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Ezra Pound

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The Spring—The Coming of War: Actaeon—
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Rihaku (Li Po)
Translated by Ezra Pound

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Our Contemporaries—Notes

543 Cass Street, Chicago
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PROVINCIA DESERTA

At Rochecourt,
Where the hills part
in three ways,
And three valleys, full of winding roads,
Fork out to south and north,
There is a place of trees . . . gray with lichen.
I have walked there
thinking of old days.

At Chalais
is a pleached arbor;
Old pensioners and old protected women
Have the right there—
it is charity.
I have crept over old rafters,
peering down
Over the Dronne,
    over a stream full of lilies.
Eastward the road lies,
    Aubeterre is eastward,
With a garrulous old man at the inn.
I know the roads in that place:
Mareuil to the north-east,
    La Tour,
There are three keeps near Mareuil,
And an old woman,
    glad to hear Arnaut,
Glad to lend one dry clothing.

I have walked
    into Perigord,
I have seen the torch-flames, high-leaping,
Painting the front of that church,
And, under the dark, whirling laughter.
I have looked back over the stream
    and seen the high building,
Seen the long minarets, the white shafts.
I have gone in Ribeyrac
    and in Sarlat,
I have climbed rickety stairs, heard talk of Croy,
Walked over En Bertran's old layout,
Have seen Narbonne, and Cahors and Chalus,
Have seen Excideuil, carefully fashioned.
I have said:

"Here such a one walked.
"Here Coeur-de-Lion was slain.
"Here was good singing.
"Here one man hastened his step.
"Here one lay panting."

I have looked south from Hautefort,
thinking of Montaignac, southward.

I have lain in Rocafixada,
level with sunset,
Have seen the copper come down
tinging the mountains,
I have seen the fields, pale, clear as an emerald,
Sharp peaks, high spurs, distant castles.

I have said: "The old roads have lain here.
"Men have gone by such and such valleys,
"Where the great halls are closer together."

I have seen Foix on its rocks, seen Toulouse and Arles greatly altered,
I have seen the ruined "Dorata."

I have said:

"Riquier! Guido."

I have thought of the second Troy,
Some little prized place in Auvergnat:
Two men tossing a coin, one keeping a castle,
One set on the highway to sing.

He sang a woman.
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Auvergne rose to the song;
   The Dauphin backed him.
"The castle to Austors!"
   "Pieire kept the singing—
"A fair man and a pleasant."
   He won the lady,
Stole her away for himself, kept her against armed force:
So ends that story.
That age is gone;
Piere de Maensac is gone.
I have walked over these roads;
I have thought of them living.

IMAGE FROM D'ORLEANS

Young men riding in the street
In the bright new season
Spur without reason,
Causing their steeds to leap.

And at the pace they keep
Their horses' armored feet
Strike sparks from the cobbled street
In the bright new season.

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The Spring

THE SPRING

Cydonian spring with her attendant train,
Maelids and water-girls,
Stepping beneath a boisterous wind from Thrace,
Throughout this sylvan place
Spreads the bright tips,
And every vine-stock is
Clad in new brilliancies.

And wild desire
Falls like black lightning.
O bewildered heart,
Though every branch have back what last year lost,
She, who moved here amid the cyclamen,
Moves only now a clinging tenuous ghost.

THE COMING OF WAR: ACTAEON

An image of Lethe,
and the fields
Full of faint light
but golden,
Gray cliffs,
and beneath them
A sea
Harsher than granite,
unstill, never ceasing;

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High forms
with the movement of gods,
Perilous aspect;
And one said:
"This is Actaeon."
Actaeon of golden greaves!

Over fair meadows,
Over the cool face of that field,
Unstill, ever moving,
Host of an ancient people,
The silent cortège.

THE GIPSY

"Est-ce que vous avez vu des autres—des camarades—avec des singes ou des ours?"

A stray gipsy—A. D. 1912

That was the top of the walk, when he said:
"Have you seen any others, any of our lot,
"With apes or bears?"

—A brown upstanding fellow
Not like the half-castes,
up on the wet road near Clermont.
The wind came, and the rain,
And mist clotted about the trees in the valley,
And I'd the long ways behind me,
gray Arles and Biaucaire,

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And he said, "Have you seen any of our lot?"

