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SCENTED LEAVES—FROM A CHINESE JAR

KUBLAI AND THE LINNET

It is told that the great emperor Kublai, listening one day in his garden, condescended to praise the song of the common brown linnet. Do thou, O high-born scholar, who mayest overlook these clumsily written trifles, be not less gracious than that great emperor, Kublai!

THE ACACIA LEAVES

The aged man, when he beheld winter approaching, counted the leaves as they lapsed from the acacia trees; while his son was talking of the spring.

THE BITTER PURPLE WILLOWS

Meditating on the glory of illustrious lineage I lifted up my eyes and beheld the bitter purple willows growing round the tombs of the exalted Mings.

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THE COMMENTATOR

After the celebrated commentator Yu had spent thirty years in meditation on the first paragraph of the Tao-Te-Ching, he was urged by an inquisitive Viceroy to begin to write. He remarked, "Indecent haste! How contrary to the precepts of the Tao-Te-Ching!"

THE CONQUEROR

The great conqueror Khengiz, towards the close of his life, when he had subdued the four corners of the world and slain more than a million men, encountered on the way an old woman who inquired of him, "Canst thou tell me anything of a certain Khengiz?"

THE CORAL FISHER

The coral fisher, who had been a long time beneath the water, rose to the surface with nothing in his hand but a spray of crimson seaweed. In answer to the master of the junk he said, "While I was in the world of fishes this miserable weed appeared to me more beautiful than coral."

THE CRIMSON PARROTS

On the way I saw the parrots of dusty crimson feathers wrangling over a piece of flesh, but on account of the perfume of thy scented billet I was unable to hear their screams.

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THE DEVIL-WORSHIPPERS

Outside the Heavenly Kingdom, it is reported, dwell devil-worshippers who burn incense before the stake on which a sorcerer was formerly impaled.

THE DIAMOND

The poet Wong, after he had delighted a company of mandarins at a feast, sat silent in the midst of his household. He explained, “The diamond only sparkles when it is in the light.”

THE ESTUARY

Some one complained to the Master, “After many lessons I do not fully understand your doctrine.” In response the Master pointed to the tide in the mouth of the river, and asked, “How wide is the sea in this place?”

THE GOLD FISH

Like a breath from hoarded musk,
Like the golden fins that move
Where the tank’s green shadows part—
Living flames out of the dusk—
Are the lightning throbs of love
In the passionate lover’s heart.
THE INTOXICATED POET

A poet, having taken the bridle off his tongue, spoke thus: "More fragrant than the heliotrope, which blooms all the year round, better than vermilion letters on tablets of sendal, are thy kisses, thou shy one!"

THE JONQUILS

I have heard that a certain princess, when she found that she had been married by a demon, wove a wreath of jonquils and sent it to the lover of former days.

THE LUSCIOUS NECTARINE

In the season of drouth, when the sallow rice bowed down before the reaper's hook, the faithful lover, walking in the Garden of Friendship, plucked a luscious nectarine, and thinking of the beautiful betrothed he wished the marriage day were come.

THE MARIGOLD

Even as the seed of the marigold, carried by the wind, lodges on the roofs of palaces, and lights the air with flame-coloured blossoms, so may the child-like words of the insignificant poet confer honour on lofty and disdainful mandarins.
Scented Leaves

THE MERMAID

The sailor boy who leant over the side of the Junk of Many Pearls, and combed the green tresses of the sea with his ivory fingers, believing that he had heard the voice of a mermaid, cast his body down between the waves.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The emperors of fourteen dynasties, clad in robes of yellow silk embroidered with the Dragon, wearing gold diadems set with pearls and rubies, and seated on thrones of incomparable ivory, have ruled over the Middle Kingdom for four thousand years.

THE MILKY WAY

My mother taught me that every night a procession of junks carrying lanterns moves silently across the sky, and the water sprinkled from their paddles falls to the earth in the form of dew. I no longer believe that the stars are junks carrying lanterns, no longer that the dew is shaken from their oars.

THE NIGHT

In the hall of ebony there grows a tree with golden tassels. In the branches is a silver nest out of which
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come forth twelve squirrels. In the heart of the tree
dwells a fiery snake; when the wind blows the boughs
of the tree smite together, and the fiery snake leaps
forth.

**THE ONION**

The child who threw away leaf after leaf of the many-coated onion, to get to the sweet heart, found in the end that he had thrown away the heart itself.

**THE PEAR TREE**

Han, the wise emperor, bade his son: "Look thou
For merit where thou seest humility,
As they who strip the pear-tree seek for fruit
Upon the branches bending to the ground."

**THE POTTER**

A potter, who was creating the world, threw from him what seemed to him a useless lump of clay, and found that he had thrown away his left hand.

**THE ROSE**

When the delicious verses of Li Po were praised in the Court of Heaven an envious mandarin complained of the poet's scandalous life. The Divine Emperor,
who was walking in his garden, held out a rose and asked him, "Do you smell the gardener’s manure?"

THE SEA-SHELL

To the passionate lover, whose sighs come back to him on every breeze, all the world is like a murmuring sea-shell.

THE STUPID KITE

A kite, while devouring a skylark, complained, "Had I known that thy flesh was no sweeter than that of a sparrow I should have listened longer to thy delicious notes."

