. ’Tis but the shadow of a sound to be
One rushing hour away!

Nero. [In panic.] Where shall I flee?—
I, the sad poet whom she made a king!
At last we flesh the ghost of what we sing—
We bards!—I sang Orestes.

[His face softens with a gentler thought.]

Ah—I’ll go
To my poor heartsick mother. Tears shall flow,
The tears of Lucius, not imperial tears.
I’ll heap on her the vast, too vast arrears
Of filial love. The Senate shall proclaim
My mother regnant with me—write her name
Beside Augustus with the demigods!
Yea, lictors shall attend her with the rods,
And massed Praetorians tramp the rabble down
Whene’er her chariot flashes through the town!
One should be kind to mothers.

Anicetus. Yea, and be
Kind to the senseless fury of the sea,
Fondle the tempest in a rotten boat!

Nero. What would you, Anicetus?

Anicetus. Cut her throat!

[Nero gasps and shrinks from Anicetus.]

Nero. No, no!—her ghost!—one can not stab so deep—
One can not kill these tortures spawned of sleep!
No, no—one can not kill them with a sword!

Anicetus. Faugh! One good thrust—the rest is air,
my lord!

[Enter Page timorously. Nero turns upon him.]

[56]
Page. [Frightened.] Spare me, good Caesar!—Agerinus—
Nero. Go!
Bid Agerinus enter!

[Page flees. Nero to Anicetus menacingly.]

We shall know
What breath from what damned throat tonight shall hiss!

[Enter Agerinus, bowing low.]

Agerinus. My mistress sends fond greetings and a kiss
To her most noble son, and bids me say,
She rests and would not see him until day.
The royal galley, through unhappy chance,
Struck rock and foundered; but no circumstance
So meagre might deprive a son so dear
Of his beloved mother! Have no fear,
The long swim leaves her weary, but quite well.
She knows what tender love her son would tell
And yearns for dawn to bring him to her side.

Nero. [To Anicetus.] So! Spell your doom from
that! You lied! You lied!
I'll lance that hateful fester in your throat!
Yea, we shall prove who rides the rotten boat
And supplicates the tempest!

[With a rapid motion, Nero draws Agerinus' sword from
its sheath. Anicetus shrinks back. Nero cries to Agerinus.]

Wait to see
The loving message you bear back from me!

[Nero, brandishing the sword, makes at Anicetus. As he
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

is about to deliver the stroke, enter Poppaea from behind. She has evidently been quite leisurely about her toilet, being dressed gorgeously, and wearing her accustomed half-veil. Her manner is stately and composed. She approaches slowly. Nero stops suddenly in the act to strike Anicetus, and stares upon the beautiful apparition. Anger leaves his face, which changes as though he had seen a great light.

Poppaea. [Languidly.] My Nero longed for me?
[Nero with his free hand brushes his eyes in perplexity.]
Nero. I—can not—tell—
What—'twas—I wished—I wished—
Poppaea. [Haughtily.] Ah, very well.
She walks slowly on across the stage. Nero stares blankly after her. The sword drops from his hand. As Poppaea disappears, he rouses suddenly as from a stupor.
Nero. Ho! Guards!
[Three soldiers enter. Nero points to Agerinus.]
There—seize that wretch who came to kill Imperial Caesar!
[Agerinus is seized. Nero turns to Anicetus.]
Hasten! Do your will!
[Nero turns, and with an eager expression on his face, goes doddering after Poppaea.]

III

[The same night. Agrippina's private chamber in her villa at Bauli near Baiae. There is one lamp in the room. At the center back is a broad door closed with heavy hangings.]

[58]
The Death of Agrippina

At the right is an open window through which the moonlight falls. Agrippina is discovered lying on a couch. One maid, Nina, is in attendance and is arranging Agrippina's hair.

Agrippina. He was so tender—what should kindness mean?

[The maid, seeming not to hear, continues with toilet.]

I spoke!—you heard me speak?

Nina. I heard, my Queen.

Agrippina. And deemed my voice some ghostly summer wind Fit for autumnal hushes? He was kind!

Was ever breath in utterance better spent?

Nina. Your slave could scarcely fancy whom you meant, There are so many tender to the great.

Agrippina. When all the world is one sky-circled state, Pray, who should fill it as the sun the sky?

The mother of that mighty one am I— And he caressed me!