I'd seen a lot of his lot . . .
ever since Rhodez,
Coming down from the fair
of St. John,
With caravans, but never an ape or a bear.

DOGMATIC STATEMENT CONCERNING THE GAME OF CHESS:
THEME FOR A SERIES OF PICTURES

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens,
Striking the board, falling in strong "l"s of color,
Reaching and striking in angles,
holding lines in one color.
This board is alive with light;
these pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
Luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with "x"s of queens,
looped with the knight-leaps.

"Y" pawns, cleaving, embanking!
Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the vortex,
Clash, leaping of bands, straight stripe of hard color,

Ezra Pound

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EXILE'S LETTER

From the Chinese of Rihaku (Li Po), usually considered the greatest poet of China: written by him while in exile about 760 A. D., to the Hereditary War-Councillor of Sho, "recollecting former companionship."

So-Kin of Rakuho, ancient friend, I now remember
That you built me a special tavern,
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.
With yellow gold and white jewels
we paid for the songs and laughter,
And we were drunk for month after month,
forgetting the kings and princes.
Intelligent men came drifting in, from the sea
and from the west border,
And with them, and with you especially,
there was nothing at cross-purpose;
And they made nothing of sea-crossing
or of mountain-crossing
If only they could be of that fellowship.
And we all spoke out our hearts and minds . . .
and without regret.

And then I was sent off to South Wei,
smothered in laurel groves,
And you to the north of Raku-hoku,
Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories between us.
And when separation had come to its worst
We met, and travelled together into Sen-Go

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Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning and twisting waters;
Into a valley of a thousand bright flowers . . .
that was the first valley,
And on into ten thousand valleys
full of voices and pine-winds.
With silver harness and reins of gold,
prostrating themselves on the ground,
Out came the East-of-Kan foreman and his company;
And there came also the "True-man" of Shi-yo to meet me,
Playing on a jewelled mouth-organ.
In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us
more Sennin music;
Many instruments, like the sound of young phoenix broods.
And the foreman of Kan-Chu, drunk,
Danced because his long sleeves
Wouldn't keep still, with that music playing.
And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my head on his lap,
And my spirit so high that it was all over the heavens.

And before the end of the day we were scattered like stars or rain.
I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,
You back to your river-bridge.
And your father, who was brave as a leopard,
Was governor in Hei Shu and put down the barbarian rabble.

[259]
And one May he had you send for me, despite the long distance;
And what with broken wheels and so on, I won’t say it wasn’t hard going . . .
Over roads twisted like sheep’s guts.
And I was still going, late in the year,
in the cutting wind from the north,
And thinking how little you cared for the cost . . .
and you caring enough to pay it.
Then what a reception!
Red jade cups, food well set, on a blue jewelled table;
And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning;
And you would walk out with me to the western corner of the castle,
To the dynastic temple, with the water about it clear as blue jade,
With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and drums,
With ripples like dragon-scales going grass-green on the water,
Pleasure lasting, with courtesans going and coming without hindrance,
With the willow-flakes falling like snow,
And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,
And the waters a hundred feet deep reflecting green eyebrows—
Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young moonlight,
Gracefully painted—and the girls singing back at each other,
Dancing in transparent brocade,
And the wind lifting the song, and interrupting it,
Tossing it up under the clouds.

And all this comes to an end,
And is not again to be met with.
I went up to the court for examination,
Tried Layu's luck, offered the Choyu song,
And got no promotion,
And went back to the East Mountains white-headed.

And once again we met, later, at the South Bridge head.
And then the crowd broke up—you went north to San palace.
And if you ask how I regret that parting?
It is like the flowers falling at spring's end,
confused, whirled in a tangle.
What is the use of talking! And there is no end of talking—
There is no end of things in the heart.

I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees to write and seal this,
And I send it a thousand miles, thinking.

Rihaku (Li Po)

Translated by Ezra Pound from the notes of the late
Ernest Fenollosa, and the decipherings of the Pro-
fessors Mori and Araga.
LIADAIN TO CURITHIR

Liadain and Curithir were two poets who lived in Ireland in the seventh century. They fell in love; but while Curithir was absent making preparations for their marriage, Liadain, for some unexplained reason, took the vows of a nun. Curithir in despair became a monk. At first they continued to see each other, but when this led to the breaking of their vows, Curithir left Liadain to spend his life in penance and thus save his soul.