THE SWALLOW TOWER

Amid a landscape flickering with poplars, and netted by a silver stream, the Swallow Tower stands in the haunts of the sun. The winds out of the four quarters of heaven come to sigh around it, the clouds forsake the zenith to bathe it with continuous kisses. Against its sun-worn walls a sea of orchards breaks in white foam; and from the battlements the birds that flit below are seen like fishes in a green moat. The windows of the Tower stand open day and night; the winged Guests come when they please, and hold communication with the unknown Keeper of the Tower.

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THE TARTAR

When the victorious general, Ching Wu,
Had overthrown the Tartars, and their chief
Made captive, he reproached him bitterly
For having gone to war without a cause.
The Tartar answered: "Were our country yours,
And China ours, you would make war on us."

THE WINDMILL

The exquisite painter Ko-tsu was often reproached
by an industrious friend for his fits of idleness. At last
he excused himself by saying, "You are a watermill—a
windmill can only grind when the wind blows."

THE TURRET

Millions of years ago, on another planet far off where
different constellations hang, once a poet, forgetting
sorrow, walked in summer along a white cliff high above
the sea with a boy beside him. And the boy said, "There
in that house, before I lost my father and fell into pov-
erty, formerly I lived, and in that turret with its little
window I passed happy hours." And as he listened the
poet felt deep in his heart a mystic pain such as he had
never felt in looking back upon the lost palaces of his
own youth. Afterwards the boy was drowned at sea,
and the heart of the poet was drowned in care; yet to the end of his troubled life he never saw in stone or picture, neither heard nor read of, a turret like that one, but over him there stole the same mystic sorrow, like the breath of flowers out of a hidden garden, like a chord of music from passionate harpstrings away in some immortal world.

THE WORD

The first time the emperor Han heard a certain Word he said, “It is strange.” The second time he said, “It is divine.” The third time he said, “Let the speaker be put to death.”

Allen Upward.
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THE IDOL

Deep in an ancient forest a huge stone idol stood,
Where thronged the dusky worshipers in gratitude for good;
With humble hearts in rudest strains they praised their god benign:
   Serene in measureless repose the idol gave no sign.

In times of sorest trial their chieftain oft would pray
That there might fall upon his path some guiding heavenly ray:
   "Out of thy wisdom manifold let but one word be mine!"
   Serene in measureless repose the idol gave no sign.

When dire disaster smote the tribe or famine's toll was paid,
The trembling people bowed to earth and sought the idol's aid,
Or, frenzied, cursed its stony smile and changeless brow malign:
   Serene in measureless repose the idol gave no sign.

Grave priests declared, "Yon sits the god who heeds no man's behest.
Ye cannot see, ye must not know, yet all is for the best;
   Vain are tears, in vain is praise, yet worship the divine!"

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The Idol

Serene in measureless repose the idol gave no sign.

Behold a wretch despairing fled before the painted foe: With sobbing breath the victim fell—he could no further go.
Ah!— Would that dark libation were but of crimson wine!
   Serene in measureless repose the idol gave no sign.

Pass seasons, years, long centuries. The people die away.
Amid a dwindling forest rots a crumbling image gray,
Now but a formless bulk of rock draped in a living vine.
   Serene in measureless repose the idol gives no sign.

_Tudor Jenks._
FARMER'S BLOOD
To My Grandmother

They said it was too hard for you, who were alone and old,
To live there any longer. And so the farm was sold.

And you, to whom the wind had blown across the yellow wheat,
Made no complaint against the life upon the narrow street;
But many times you stole away all by yourself to stand,
Here by the upper window, where the wide and lovely land sweeps to the farmhouse gleaming white upon the wooded hill,
Just looking off with yearning eyes, quite patient, very still.

Ah, nevermore for you the herd should wind along the lane,
The dogs come barking o'er the snow, the reapers toss the grain!

THE HEARTENING
It may be that the words I spoke
To cheer him on his way,
To him were vain, but I myself
Was braver all that day.
CONTENTMENT

The wide grey sweep of ocean and the long white curl of foam,
The ever-pleading wash of waves, the never-ceasing moan:
I used to scorn their beauty with a heart that spurned its home.

Oh for the silver shining of fair cities o'er the sands!
Oh for the song of dusky throats in dim and distant lands!
They reached to me as women reach their slim and lovely hands.

I followed 'neath the alien sky and through the stranger's door;
And now I crown my wandering with peace that asks no more
Than just to lie and watch the surf along the dear home shore.

QUEST

Ho all you eager travelers!
Have you some place to go
Where you forget the many things
You wish you did not know?
Forget your own insistent past
And feel just fit and free?
If you have found it, won't you tell
Its happy name to me?

Winifred Webb

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THE HUNTING-SONG OF THEM THAT DID NOT HUNT

Good-day, said the damsel,
Good-morrow to you,
For if you mean hunting
I would hunt with you too;

I am weary of making
And baking the bread;
If you stay in my parlour
I will hunt in your stead.

You shall sup in my parlour
My white wine and broth,
I am weary of weaving
The sendal and cloth.