I shall feel no pain

Forever now. So, drenched with winter rain, The friendless marshland knows the boyish South And shivers into color!

On the mouth

He kissed me, as before that other came—

That Helen of the stews, that corpse aflame With lust for life, that—

Ah, he maidened me!

[59]
What dying wind could sway so tall a tree
With such proud music? I shall be again
That darkling whirlwind down the fields of men,
That dart unloosed, barbed keenly for his sake,
That living sword for him to wield or break,
But never sheathe!

[Lifts herself on elbow.]

O Nina, let me be
Robed as the Queen I am in verity!
Robed as a victrix home from splendid wars,
Whom, 'mid the rumble of spoil-laden cars
Trundled by harnessed kings, the trumpets hail!
Let quiet garments be for those who fail,
Mourning a world ill-lost with meek surrenders!
I would flare bright 'mid Death's unhuman splendors,
Dazzle the moony hollows of the dead!
Ah no—[Arising and going to window.]

I shall not die yet. [Parts the curtains and gazes out.]

Nina. 'Tis the dread
Still clinging from the clutches of the sea,
That living, writhing horror! Ugh! O'er me
Almost I feel the liquid terror crawl!
Through glassy worlds of tortured sleep to fall,
Where winds blow not, nor mornings ever blush,
But green, cold, ghastly light-wraiths wander—

Agrippina. [Turning from window with nervous anger.]

Hush!

[TURNS AGAIN TO WINDOW; AFTER PAUSE, CONTINUES MUSINGLY.]
The Death of Agrippina

She battles in a surf of spectral fire.
No—like some queen upon a funeral pyre,
Gassing, she withers in a fever swoon.
Had she a son too?

Nina. [Approaching the window.]
Who, O Queen?

Agrippina. The moon!
See, she is strangled in a noose of pearl!
What telltale scars she has!

—Look yonder, girl—

Your eyes are younger—by the winding sea
Where Baiae glooms and blanches; it may be
Old eyes betray not, but some horsemen take
The white road winding hither by the lake.

Nina. The way lies plain—I see no moving thing.

Agrippina. Why thus is Agerinus loitering?
For he was ever true. [Joyously.] Ah foolish head!
My heart knows how my son shall come instead,
My little Lucius! Even now he leaps
Into the saddle and the dull way creeps
Beneath the spurred impatience of his horse,
He longs so for me!

[Pause—She scans the moonlit country.]

Shrouded like a corse,
Hoarding a mother’s secret, lies the sea;
And Capri, like a gaint Niobe,
Outgazes Fate!

O sweet, too gentle lies
And kisses sword-like! Would the sun might rise
No more on Baiae! Would that earth might burst
Spewing blear doom upon this world accursed
With truth too big for hiding!

See! He sleeps

Beside her, and the shame-dimmed lamp-light creeps
Across her wine-stained mouth—so red—so red—
Like mother blood!—See! hissing round her head
Foul hate-fanged vipers that he calls her hair!
Ah no—beyond all speaking is she fair!
Sweet as a sword-wound in a gasping foe
Her mouth is; and too well, too well I know
Her face is dazzling as a funeral flame
Battened on queen's flesh!

[Turning angrily from window.]

Oh the blatant shame!
The bungling drunkard's plot!—Tonight, tonight
I shall swoop down upon them by the light
Of naked steel! Faugh! Had it come to that?
Had Rome no sword, that like a drowning rat
The mother of a king should meet her end?
What Gallic legion would not call me friend?
Did they not love Germanicus, my sire?
Oh, I will rouse the cohorts, scattering fire
Till all Rome blaze rebellion!

[She has advanced to a place beside the couch, stands in
a defiant attitude for a moment, then covers her face with her
hands and sinks to the couch.]
No, no, no—
It could not be, I would not have it so!
Not mine to burn the tower my hands have built!
And somewhere ’mid the shadows of his guilt
My son is good.

[ Lifts herself on elbow. ]
Look, Nina, toward the roofs
Of sleeping Baiae. Say that eager hoofs
Beat a white dust-cloud moonward.

[Nina goes to window and peers out.]
Nina. Landward crawls
A sea fog; Capri’s league-long shadow sprawls
Lengthening toward us—soon the moon will set.

Agrippina. No horsemen?
Nina. None, my Queen.