I

If I had known how narrow a prison is love,
Never would I have given the width of the skies
In return for thy kiss, O Curithir, thou my grief!

If I had known love's poverty, I would have given
Dúns and forests and ploughlands and begged my bread:
For now I have lost the earth and the stars and my soul.

If I had known the strength of love, I would have laid
The ridge of the world in ashes to stay his feet:
I would have cried on a stronger lord—on Death.

II

I, that was wont to pass by all unmoved
As the long ridge of the tide sweeps to the shore,
Am broken at last on the crags of a pitiless love.
Liadain to Curithir

I, who was wont to see men pale at my glance,
Like the quivering grass am shaken beneath thine eyes;
At thy touch my spirit is captive, my will is lost.

I would darken the sun and moon to break from thy love,
I would shatter the world to win thee again to my side.
O aching madness of love! Have the dead repose?
Or wilt thou tear my heart in the close-shut grave?

III

I have done with blame, I have risen from the cold earth
Where night and day my forehead has known the clay.
With faltering steps I have passed out to the sun.

Now in the sight of all I stand, that all may know
(For I myself will praise thee and prove their words)
How great was thy wisdom in turning away from me.

Who that has drunken wine will keep the lees?
Who that has slain a man will wait for revenge?
Who that has had his desire of a woman will stay?

Farewell, O Curithir, let thy soul be saved!
I have not found a thing that is dearer to thee.
In the eyes of God is it priceless? Who can say!

[263]
My soul is a thing of little worth unto God:
Of less worth unto thee, O Curithir, than my love.
And unto me so small I flung it beneath thy feet.

IV

If the dark earth hold a Power that is not God
I pray It to bind up memory lest I die.

There was a day when Curithir loved me, now it is gone.
It was I that sundered his love from me, I myself;
Or it was God who struck me with madness and mocked.

If the dark earth hold a Power that is not God
I pray It to hide me for ever away from His face.

V

All things are outworn now—grief is dead,
And passion has fallen from me like a withered leaf.
Little it were to me now though Curithir were beside me:
Though he should pass I would not turn my head.
My heart is like a stone in my body.
All I have grasped I loose again from my hands.

Moireen Fox
POEMS

THE WIND SLEEPERS

Whiter
than the crust
left by the tide,
we are stung by the hurled sand
and the broken shells.

We no longer sleep,
sleep in the wind.
We awoke and fled
through the Peiraeic gate.

Tear—
tear us an altar.
Tug at the cliff-boulders,
pile them with the rough stones.
We no longer
sleep in the wind.
Propitiate us.

Chant in a wail
that never halts.
Pace a circle and pay tribute
with a song.

When the roar of a dropped wave
breaks into it,

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pour meted words
of sea-hawks and gulls
and sea-birds that cry
discords.

STORM

I

You crash over the trees,
you crack the live branch:
the branch is white,
the green crushed,
each leaf is rent like split wood.

II

You burden the trees
with black drops,
you swirl and crash:
you have broken off a weighted leaf
in the wind—
it is hurled out,
whirls up and sinks,
a green stone.

THE POOL

Are you alive?
I touch you with my thumb.
The Pool

You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you—banded-one?

THE GARDEN

I

You are clear,
O rose, cut in rock.

I could scrape the color
from the petals,
like spilt dye from a rock.

If I could break you
I could break a tree.

If I could stir
I could break a tree,
I could break you.

II

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
slit it to tatters.

[267]
Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air:
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears,
and rounds grapes.

Cut the heat:
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

MOONRISE

Will you glimmer on the sea?
Will you fling your spear-head
on the shore?
What note shall we pitch?

We have a song,
on the bank we share our arrows—
the loosed string tells our note:

O flight,
bring her swiftly to our song.
She is great,
we measure her by the pine-trees.

H. D.
IN AN OLD LODGING-HOUSE

Old house, old room, what do you think of me,
And all my little windy smiles and tears—
My easy woe and easier ecstasy:
Old house, old room, who know the falling years?

I wonder if my loneliness is strange
To you, tall windows, free with night and day.
Who else has loved the seasons’ lingering change
Across the courts and roofs? What eyes more gay

Have glanced through you, nor watched the moon too well
Because they sought some face less cold and far?
What feet upon your wornout thresholds fell,
More light, more daring, than my dull feet are?