Good-day, said the damsel,
Good-even to you:
What is good for the huntsman
Is good for me too.
DAGONET'S CANZONET

A queen lived in the South;
And music was her mouth,
And sunshine was her hair,
By day, and all the night
The drowsy embers there
Remember'd still the light;

My soul, was she not fair!

But for her eyes — they made
An iron man afraid;
Like sky-blue pools they were,
Watching the sky that knew,
Itself transmuted there
Light blue, or deeper blue;

My soul, was she not fair!

The lifting of her hands
Made laughter in the lands
Where the sun is, in the South:
But my soul learnt sorrow there
In the secrets of her mouth,
Her eyes, her hands, her hair:

Oh soul, was she not fair!

Ernest Rhys.

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SWAN CREEK

Stream, stream, stream,
Oh the willows by the stream;
The poplars and the willows
And the gravel all agleam!

Oh, oh, oh,
And the mourning-doves sang "Oh!"
From their hiding in the oak tops,
Looking on the world below.

Sky, sky, sky,
And all wide and round the sky,
With the white clouds rising, coming,
Coming, shining, drifting by.

Home, home, home,
And beyond the wood was home,
With the old road leading ready
Where the open door said come.

Dream, dream, dream,
Now I wake not but I dream
Of the old road and the ring-doves
And the willows by the stream.

Williston Fish
SONG OF THE MECHANICS

Stilled for a moment be jester’s lay, and the piping notes of Pan,
'Mid your mellow music we high essay to sing a song of Man:
Short be its phrases, as short our speech who fashion the mill and loom,
If the work of our hands not better teach, then give a Man-song room.

When the hammers their thunderous din renew, by the roaring of furnace fires,
We see the forging of dreams come true, the shaping of long desires.
The walls of Progress we carry high, though stained by crime and blood;
For your wondrous beauty and joy we die, O coming Brotherhood.

Then drink to labor an honest cup and let its worth be known!
The ghosts of the past come trooping up bearing the brick and stone;
Dig they the trenches broad and deep, and shape foundations strong,
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Whose good the future years may keep when coming builders throng.

The savage strives for his home, his brood, he fends for his race, his kin;
The workman toils for the common good that takes the whole world in.
Not only for dollars, which mean but bread and refuge from rain and snow,
But that peace may prosper, of war instead; for the Master willed it so.

A Workman spread the heavens wide, a Workman placed the sun:
A Master Workman was satisfied when the Maker said, “Well done.”
Take we no shame if we be but tools, clumsy and dull and worn,
If over us infinite justice rules to mould the years unborn.

*George W. Priest*
DANCING TO A CHEWINK'S SONG

One day when by a path I stood
That strayed its way out of a wood,
To hear the woodbirds' early song
Before I drove my feet along,
There came from out the trees' soft shade
A most delightful, buoyant maid
Who seemed no more of me afraid
Than of the birds whose joyous singing
Set her splendid legs to springing
Till my heart went singing, winging,
And my body woke and swayed.

And then when near to me she drew,
She smiled as most wood-maidens do,
And her sweet voice rang out with laughter
And all the trees went echoing after.
She raised bare arms above her head,
And beckoned me, and then she fled,
More blithesome than the chickadees,
Down a path of arching trees,
Quick of foot as any breeze,
And I followed where she led.

And when we came to a wide brook,
One mighty, flying leap she took;
And then, it seemed, she almost died
Of laughter, while I grimly tried
That cursed running stream to cross
On little boulders green with moss.
And when I tumbled, both feet slipping,
In the stream and came up dripping,
Up and down she ran, a-tripping,
Seeking flowers at me to toss.

Oh, how a girl loose-frocked can kick,
When kicking isn’t just a trick,
But effervescence of pure joy
That bubbles up as in a boy.
She stretched her arms to me and called
When out upon a stone I’d crawled,
And fingers busy, kisses throwing,
All her face alive and glowing,
Danced until, my poor wits going,
Off again I slipped, enthralled.

At last when on the bank I stood
She ran again into the wood,
And now and then a joyous cry
Rang through the trees to guide me by.
And yet, however hard I tried,
It was n’t till her quick eyes spied
A mother squirrel in her nest,
Baby squirrels at her breast,
Dancing to a Chewink’s Song

That she stopped a time to rest,
Letting me creep up beside.
Soft-eyed she watched, with hand held out
To warn me that I must n’t shout,
Or crackle dead limbs with my feet.
And then I heard the wood’s heart beat,
And suddenly the mood was stilled
That in a blithesome hour had willed
For me to caper to the skilled
Abandon of her girlish graces,
Running joyous, pagan races
Through the arching leaf-hung places
Till her cup of fun was filled.

And silently she slipped away
Into the east where each new day
The sun comes up across the sky
While living things are born and die;
And, trailing her with strident cry,
I almost reached her side again,
And saw her eyes were filled with pain:
For all the trees took up my calling,
Echoed it like giant’s brawling,
While she ran through sunbeams falling
And was gone like summer rain.

If you had ever watched for long
A girl with body lithe and strong
Go dancing to a chewink's song,
And then at last, just when you thought
You had her radiant body caught,
Away from you she'd swiftly flown,—
You too would call in plaintive tone,
And run about like something blind,
Begging her to be more kind,
Crying like the winter wind
Through a lonesome forest blown.