Agrippina. —And yet—and yet—
He called me baby names. Ah, ghosts that wept
Big tears down smiling faces, twined and crept
About my heart, and still I feel their tears.
They make me joyous.—After all these years,
The little boy my heart so often dirged
Shivered the man-husk, beardless, and emerged!
He kissed my breasts and hung upon my going!
Once more I felt the happy nurture flowing,
The silvery, tingling shivers of delight!
What though my end had come indeed tonight—
I was a mother!

—Have you children?

[63]
Nina. No,
My Queen.

Agrippina. Yet you are winsome.

Nina. Lovers go
Like wind, as lovers come; I am unwed.

Agrippina. How lonely shall you be among the dead
Where hearts remember, but are lorn of hope!
Poor girl! No dream of tiny hands that grope,
And coaxing, hunting little mouths shall throw
Brief glories 'round you!

Nina, I would go
Like any brazen bawd along the street,
Hailing the first stout carter I should meet,
Ere I would perish childless! Though we nurse
The cooing thing that some day hurls the curse,
Forge from our hearts the matricidal sword,
The act of loving is its own reward.
We mothers need no pity!

'Twill be said,
When this brief war is done, and I am dead,
That I was wanton, shameless—be it so!
Unto the swarm of insect scribes I throw
The puffed-up purple carcass of my name
For them to feast on! Pointed keen with shame,
How shall each busy little stylus bite
A thing that feels not! I have fought my fight!
That mine were but the weapons of the foe,
Too well the ragged scars I bear can show.
The Death of Agrippina

Oh, I have triumphed, and am ripe to die!
About my going shall the trumpets cry
Forever and forever!

I can thread
The twilit under-regions of the dead
A radiant shadow with a heart that sings!
Before the myriad mothers of great kings
I shall lift up each livid spirit hand
Spotted with blood—and they shall understand
How small the price was!

Nina. Hark!

[The tramp of soldiery and the clatter of arms are heard from without. Nina, panic-stricken, runs to window, peers out, shrinks back, and, turning, flees by a side door.]

Agrippina. Why do you flee?
Did I not say my son would come to me?
’Tis Nero—Nero Caesar, Lord of Rome!
My little boy grown tall is coming home!

[She goes to window, peers out, shrinks back, then turns toward the door and sees three armed men standing there—Anicetus, the Captain of a Galley and a Centurion of the Navy. The men stare at her without moving.]

Why come you here?

[Silence.]

To know my health?—Go tell
My son, your master, I am very well—
And happy—

[65]
[The men make no reply. Agrippina straightens her body haughtily.]

—If like cowards in the night
You come to stab a woman—

Anicetus. [Drawing his sword and speaking to Captain.]
Snuff the light!

[The men spring forward with drawn swords. Agrippina does not move. The light is stricken out.]

John G. Neihardt.
EDITORIAL COMMENT

TRADITION

OUR April number has aroused certain critics to the defence of what they call "the grand old English tradition." Their meaning would seem to be tradition of external form rather than the larger tradition of spiritual motive, a mere binding tradition of detail for which we confess little reverence. Such tradition is not for the strong, but for the weak. It is invoked by those who need protection, not by those who can stand alone. The men who made this grand old English tradition little knew what they were doing. To them there was nothing sacro-sanct in their adventurous experiments; they never dreamed of discouraging the adventurous experiments of others.

Tradition, however grand and old, ceases to be of use the moment its walls are strong enough to break a butterfly's wing, or keep a fairy immured. The freedom of the human spirit is more important to the future of the race than the Greek temples and Gothic cathedrals of the past. Art is not a Mosaic dispensation from Mount Sinai, but a creation of men's minds. The more direct and spontaneous this creation, the better. The more the artist can sweep away all barriers between his soul and the truth, between himself and his particular inspiring god, the nearer will he come to complete and
supreme expression. Inevitably he inherits his materials and instruments; he can not invent words, colors, sounds, the pen he writes with, the paints he uses, the violin he plays upon. If he must inherit also forms and rules—better the free foot in the wilderness, better the upward flight of danger in a monoplane!

* * *

However, the strong also may march in the ancient highway, may hearken for a time to the grand old voices. It is in no desire to appease our critics, but to open a free road to one of our strongest poets, that we present this month Mr. Neihardt's essay in poetic tragedy on the old Roman theme. There may be value in contrast; between April and May the issue is sharply drawn. Perhaps both schools have their modern uses, and the laurel will go to the stronger, whatever his costume and his weapon!