Or, oh, what passionate sorrow may have swept
From wall to wall, and shaken them like cloth?
What weary wounded arrogance has kept
A blundering watch here, like a wing-scorched moth?

Has Death lain here, maybe, all night, all night,
Where I in ruddy restlessness do lie:
The folded hands, the lips so smiling white?
O room, what wind of Fate has lashed you high
Upon the wave of tragedy and tears?
And I sit here, and write such foolish things!
Old house, old room, who know the falling years,
How faint must be my gloom and gloryings!

TONIGHT

My mother died when I was young,
Yet not too young to know
What terror round the dark halls clung
That aching day of snow.

I knew she could not comfort me.
I sat there all alone.
Cold sorrow held me quietly
Dumb as a snow-hid stone.

And yet I seemed to watch it all
As in a picture-book:
The silent people in the hall,
My father's frozen look.

The heaped white roses, and my dress
So very black and new.
I watched it without weariness—
Ah, how the snow-blast blew!
Tonight

Tonight you say you love me—me
Who leap to love you. Lo,
I am all yours so utterly
You need not speak, nor show

One sign, but I shall understand
Out to our life's last rim;
Out into death's uncertain land,
Gracious be it or grim.

I am all yours. And yet tonight
The old trick haunts me. Look!
I see your face, O new delight,
As in a picture-book.

Your face, your shape, the fire-lit room,
The red rose on the shelf;
And, leaning to its passionate bloom,
Troubled with love, myself.

Oh, hold your hand across my eyes—
They have no right to see!
But now, as then, they are too wise:
They stare—they frighten me!

Fannie Stearns Davis
Scherzo

Come, sprite, and dance! The sun is up,
The wind runs laughing down the sky
That brims with morning like a cup.
Sprite, we must race him,
We must chase him—
You and I!
And skim across the fuzzy heather—
You and joy and I together
Whirling by!

You merry little roll of fat!—
Made warm to kiss, and smooth to pat,
And round to toy with, like a cub;
To put one's nozzle in and rub
And breathe you in like breath of kine,
Like juice of vine,
That sets my morning heart a-tingling,
Dancing, jingling,
All the glad abandon mingling
Of wind and wine!

Sprite, you are love, and you are joy,
A happiness, a dream, a toy,
A god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,

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The Bacchante to Her Babe

The sun come down in tangled gold,
The moon to kiss, and spring to hold.

There was a time once, long ago,
Long—oh, long since . . . I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot . . .
There was a time when you were not,
You merry sprite, save as a strain,
The strange dull pain
Of green buds swelling
In warm, straight dwelling
That must burst to the April rain.
A little heavy I was then
And dull—and glad to rest. And when
The travail came
In searing flame . . .
But, sprite, that was so long ago!—
A century!—I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot
When you were not.

So, little sprite, come dance with me!
The sun is up, the wind is free!
Come now and trip it,
Romp and skip it,
Earth is young and so are we.
Sprite, you and I will dance together
On the heather,
Glad with all the procreant earth,
With all the fruitage of the trees,
And golden pollen on the breeze,
With plants that bring the grain to birth,
With beast and bird,
Feathered and furred,
With youth and hope and life and love,
And joy thereof—
While we are part of all, we two—
For my glad burgeoning in you!

So, merry little roll of fat,
Made warm to kiss and smooth to pat
And round to toy with, like a cub,
To put one's nozzle in and rub,
My god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
Come and dance beneath the sky,
You and I!
Look out with those round wondering eyes,
And squirm, and gurgle—and grow wise!

Eunice Tietjens

[274]
SIX LYRICS

I AM WEARY OF BEING BITTER

I am weary of being bitter and weary of being wise,
And the armor and the mask of these fall from me, after
long.
I would go where the islands sleep, or where the sea-dawns
rise,
And lose my bitter wisdom in the wisdom of a song.

There are magics in melodies, unknown of the sages;
The powers of purest wonder on secret wings go by.
Doubtless out of the silence of dumb preceding ages
Song woke the chaos-world—and light swept the sky.