Out of the woods in headlong race
I ran, and tripped, and fell through space,
Down by the crossroads near a spring
Where all the peewits come to sing:
And then the next clear thing I knew
Across my face a soft wind blew,
And at my side a girl was kneeling.
All the world went reeling, wheeling,
And her lips to mine came stealing
Softer than the morning dew.

Francis Buzzell
REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

THE NEW LAUREATE

R. ASQUITH was neither adventurous nor democratic in appointing Robert Bridges Poet Laureate. He followed a scholarly tradition, soothed with the honor the declining years of a modern descendant of Addison, an Oxonian closet singer of graceful discreet love verses and carefully carved classic dramas. Of course Mr. Bridges' poetry is as much better than Addison's as his scholarship is more exact than that of Queen Anne's gentlemanly dilettante of letters and politics; it would be a pity if two centuries of international culture had not raised our standards, in this art as in the others, for him who cultivates poetry as an accomplishment.

But the two men belong to the same class. Essentially it is the eighteenth century ideal that Mr. Bridges follows, and it is eighteenth-century verse that he writes. His poetry is a "clear and gentle stream" never troubled by a spring flood. Limpid, quiet, sometimes playful, it moves softly through peaceful rural scenes, as unaware of cities, railroads, steamboats, as it is of mountains and cataracts. It mirrors the gray-green English country through which it travels, but not with Spenser's piquant lyricism or Wordsworth's depth of still sincerity. If Mr. Bridges has moved far enough from Queen Anne's city-

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bound classicists to become aware, under Virgilian sanction, of idyllic and pastoral nature, his mood is still pre-Shelleyan, reminiscent of Thomson or Gray rather than the Victorians.

Of highly artificialized, made-to-order poetry such as the eighteenth century loved, one could scarcely find a better example than Mr. Bridges' *Elegy on a Lady Whom Grief for the Death of Her Betrothed Killed*. And of vers de société love verses there are few prettier examples than *I Will Not Let Thee Go*. Perhaps the most rhythmically descriptive of his *Shorter Poems* is *London Snow*, and the most airily, exquisitely graceful is that dialogue between the muse and the poet which contains this delicate quatrain:

> She must be fair of face,  
> As bold of heart she seems,  
> If she would match her grace  
> With the delight of dreams.

But of all the new laureate's poems, the one which seems most personal and sincere, at once true and tender in grace, is this lyric:

I have loved flowers that fade,  
Within whose magic tents  
Rich hues have marriage made  
With sweet unmemoried scents:  
A honeymoon delight,  
A joy of love at sight  
That ages in an hour:—  
My song be like a flower!  
I have loved airs that die  
Before their charm is writ  
Along a liquid sky  
Trembling to welcome it:  
Notes that with pulse of fire  
Proclaim the spirit's desire,  
Then die, and are nowhere:—  
My song be like an air!

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Die, song, die like a breath,
And wither as a bloom;
Fear not a flowery death,
Dread not an airy tomb!
Fly with delight, fly hence!
'Twas thine love's tender sense
To feast, now on thy bier
Beauty shall shed a tear.

H. M.

IMPRESSIONISM—SOME SPECULATIONS

II

One of my friends, a Really Serious Critic, has assured me that my poem called To All the Dead was not worth publishing because it is just Browning. Let me, to further this speculation, just confess that I have never read Browning and that, roughly speaking, I cannot read poetry at all. I never really have been able to. And then let me analyze this case because it is the plight of many decent, serious people, friends of mine.

As boys we—I and my friends—read Shakespeare with avidity, Virgil to the extent of getting at least two Books of the Aeneid by heart, Horace with pleasure and Ovid's Persephone Rapta with delight. We liked very much the Bacchae of Euripides—I mean that we used to sit down and take a read in these things sometimes apart from the mere exigencies of the school curriculum. A little later Herrick moved us to ecstasy and some of Donne; we liked passages of Fletcher, of Marlowe, of Webster and of Kyd. At that time we really loved the
Minnesingers and fell flat in admiration before anything of Heine. The Troubadors and even the Northern French Epics we could not read—French poetry did not exist for us at all. If we read a French poem at all we had always to read it twice, once to master the artificial rhythm, once for the sense.

Between seventeen and eighteen we read Rossetti, Catullus, Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, and still Shakespeare, Herrick, Heine, Elizabethan and Jacobean lyrics, Crashaw, Herbert and Donne. Towards eighteen we tried Swinburne, Tennyson, Browning and Pope. We could not read any of them—we simply and physically couldn't sit down with them in the hand long enough to master more than a few lines. We never read any Tennyson at all except for the fragment about the Eagle; never read any Swinburne at all except for a poem or two. Browning we read sufficient to "get the hang" of Fifine at the Fair, the Blot on the Scutcheon for the lyric There's a Woman Like a Dewdrop, and Meeting at Night and Parting at Morning, and Oh to be in England.... So that, as things go, we may be said never to have read any Browning at all. (I do not mean to say that what I did read did not influence me so that even at this late date that influence may be found in such a poem as To all the Dead or The Starling. Influences are queer things and there is no knowing when or where they may take you. But, until the other day, I should have said
that Browning was the last of the poets that I should have taken consciously as a model. The other day, however,—about a month ago—my wife insisted, sorely against my wishes, on reading to me the beginning of The Flight of the Duchess—as far as And the whole is our Duke's country.... that most triumphant expression of feudal loyalty. And my enthusiasm knew no bounds, so that, if ever the Muse should visit me again it may well be Browningese that I shall write, for there is no passage in literature that I should more desire to have written.)