** IN DANGER **

How may a man be a popular poet and yet save his soul and his art?—this is a question which only the select few of any group or period are called upon to answer. Some popular poets, of course, have no souls to save—none, at least, which emerge above the milk-and-water current of their verse—the Tuppers and Ella Wheeler Wilcoxes of their generation. Others have no trouble with their souls; they just sing naturally about common
sights and sounds, the things all men know or feel or think they know and feel—like Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene Field, Bret Harte in his brief lyric moods, or, now and then, Joaquin Miller, that high-hearted old democrat who now sleeps in his Sierras.

No poet of these two so different kinds need ask himself the question. Popularity is wine to these. It makes the former more garrulous, the latter more genial; it is only mildly and amiably intoxicating. But there is another class of poets with whom popularity is poison, an insidious, habit-producing drug which dulls their minds and undermines their morals; which, once they yield to its control, they must get and feed on at any cost. With these even a little of the intoxicant goes to their heads and heels, makes them totter and fall back and repeat themselves.

I remember the cry of delight which greeted *Paolo and Francesca* a dozen years ago. A delicate literary exercise was acclaimed as a great tragedy by the thousand-and-one journalists and woman's-club orators who love a twice-told tale. And so, under the insidious stimulus of their prompt applause, Mr. Stephen Phillips read up other ancient stories, and put them into academic dramas of which each, inevitably, was a little weaker and staler than the last.

Today, with the same impetuosity, *Nan* is acclaimed as a great tragedy, and Mr. Masefield is in the same danger. In this case as in the other, the poet's weakest
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

point, derivative plot, becomes his strongest with the crowd, although Mr. Phillips took his plots from old legend, while Mr. Masefield takes his from current popular convention. Derived plot tempts almost inevitably to derived style, and any suggestion of an old familiar tune helps with the crowd.

POETRY has opened its hospitable door to Mr. Masefield's admirers and detractors, presenting in each case the extreme opinion. Meantime, to the more moderate view, this poet seems to be in danger, and The Daffodil Fields is the danger sign. Here his taste for popular melodrama decoys him into a plot so absurd that it utterly destroys the poem. And his allegiance to it leaves him in no mood for such stirring organ music as that long description of the ten-days' storm at sea which is the best of Dauber.

In The Daffodil Fields this poet, like Mr. Phillips in his later plays, is merely indulging his weaknesses.

H. M.

POETIC PROSE AND VERS LIBRE

The essential difference between prose and poetry is in the quality of the rhythmic phrase. The metric paraphrase of one of Oscar Wilde's prose poems, recently published in a Chicago paper, gave merely a typographical semblance of poetry. Any attempt to turn the following poem into prose by omitting the line divisions would prove unsuccessful.
Poetic Prose and Vers Libre

THE POET

Out of the deep and the dark,
A sparkling mystery, a shape,
Something perfect,
Comes like the stir of the day:
One whose breath is an odour,
Whose eyes show the road to stars,
The breeze in his face,
The glory of Heaven on his back.
He steps like a vision hung in air,
Diffusing the passion of Eternity;
His abode is the sunlight of morn,
The music of eve his speech:
In his sight,
One shall turn from the dust of the grave,
And move upward to the woodland.

Yone Noguchi

Prose rhythms differ from poetic rhythms according to the inherent, scientific divisions of the rhythmic wave lengths. Those of poetry rise to a more concentrative stress, regularly or irregularly recurrent, and by the law of balance, make strenuous demand on the poetic interval, the pause. The rhythm of prose has less range of rise and fall. Its periodic waves cling rather closely to the horizontal level, though permitting within this range a great amount of subtle variation. It is interesting, in this connection, to call attention to the extremely limited scope of conventional English prosody. A comparison of iambic pentameter lines taken from Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Swinburne, and William Butler Yeats would reveal how inadequate is the old system of digital mensuration.
Robert Louis Stevenson was one of the first to call attention to the rhythmic phrase division of poetry. Taking a line from Shakespeare he found that, apart from the five minor stressed syllables of the line, there were three major crests marking the poetic phrase, and that these were the more important of the two, since around these the minor crests were grouped in sequence. The musical analogy to the octave is suggestive, and far less sterile than the old system of prosody, which is more often proved false than true.