All that we know is idle; idle is all we cherish;
Idle the will that takes loads that proclaim it strong.
For the knowledge, the strength, the burden—all shall perish:
One thing only endures, one thing only—song.

THE BIRDCAGE

O tragic bird! whose bleeding feet,
Whose maddened wings dizzily beat
Against your cage in agony—
Soon, soon to win your liberty!
Still you believe that happiness
Dwells just beyond the bars you press
That if a sudden miracle
Gave your desire, life would be well.
The old, old dream! The old, old lure!
The devil plays; his stakes are sure.
With happiness he baits his gin
That still mankind shall perish in.
And still we trust our hearts could be
Blessed by the distant liberty,
Blind to the newer agony!
The earth will be a frozen coal
Before man knows his traitor soul.

DON GIOVANNI

It is not lust that leads me,
It is not evil drives me;
But beauty, beauty, beauty,
Calling afar off.

Prophet and poet know my urge and torture;
Hermit and dreamer are my errant brothers.
For I am mad with unattainèd beauty
Calling afar off. . . .

The fairer morrow, the horizons
Lighted beyond old borders,
The world’s one savior—beauty
Calling afar off. [276]
LIKE HIM WHOSE SPIRIT

Like him whose spirit in the blaze of noon
Still keeps the memory of one secret star
That in the dusk of a remembered June
Thrilled the strange hour with beauty from afar—
And perilous spells of twilight snare his heart,
And wistful moods his common thoughts subdue,
And life seethes by him utterly apart—
Last night I dreamed, today I dream, of you.
Gleams downward strike; bright bubbles upward hover
Through the charmed air; far sea-winds cool my brow.
Invisible lips tell me I shall discover
Today a temple, a mystery, a vow . . .
The cycle rounds: only the false seems true.
Last night I dreamed, today I dream, of you.

SNOWTIME

Is it summer that you crave—
Swallows dipping wing,
Evening light across the wave—
Or some farther thing?

Some report of happier places—
Golden times and lands,
New and wonder-laden faces,
New and eager hands?

Nay, you know not . . . But I know
Round you cold is furled,
Like this shroud of trampled snow
Smothering the world:

Where no trust in any spring
Now can heal or save,
Nor the icy sunlight bring
Swallows o'er the wave.

MEETING

Gray-robed Wanderer in sleep . . . Wanderer . . .
You also move among
Those silent halls
Dim on the shore of the unsailèd deep?
And your footfalls, yours also, Wanderer,
Faint through those twilight corridors have rung?

Of late my eyes have seen . . . Wanderer . . .
Amid the shadows' gloom
Of that sleep-girdled place
I should have known such joy could not have been—
Meeting

To see your face: and yet, Wanderer,
What hopes seem vain beneath the night in bloom?

Wearily I awake . . . Wanderer . . .
Your look of old despair,
Like a dying star,
In morning vanishes. But for all memories' sake,
Though you are far, tonight, O Wanderer,
Tonight come, though in silence, to the shadows there . . .

Arthur Davison Ficke
The Book and Play Club had an "editors' night" last month, when spokesmen for various Chicago weeklies and monthlies uttered their pleas and plaints. It was mostly the same story—the difficulty of finding and winning over a public for art, for ideas, while the great headlong tolerant American crowd huddles like sheep in the droves of the commercial exploiters of this or that feature or fashion, this or that impulse or interest, of the hour.

Also it was a confession of motives and feelings. Mr. Alexander Kahn loved the *Little Review* like a sweetheart, the editor of *The Dial* admitted his aversion from its conventionality, and one and all longed for that free enlightened weekly which shall outrank all other papers of whatever time or clime, and make Chicago the centre of the earth. Incidentally there were more personal confessions. Mr. Edgar Lee Masters, for example, told how the *Spoon River Anthology* was conceived nearly a year ago, when his mind, already shaken out of certain literary prejudices by the reading in *Poetry* of much free verse, especially that of Mr. Carl Sandburg, was spurred to more active radicalism through a friendship with that iconoclastic champion of free speech, free form, free art—freedom of the soul. At this acknowledgment that *Poetry* had furnished the spark which kindled a poet's soul to living flame, and burned out of it the dry refuse of formalism, this editor, in her corner, felt a thrill of
The Fight for the Crowd

pride, and a sudden warmth of unalterable conviction that, whatever may happen to the magazine now or later, its work can never be counted vain.