But at any rate, the attempt to read Tennyson, Swinburne and Browning and Pope—in our teens—gave me and the friends I have mentioned a settled dislike for poetry that we have never since quite got over. We seemed to get from them the idea that all poets must of necessity write affectedly, at great length, with many superfluous words—that poetry, of necessity, was something boring and pretentious. And I fancy that it is because the greater part of humanity got that impression from those poets that few modern men or women read verse at all.

To such an extent did that feeling overmaster us that, although we subsequently discovered for ourselves Christina Rossetti—who strikes us still as far and away the greatest master of words and moods that any art has produced—I am conscious that we regarded her as being far
more a prose writer than a poet at all. Poetry being something pretentious, "tol-lol" as the phrase then was, poetentious, brow-beating, affected—this still, small, private voice gave the impression of not being verse at all. Such a phrase describing lizards amongst heath as; like darted lightnings here and there perceived yet nowhere dwelt upon or such a sentence as Quoth one, to-morrow shall be like to-day, but much more sweet — these things gave an exquisite pleasure, but it was a pleasure comparable rather to that to be had from reading Flaubert. It was comparable rather to that which came from reading the last sentences of Herodias: Et tous ayant pris la tete de Jokanaan s'en allaient vers Galilée. Comme elle était très lourde ils la portaient alternativement. I do not presume to say exactly whence the pleasure comes except in so far as that I believe that such exact, formal and austere phrases can to certain men give a pleasure beyond any other. And it was this emotion that we received from Christina Rossetti.

But still, subconsciously, I am aware that we did not regard her as a poet.

And, from that day onwards I may say that we have read no poetry at all—at any rate we have read none unprofessionally until just the other day. The poets of the nineties—Dowson, Johnson, Davidson and the rest—struck us as just nuisances, writing in derivative language uninteresting matters that might have been interesting
Impressionism—Some Speculations

had they been expressed in the much more exquisite medium of prose. We got perhaps some pleasure from reading the poems, not the novels, of George Meredith, and a great deal from those of Mr. Hardy, whom we do regard as a great, queer, gloomy and splendid poet. We read also, by some odd impulse, the whole of Mr. Doughty’s *Dawn in Britain*, that atrocious and wonderful epic in twelve volumes which is, we think, the longest and most queerly impressive poem in modern English. We read it with avidity; we could not tear ourselves away from it, and we wrote six reviews of it because no professional reviewers could be found to give the time for reading it. It was a queer adventure.

That, then, is the history of twenty years of reading verse, and I think I may say that, for men whose life-business is reading, we have read practically no poetry at all. And, during those twenty years we should have said with assurance that poetry was an artificial, a boring, an unnecessary thing.

But, about five years ago we began to think of founding a periodical—one is always thinking of founding periodicals. We had then to think of what place verse must take in the scheme of things. With our foreign ideas in which academic palms and precedence figure more strongly than they do in the minds of most free-born islanders, it did not take us long to arrive at the conclusion that poetry must have the very first place in that journal—not because it was a living force but just
because it was dead and must be treated with deference. Moreover, if I may make a further confession, our express aim in founding the periodical in question, was to print a poem by Mr. Hardy, a poem that other periodicals had found too—let us say—outranked for them to print. Now it would have been ridiculous to found an immense paper for the express purpose of printing one particular poem and not to have given that poem the utmost pride of place.

So we printed *A Sunday Morning Tragedy* first and the rest in a string after it. It seemed proper, French and traditional to do so.

And then, we began to worry our poor heads about poetry. We had, perforce, to read a great deal of it and much of what we read seemed to be better stuff than we had expected. We came for instance upon the poems of Mr. Yeats. Now, for ten or twenty years we had been making light of Mr. Yeats; we used to sniff irritably at *I will arise and go now*, and to be worried by *The Countess Kathleen*. Mr. Yeats appeared to be a merely "literary" poet; an annoying dilettante. I do not now know whether Mr. Yeats has changed or whether we have, but I am about in a moment to try to make an *amende honorable*.

At any rate we came upon the work of Mr. Yeats, of Mr. De la Mare, of Mr. Flint, of Mr. D. H. Lawrence, and upon suggestions of power in Mr. Pound's derivations
Impressionism—Some Speculations

from the Romance writers. And gradually it has forced itself upon us that there is a new quality, a new power of impressionism, that is open to poetry and not so much open to prose. It is a quality that attracted us years ago to the poems of Mr. Hardy and of George Meredith. I know that my younger friends will start ominously at this announcement, that they will come round to my house and remonstrate seriously for many weary hours. But I must make the best of that.