A. C. H.

REVIEWS

_A Boy's Will_, by Robert Frost, David Nutt, London

I had withdrawn in forest, and my song
Was swallowed up in leaves.

There is another personality in the realm of verse another American, found, as usual, on this side of the water, by an English publisher long known as a lover of good letters. David Nutt publishes at his own expense _A Boy's Will_, by Robert Frost, the latter having been long scorned by the "great American editors." It is the old story.

Mr. Frost's book is a little raw, and has in it a number of infelicities; underneath them it has the tang of the New Hampshire woods, and it has just this utter sincerity. It is not post-Miltonic or post-Swinburnian or post-Kiplonian. This man has the good sense to speak naturally and to paint the thing, the thing as he sees
it. And to do this is a very different matter from gunning about for the circumplectious polysyllable.

It is almost on this account that it is a difficult book to quote from.

She's glad her simple worsted gray
Is silver now with clinging mist—

does not catch your attention. The lady is praising the autumn rain, and he ends the poem, letting her talk.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days,
Before the coming of the snow;
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

Or again:

There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.

My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make.

I remember that I was once canoeing and thirsty and I put in to a shanty for water and found a man there who had no water and gave me cold coffee instead. And he didn’t understand it, he was from a minor city and he “just set there watchin’ the river” and didn’t “seem to want to go back,” and he didn’t much care for anything else. And so I presume he entered into Anunda. And I remember Joseph Campbell telling me of meeting a man on a desolate waste of bogs, and he said to him, “It’s rather dull here;” and the man said, “Faith, ye can sit on a middan and dream stars.”

And that is the essence of folk poetry with distinction between America and Ireland. And Frost’s book reminded me of these things.
There is perhaps as much of Frost’s personal tone in the following little catch, which is short enough to quote, as in anything else. It is to his wife, written when his grandfather and his uncle had disinherited him of a comfortable fortune and left him in poverty because he was a useless poet instead of a money-getter.

**IN NEGLECT**

They leave us so to the way we took,
As two in whom they were proved mistaken,
That we sit sometimes in a wayside nook,
With mischievous, vagrant, seraphic look,
And try if we cannot feel forsaken.

There are graver things, but they suffer too much by making excerpts. One reads the book for the “tone,” which is homely, by intent, and pleasing, never doubting that it comes direct from his own life, and that no two lives are the same.

He has now and then such a swift and bold expression as

The whimper of hawks beside the sun.

He has now and then a beautiful simile, well used, but he is for the most part as simple as the lines I have quoted in opening or as in the poem of mowing. He is without sham and without affectation.

*Helen Redeemed and other Poems*, by Maurice Hewlett.
The Macmillan Co.

Maurice Hewlett stands among the first dozen of living poets in England, but this fact is constantly being obscured by his popular reputation for prose and by
his lack of self-intolerance, albeit he keeps his stuff by him often for more than the seven years prescribed.

His chief interest from the technical point of view lies in his skillful use of harsh rime to check the verse suddenly and to keep it in swift motion, a system of barring which is efficient in a manner similar to the Anglo-Saxon alliterative devices.

Somewhat over a year ago *The Agonists* proved that he could write, if not the only, at least the most readable "Greek Plays" in English.

The present collection of his verse, *Helen Redeemed and other Poems* (The Macmillan Co.), contains the title poem, one hundred and twenty pages long, in the regulation pentametric couplets, with the usual inversions, sometimes for the rime’s sake, the long similes, etc., *cui amet*.

The three tales following are good tales well told, *Oreithyia*, *Clytie*, and the *Lai of Gaubertz*; so also the *Gnatho*. We do not hesitate to praise them, and if there is any stricture to be made it is so minute as to fall under the head of carping. Maurice Hewlett at his best has seen the elder gods and known their progeny. Such ventures will out. No hiding! Not even under the mask of the "man of letters," *le grand seigneur*, or, at worst, "the academician."

The *Oreithyia* is perhaps, as a whole, the best of the idyls; the *Gaubertz* shows best the knack of riming; the *Gnatho* has, I should say, the finest single lines.
There is also a genuine octave to the sonnet on page 208, that ends,

I dare not love, fearing my poisonous thought.