After POETRY, The Little Review, The Dial, Drama, etc., had confessed bitter struggles to keep above water, we were patted on the head and condescendingly put in our place as “uplift magazines” by one of the numerous popular monthlies which, though no one ever hears of them, go out from Chicago to eager millions. “We don’t turn over our hands to get subscribers,” said the charmingly complacent editor, “yet nothing can stop them; after two brief years of life we have two hundred thousand—thirty thousand new ones since October. I fear these well-meaning neighbors of mine don’t give you what you want.”

As the audience laughed, the mind of at least one editor transformed it, and multiplied it by millions, until it included the vast constituency of all those incredibly popular magazines. I saw as in a Piers Ploughman vision the myriads of “new readers” stretching from sea to sea—the huge easy-going American public following trampled roads, gulping down pre-digested foods, seeking comfortable goals, suspicious always of ideas, of torches, of climbing feet, of singing voices—a public which does not stone its prophets, finding it more effective to ignore them.

But, strangely enough, the vision brought, instead of bitterness, a deep warming of the heart. Is it not the same old crowd that Langland saw—the struggling, suffering toilers who starve in body and mind, who clutch at any straw [281]
of comfort and follow any casual cry, who dream deep dreams which they dare not admit and cannot express, who grope for beauty and truth through tinsel trickeries and smug falsities? Are not the prophets one with them because the prophets, each in his degree, are doing the same thing—plunging with such lights as they have into the darkness? Indeed, only the prophets are aware of what all are doing, aware of the uncharted immensities against which our little human torches flicker and flare; so they alone feel the urgent impulse to lift their torches high, to cry aloud, to reveal, to lead.

The crowd rebels against the universal theme of art—the littleness of man—or, rather, the abysmal contrast between his littleness and his greatness. In old Chinese paintings there is always some little weazened philosopher squinting at the cataract; and so in all great art stands the absurd, earth-bound, gnome-like figure of humanity facing the infinite with inadequate and unattainable dreams. Deep-buried in the heart of every man is some effigy of this figure, but most men are afraid of it, like to bury it deeper under conventional occupations, sentimentalities, moralities, instead of permitting artists and prophets to unearth it and expose it to the pitiless light. But every man’s heart, however perverse with ignorance, however cluttered with knowledge, makes a secret confession of the truth. Poets and prophets, therefore—the beauty of art, the sublimity of truth—appeal to him not quite in vain; and the appeal must go on so long as the race endures. To the last trench and the last despair
The Renaissance

certain spirits, in whom the common human spark of love becomes a flaming passion, must keep up the eternal impossible fight for souls, for “a kingdom of heaven on earth.”

H. M.

THE RENAISSANCE

II

Whether from habit, or from profound intuition, or from sheer national conceit, one is always looking to America for signs of a “renaissance.” One is open-eyed to defects. I have heard passionate nonentities rave about America’s literary and artistic barrenness. I have heard the greatest living American saying, with the measured tones of deliberative curiosity, “Strange how all taint of art or letters seems to shun that continent . . . ah . . . ah, God knows there’s little enough here . . . ah . . . .”

And yet we look to the dawn, we count up our symptoms; year in and year out we say we have this and that, we have so much, and so much. Our best asset is a thing of the spirit. I have the ring of it in a letter, now on my desk, from a good but little known poet, complaining of desperate loneliness, envying Synge his material, to-wit, the Arran Islands and people, wishing me well with my exotics, and ending with a sort of defiance: “For me nothing exists, really exists, outside America.”

That writer is not alone in his feeling, nor is he alone in his belief in tomorrow. That emotion and belief are our motive forces, and as to their application we can perhaps
best serve it by taking stock of what we have, and devising practical measures. And we must do this without pride, and without parochialism; we have no one to cheat save ourselves. It is not a question of scaring someone else, but of making ourselves efficient. We must learn what we can from the past, we must learn what other nations have done successfully under similar circumstances, we must think how they did it.

We have, to begin with, architecture, the first of the arts to arrive, the most material, the most dependent on the inner need of the poor—for the arts are noble only as they meet the inner need of the poor. Bach is given to all men, Homer is given to all men: you need only the faculty of music or of patience to read or to hear. Painting and sculpture are given to all men in a particular place, to all who have money for travel.