For the fact is that, in Mr. Yeats as in Mr. Hardy, there are certain qualities that very singularly unite them, qualities not so much of diction or of mind but qualities that can only be expressed in pictorial terms. For when I think of Mr. Hardy's work I seem to see a cavernous darkness, a darkness filled with wood-smoke, touched here and there with the distant and brooding glow of smothered flame. When I think of Mr. Yeats' work I seem to see a grey, thin mist over a green landscape, the mist here and there being pierced by a sparkle of dew, by the light shot from a gem in a green cap. I have tried to write this as carefully as I can so as to express very precisely what is in the end a debt of sheer gratitude. I mean that really and truly that is the sort of feeling that I have—as if I had discovered two new countries—the country of the hardly illumined and cavernous darkness, the country of the thin grey mist over the green fields and as if those countries still remained for me to travel in.
It will at first sight appear that here is a contradicting of the words with which we set out—the statement that it is the duty of the poet to reflect his own day. But there is no contradiction. It is the duty of the poet to reflect his own day as it appears to him, as it has impressed itself upon him. Because I and my friends have, as the saying is, rolled our humps mostly in a landscape that is picked out with red patches of motor-bus sides it would be the merest provincialism to say that the author of *Innisfree* should not have sate in the cabins of County Galway or of Connemara or wherever it is, or that the author of the *Dynasts* should not have wandered about a country called Wessex reading works connected with Napoleon. We should not wish to limit Mr. Yeats' reading to the Daily Papers, nor indeed do we so limit our own, any more than we should wish to limit the author of that most beautiful impression, *The Listeners*, to the purlieus of Bedford Street where the publishers' offices are.

What worried and exasperated us in the poems of the late Lord Tennyson, the late Lewis Morris, the late William Morris, the late—well whom you like—is not their choice of subject, it is their imitative handling of matter, of words; it is their derivative attitude.

Reading is an excellent thing; it is also experience, and both Mr. Yeats and Mr. De la Mare have read a great deal. But it is an experience that one should go through
not in order to acquire imitative faculties but in order to find—oneself. Roughly speaking, the late Victorian writers imitated Malory or the Laxdaela Saga and commented upon them; roughly speaking, again, the poets of today record their emotions at receiving the experience of the emotions of former writers.

The measure of the truth has to be found. It would be an obvious hypocrisy in men whose first unashamed action of the day is to open the daily paper for the cricket scores and whose poetic bag and baggage is as small as I have related—it would be an obvious hypocrisy in us to pretend to have passed the greater part of our existences in romantic woods. But it would be a similar hypocrisy in Mr. De la Mare, Mr. Yeats, or Mr. Hardy to attempt to render Life in the terms of the sort of Futurist picture that life is to me and my likes.

But to get a sort of truth, a sort of genuineness into your attitude towards the life that God makes you lead; to follow up your real preferences—to like, as some of us like, the hard, bitter, ironical German poets, the life of restaurants, of Crowds, of flashed impressions; to love as we may love, in our own way, the Blessed Virgin, Saint Katharine or the sardonic figure of Christina of Milan, and to render it, that is one good thing. Or again, to be genuinely Irish, with all the historic background of death, swords, flames, mists, sorrows, wakes and again mists; to love those things and the Irish sanctities and Paganisms
—that is another good thing if it is truly rendered. The main thing is the genuine love and the faithful rendering of the received impression.

The actual language, the vernacular employed, is a secondary matter. I prefer personally the language of my own day, a language clear enough for certain matters, employing slang where slang is felicitous, and vulgarity where it seems to me that vulgarity is the only weapon against dullness. Mr. Doughty on the other hand—and Mr. Doughty is a great poet—uses a barbarous idiom as if he were chucking pieces of shale at you from the top of a rock. Mr. Yeats makes literal translations from the Irish; Mr. Hardy does not appear to bother his head much about words; he drags them in as he likes. Mr. De la Mare and Mr. Flint are rather literary, Mr. Pound, as often as not, is so unacquainted with English idioms as to be nearly unintelligible.

(God forbid, by the bye, that I should seem to arrogate to myself a position as a poet side by side with Mr. De la Mare, or, for the matter of that, with Mr. Pound. But in stating my preferences I am merely, quite humbly, trying to voice what I imagine will be the views or the aspirations, the preferences or the prejudices, of the poet of my day and circumstances when he shall at least appear and voice the life of dust, toil, discouragement, excitement and enervation that I and many millions lead today.)

When that poet does come, it seems to me, that his species will be much that of the gentlemen I have several
Impressionism—Some Speculations

times mentioned. His attitude towards life will be theirs; his circumstances only will be different. An elephant is an elephant whether he pours, at an African water-hole, mud and water over his free and scorched flanks, or whether, in the Zoological Gardens, he carries children about upon his back. —Ford Madox Hueffer.

Myself and I, by Fannie Stearns Davis. Macmillan.

This book shows a charming lyrical fancy. Poems such as Hill-Fantasy and the first of the Songs of Conn the Fool, are excellent and original. In Conn, the idea of the poet's mission being to steal the moon in order to plant its seeds and grow more moons for a clamoring world, expresses an old belief under quite a new figure.