It is significant or rather it is odd, or oddly natural, that Mr. Hewlett should regard Sturge Moore as the best poet now in England. For while no one can deny that Sturge Moore knows the feel of things; knows the feel of the grass growing and of the running hare, and while no sane man would withhold praise from parts of his work, as in "The Amazons," still his results are not infrequently more like colours mixed on a palette than like a picture displayed.

Ezra Pound

The Daffodil Fields, by John Masefield. The Macmillan Co.

In The Daffodil Fields (Macmillan) we have another of Mr. John Masefield's rhymed histories of sophisticated rustics. It is difficult to indicate to an admiring public the sources of discontent aroused by the cheapening of Mr. Masefield's talent, because in this cheapening Mr. Masefield has so obviously hit upon that one touch of nature which makes for popularity.

That Mr. Masefield uses melodramatic themes is not in itself a sufficient implication of inferiority. The Greeks used themes which, strictly considered, come under this heading; but the term has arisen, since the time of the Greeks, to denote a certain sensational or sentimental rendering of a theme obviously harrowing and playing
upon the most vibrantly commonplace of human emotions. It is in this sense that Mr. Masefield is a melodramatic author of the first water, and by this melodramatic virtue alone has he won popularity. No, not quite alone by this. His poetic virtuosity enables many people to confuse issues and to believe with simple-hearted naiveté that the source of their enjoyment is their great love of the humanities and of art.

Given a melodramatic theme and melodramatic treatment, it matters little whether the actors be of flesh and blood, or mere puppets worked by wires; they will win the same amount of applause from the sentimental sympathies of the audience.

And in truth, whether in acted drama, as in The Tragedy of Nan, or in poetic narrative, as in The Daffodil Fields, Mr. Masefield’s characters are all puppets. They do not move, have no life of their own; the action is static, and this, not because of the vast amount of geographical revery filling up the gaps, but simply because, in all moments of passion, the poet endows his characters with the contemplative wisdom of a Greek chorus. Not that the wisdom is their own; nor that the comparison exists except by implication of design. But if the characters were as platitudinously contemplative as the words which their creator puts into their mouths, there would be no action whatever; there would be no passion, no bloodshed, no tragedy. Of course, the contemplative commentary is Mr. Masefield’s own—as
when, masquerading in the petticoats of Nan, in one of the prevailing high tides of that play, he declares,

There be three times when no woman can speak......when 'er 'ears 'er lover, and when 'er gives 'erself, and when 'er little one is born.

Not only must Mr. Masefield’s scenes of action be classed with still life; his landscapes are equally lacking in spontaneity. They are patched and descriptive, like a badly painted picture. His rhythm is monotonously commonplace, and in passing, one may note the poverty of a rhyming vocabulary which makes use of dear, my dear, or my beloved dear as line-ends with irritating insistency.

As to the story, it has elements of Enoch Arden, although less pacific, and it culminates with the novel touch of a Shropshire Ophelia, dabbling in the mingled blood of her daffodil-lapped lovers. A. C. H.

NOTES

Mr. John G. Neihardt is one of the younger American poets, having been born in Illinois in 1881. He has passed most of his life in the west, devoting five or six years to the study of the Omaha Indians. At present he lives in Minneapolis, where he is literary editor of the Journal. His publications are: The Divine Enchantment, 1900; The Lonesome Trail, '07; A Bundle of Myrrh, '08; Man-Song, '09; The River and I, '10; The Dawn-builder and Gold, '11; The Stranger at the Gate, '12.
The June number of POETRY will begin with a group of poems from the Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore, whose *Gitanjali*, introduced in this country last December by six lyrics in POETRY, has just been published by Macmillan.

Early numbers will contain a group of paraphrases from the Chinese, by Allen Upward, and poems by Grace Fallow Norton, Sara Teasdale, Frances Gregg, Margaret Widdemer, Arthur Stringer, John Hall Wheelock, Frederic Manning, F. S. Flint, Ernest Rhys, William Carlos Williams, Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, Joseph Campbell, William Ellery Leonard, and others.

POETRY will be pleased to pay 25 cents a copy for a limited number of the October, 1912, issue.
BOOKS RECEIVED


Sangar, by John Reed. Privately Printed.

The Day in Bohemia, by John Reed. Privately Printed.

The Kingdom of All-Souls, by George Edward Woodberry. Published for the Woodberry Society.