The metre of Hill-Fantasy gives the swing and lilt of the pipe music about which it sings. It is also a relief, this unusual metre, in a volume of much metrical sameness. Miss Davis is a pioneer in neither ideas nor verse-forms. She follows a well-beaten track, tripping along it with dainty, feminine feet. Hers is a delicate talent, made up of careful observation of nature, and a fine taste for beauty. Some of her expressions are a keen pleasure: "Gown of shoal-sea green," "Till the blue air crackled like a frost-film on a pool," "A little white moon like a twisted thread." All of these show a rare gift of imagination, and the real poetic quality of stamping the idea into words. Miss Davis plays a graceful little tune on a silver-stringed lute. But it is only one tune and her lute

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POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

is only one instrument. In “Myself and I”, she laments the lack of courage which prevents her from following her vision, and resigns herself to the compromise of keeping the vision as a solace, while lingering in “the sober road.” One cannot help hoping that, with so much talent, “I” will permit herself to broaden and deepen, mentally, under the tutelage of “Myself,” so that the melody of the lute may widen to the full-toned orchestra of a larger sympathy and a greater range of joy and sorrow. But even as it is, and in spite of much repetition, this book contains poems which give great pleasure and a sense of satisfaction. 

Amy Lowell


This inspiriting book contains two chapters on poetry—one on the repertoire of a Panjabi singer, with translations of lines not unworthy of the Greek Anthology, one on Rabindranath Tagore. The translations are slightly marred by inversions, by too frequent use of the second person singular, and—in their attempt to preserve the simplicity of the originals—by an occasional word or phrase which has been too far degraded by music-hall use to be longer effective in English.

Among the Panjabi folksongs there is one which says that the Sandal-tree grows where Lachchi spills water.
Reviews

Aha, Lachchi asks the girls,
Oh what coloured veil suits a fair complexion?
Your friendship with the goat-herds is sundered,
Who will give you milk to drink?

Among the poems of Rabindranath not included in *Gitanjali* is found this quatrain:

O Death, hadst thou been but emptiness,
In a moment the world would have faded away.
Thou art Beauty: the world like a child,
Rests on thy bosom forever and ever.

Even without the chapters on poetry the book is so full of profound and natural sense on matters of art industry and education that anyone who reads it will be grateful for this suggestion.

E. P.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The winner or winners of the first Guarantors’ Prize of two hundred and fifty dollars will be announced in either the first or the second number of Volume III. This prize, offered in the first number of *Poetry*, is to be awarded by the editors and the members of the Advisory Committee, either undivided to one poet, or, divided, to two poets, contributing the best poem or poems during the first year of the magazine. This prize will probably be continued during each of the five years for which the magazine is endowed, but the announcement is not yet positive.

The prize of twenty-five dollars offered by Mr. Ernest MacDonald Bowman, a guarantor, for the best
epigram, will be considered at the same time. Apparently the classic art of poetic epigram is not a modern fashion, for there have been few contestants for this prize.

The editors announce with great pleasure the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, which is to be awarded for the best poem contributed by a citizen of the United States, and published in POETRY during its second year—October, 1913 to September, 1914. This prize is offered by Mr. Salmon O. Levinson, of Chicago, in memory of his wife, who was a lover of poetry.

NOTES

Mr. Allen Upward, born in Worcester in 1863, has had a varied life. A scholar, a barrister, a volunteer soldier who ran the blockade of Crete, and invaded Turkey with the Greek army, he is also the author of plays, romances, poems, and of The New Word, that powerful plea for idealism which aroused England six years ago, and for which Mr. Gerald Stanley Lee, in Crowds, demands the Nobel prize. The Scented Leaves are not direct translations, but paraphrases from the Chinese.

A graduate of Yale and of the Columbia Law School, Mr. Tudor Jenks practised law from 1881 to 1887, served on the editorial staff of “St. Nicholas” for fifteen years, since which time he has devoted himself again to legal practise and to free lance literary work. He is the
Notes

author of many books of stories and histories for young people; but has never published his verse in book form.

Mr. Ernest Rhys has already been introduced to the readers of Poetry. His poem Happiness appeared in the November, 1912, number.

Mr. Williston Fish, of Chicago, and Mr. George W. Priest, of Bryan, Ohio, are known as contributors of verse to the magazines.

Miss Winifred Webb and Mr. Francis Buzzell are both young writers who have published little verse as yet. Miss Webb is a Californian, and a graduate of Stanford University. Mr. Buzzell comes from Michigan and has spent several years in Chicago in newspaper and editorial work.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Old Glory at Gettysburg, by Captain R. K. Beecham. A. C. McClurg & Co.

Songs Through the Night, by Mary Ellis Robins. The Maverick Press.

Lyrics, by Lady Margaret Sackville. Herbert Daniel.


Bertrud and Other Dramatic Poems, by the author of A Hymn to Dionysus. Privately printed.


Alma Mater, or The Georgetown Centennial, and Other Dramas, by M. S. Paine. Published for Georgetown Visitation Convent.


UNITED STATES.

New York: The Century; The Forum; Scribner's Magazine; Current Opinion; The Literary Digest; The Nation; The International; The Survey; The Woman's Home Companion.


Philadelphia: The Conservator.

Portland, Maine: The Bibelot.

Woodstock, N. Y.: The Wild Hawk.

New Haven, Conn.: The Yale Review.