The Daffodil Fields, by John Masefield. The Macmillan Co.


The Great River, by Frederick Oakes Sylvester. Privately Printed.


The Life Triumphant, and Other Poems, by Charles Russell Wakeley. Privately Printed.

Sonnets and Quatrains, by Antoinette De Coursey Patterson. H. W. Fisher Co.


The Year, by Hiram P. Dilworth. Privately Printed.

Wilderness Verses, by Robert Calvin Whitford. Privately Printed.

God's Weather, by E. Sewell Hill. Privately Printed.

Coming Home and Good-Bye, by E. Sewall Hill. Privately Printed.

I Am the Resurrection and the Life, by Elizabeth Gibson Cheyne. Privately Printed.

A Walled Garden and Other Poems, by Margaret Root Garvin. The Mosher Press.

Cupid's Darts, by Earl Darlington Van Deman. Privately Printed.


Gitanjali, (Song-Offerings) by Rabindra Nath Tagore. The Macmillan Co.

THE

Enjoyment of Poetry

By MAX EASTMAN

Formerly Lecturer at Columbia University

A delightful inquiry into the nature of poetry, which will intensify the pleasure of those who love it, and may well open the eyes and ears of those insensible to it.

But its prime value lies in the entertainment it gives; for though its intent is serious indeed, the wit, humor, and lightness of the writing make it the reverse of abstruse. It should be read for its own sake.

The poetic impulse in perception, in conversation, and in literature is one and the same. It is the impulse to realize. The author distinguishes this from the practical impulse, which is to achieve, or adapt oneself to an environment. He traces these two impulses and illustrates them in the very beginnings of experience, in the play of children, in the origin and growth of language, in slang and profanity, in everyday conversation, and finally in books of poetry and science.

$1.25 net; by mail $1.35

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, Fifth Ave., New York
ALFRED NOYES’

latest book

TALES of the
MERMAID TAVERN

Now Ready

Stories in verse, some humorous, some tragic, imagined to have been told at the famous gathering place of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, and other great Elizabethans. As serialized in Blackwood’s it has been called Noyes’ best work by the London Times and other critics. The background is blank verse, interspersed with ballads and many masterly lyrics, some of which are said by Edmund Gosse to be in absolutely new meters.

“Not since the Elizabethan age itself has the whole soul of Elizabethan England received such eager and vigorous expression as in these inspired tales by Alfred Noyes.” — Clayton Hamilton.

$1.35 net; postpaid $1.45

Frederick A. Stokes Company
Publishers New York
ANNOUNCEMENT

THE RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR COMPANY DESIGNS AND PRINTS LIMITED EDITIONS OF BOOKS IN WHICH WE ATTEMPT TO SECURE UNITY OF DESIGN BETWEEN THE TYPE AND THE DECORATIONS; MAKE A BOOK OF CHARACTER AND BEAUTY ABOVE THE AVERAGE; AND PRODUCE A WORK OF MECHANICAL EXCELLENCE. IF YOU HAVE IN MIND ANY BOOK THAT YOU DESIRE PRIVATELY PRINTED, YOUR KINDLY INTEREST IN OUR WORK WILL BE APPRECIATED.

PLANS AND COSTS WILL BE FURNISHED WITHOUT CHARGE

THE RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR CO.
1025 FINE ARTS BUILDING, CHICAGO

OUR CITY GARDENS—By Maurice Maeterlinck
A new and incomparably beautiful essay by the greatest figure in the literary world today

In THE BOOKMAN for May
Together with a remarkable story by JACK LONDON, personal recollections of IBSEN, and many other features

$2.50 a year
25 cents a copy

Mention this advertisement and send 25 cents for trial subscription to THE BOOKMAN for three months.

THE BOOKMAN, 443 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
Endeavors to publish the best poems now written in English;
Reviews and discusses new books and verse;
Promotes in every possible way the interests of the art.
IF YOU LOVE GOOD POETRY, SUBSCRIBE.
If you believe that this art, like painting, sculpture, music and architecture, requires and deserves public recognition and support, subscribe.
If you believe with Whitman that "the topmost proof of a race is its own born poetry," subscribe.

POETRY
543 Cass Street, Chicago.

Send POETRY for one year ($1.50 enclosed) beginning

_________________________________________________________ to

Name ______________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________