FOREIGN.

Paris: La Vie des Lettres—Nicolas Beauduin, Directeur; La Renaissance Contemporaine; Poeme et Dram; Les Bandeaux d'Or; Mercure de France; L'Effort Libre; Les Poetes; L'Ile Sonnante.

London: Poetry and Drama, Harold Monro, editor; Poetry Review (new series); Stephen Philips, editor; Rhythm; The British Review.

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This is the first collected and revised edition of Mr. Herbert Trench's work. The realm in which he seems to be a native is that of a very rich and sweet contemplation and his curiously woven harmonies, dream-touched, are full of serene human sympathy. His "Apollo and the Seamen" George Bernard Shaw declares will "certainly outlast, even as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony outlasts, the popular ephemeral of our day."

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MAY BYRON.


No woman writer in England today has a higher poetic gift, a truer inspiration, than has May Byron. Her verse has a glow of imagination, a thrilling trumpet-note, a strength and nervous mastery that are very rare in the poetry of a woman.

J. A. BURR.


Miss Burr's poetry is already widely known through its appearance in such periodicals as Scribner's The Century, etc. In this volume she includes the finest of these contributions.

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Card to the binder:

Two leaves (four pages) are here furnished to correct printers' errors. In binding please remove pages 1-2 and 117-118 from the April and June numbers, and insert these.

Will they be touched with the truth?

Their virgin stupidity is untemptable.
I beg you, my friendly critics,
Do not set about to procure me an audience.

I mate with my free kind upon the crags;
the hidden recesses
Have heard the echo of my heels.
in the cool light,
in the darkness.

[1]
CONTEMPORANIA

TENZONE

Will people accept them?

(i. e. these songs).

As a timorous wench from a centaur

(or a centurian),

Already they flee, howling in terror.

Will they be touched with the truth?

Their virgin stupidity is untemptable.

I beg you, my friendly critics,

Do not set about to procure me an audience.

I mate with my free kind upon the crags;

the hidden recesses

Have heard the echo of my heels.

in the cool light,

in the darkness.

[1]
THE CONDOLENCE

A mis soledades voy,
De mis soledades vengo,
Porque por andar conmigo
Mi bastan mis pensamientos.
Lope de Vega.

O my fellow sufferers, songs of my youth,
A lot of asses praise you because you are "virile,"
We, you, I! We are "Red Bloods"!
Imagine it, my fellow sufferers —
Our maleness lifts us out of the ruck.
Who'd have foreseen it?

O my fellow sufferers, we went out under the trees,
We were in especial bored with male stupidity.
We went forth gathering delicate thoughts,
Our "fantastikon" delighted to serve us.
We were not exasperated with women,
for the female is ductile.

And now you hear what is said to us:
We are compared to that sort of person
Who wanders about announcing his sex
As if he had just discovered it.
Let us leave this matter, my songs,
and return to that which concerns us.
Notes

Mrs. Helen Cowles Le Cron, born in Iowa, was graduated from Northwestern University in 1908. Marrying soon after, she lived five years in Wyoming but recently returned to Des Moines.

Mr. Rollo Britten, now editor of a paper in Manistee, Michigan, was born in Nebraska in 1889, and graduated from Harvard in 1912.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Tales of the Mermaid Tavern, by Alfred Noyes. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Helen of Troy, and Other Poems, by Sara Teasdale. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
A Duet With Omar, by Albert J. Edmunds, with a supplement by James E. Richards.
A Legend of the Rose and Other Poems, by Leyland Huckle. Privately printed.
Ode to Morning, by Hiram Powers Dilworth. Privately printed.
A Summer Idyl, by Mary Leedy Flanagan. The Cosmopolitan Press.
To the Lost Friend, by Auguste Angellier. Translated by Mildred J. Knight and Charles R. Murphy. Sherman, French & Co.
To Bliss Carman, a Little Anthology by Four Admirers who dwell in the Canadian Homeland. Privately printed.
First Flights in Verse, by Maxwell Edgar. Privately printed.
The Art of Versification, by J. Berg Esenwein and Mary Eleanor Roberts. The Home Correspondence School.

PERIODICALS RECEIVED.

UNITED STATES.
New York: The Century; The Forum; Scribner's Magazine; Current Opinion; The Literary Digest; The Nation; The International; The Survey; The Woman's Home Companion.
Philadelphia: The Conservator.
Portland, Maine: The Bibelot.
Woodstock, N. Y.: The Wild Hawk.
New Haven, Conn.: The Yale Review.
FOREIGN.
Paris: La Vie des Lettres (No. 1)—Nicolas Beauduin, Directeur; La Renaissance Contemporaine; Poème et Drame; Les Bandeaux d'Or; Mercure de France; L'Effort Libre, Les Poètes; L'Île Sonnante.
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The editor of POETRY shares the sorrow of many friends over the death of two of the above subscribers to the Fund. Daniel H. Burnham, the distinguished architect, and Mrs. La Verne Noyes, the gracious and generous woman, were conspicuous lovers and patrons of poetry and the other arts. The one subscription is maintained by Mrs. Burnham, and the other by Mr. Noyes.
To have great poets
there must be great audiences too.
—Whitman.