And architecture comes first, being the finest branch of advertisement, advertisement of some god who has been successful, or of some emperor or of some business man—a material need, plus display. At any rate we have architecture, the only architecture of our time. I do not mean our copies of old buildings, lovely and lovable as they are; I mean our own creations, our office buildings like greater campanili, and so on.

And we have, or we are beginning to have, collections. We have had at least one scholar in Ernest Fenollosa, and one patron in Mr. Freer. I mean that these two men at least have worked as the great Italian researchers and col-

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lectors of the quattrocento worked and collected. But mostly America, from the White House to the gutter, is still dominated by a "puritanical" hatred of what is beyond its understanding.

So it is to the fighting minority that I speak, to a minority that has been until now gradually forced out of the country. We have looked to the wrong powers. We have not sufficiently looked to ourselves. We have not defined the hostility or inertia that is against us. We have not recognized with any Voltairian clearness the nature of this opposition, and we have not realized to what an extent a renaissance is a thing made—a thing made by conscious propaganda.

The scholars of the quattrocento had just as stiff a stupidity and contentment and ignorance to contend with. It is from the biographies of Erasmus and Lorenzo Valla that we must find consolation. They were willing to work at foundations. They did not give the crowd what it wanted. The middle ages had been a jumble. There may have been a charming diversity, but there was also the darkness of decentralization. There had been minute vortices at such castles as that of Savairic de Maleon, and later at the universities. But the rinascimento began when Valla wrote, in the preface of the Elegantiae:

Linguam Latinam distribuisse minus erit, optimam frugem, et vere divinam, nec corporis, sed animi cibum? Haec enim gentes populosque omnes, omnibus artibus, quae liberales vocantur, instituit: haec optimas leges edocuit: haec viam ad omnem sapientiam munivit, haec denique praestitit, ne barbari amplius dici pos-

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sent. . . . In qua lingua disciplinae cunctae libero homine
dignae continetur. . . . Linguam Romanam vivere plus, quam
urbem.

"Magnum ergo Latini sermonis sacramentum est." "Ibi
namque Romanum imperium est, ubicunque Romana lingua
dominatur."

That is not "the revival of classicism." It is not a wor-
ship of corpses. It is an appreciation of the great Roman
vortex, an understanding of, and an awakening to, the value
of a capital, the value of centralization, in matters of
knowledge and art, and of the interaction and stimulus of
genius foregathered. Ubicunque Romana lingua
dominatur!

That sense, that reawakening to the sense of the capital,
resulted not in a single great vortex, such as Dante had
dreamed of in his propaganda for a great central court, a
peace tribunal, and in all his ghibelline speculations; but it
did result in the numerous vortices of the Italian cities, striv-
ing against each other not only in commerce but in the arts
as well.

America has no natural capital. Washington is a polit-
ical machine, I dare say a good enough one. If we are to
have an art capital it also must be made by conscious effort.
No city will make such effort on behalf of any other city.
The city that plays for this glory will have to plot, delib-
erately to plot, for the gathering in of great artists, not
merely as incidental lecturers but as residents. She will have
to plot for the centralization of young artists. She will
have to give them living conditions as comfortable as Paris
has given since the days of Abelard.

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The universities can no longer remain divorced from contemporary intellectual activity. The press cannot longer remain divorced from the vitality and precision of an awakened university scholarship. Art and scholarship need not be wholly at loggerheads.

But above all there must be living conditions for artists; not merely for illustrators and magazine writers, not merely for commercial producers, catering to what they think "the public" or "their readers" desire.

Great art does not depend on the support of riches, but without such aid it will be individual, separate, and spasmodic; it will not group and become a great period. The individual artist will do fine work in corners, to be discovered after his death. Some good enough poet will be spoiled by trying to write stuff as vendible as bath-tubs; or another because, not willing or able to rely on his creative work, he had to make his mind didactic by preparing to be a professor of literature, or abstract by trying to be a professor of philosophy, or had to participate in some other fiasco. But for all that you will not be able to stop the great art, the true art, of the man of genius.

Great art does not depend upon comfort, it does not depend upon the support of riches. But a great age is brought about only with the aid of wealth, because a great age means the deliberate fostering of genius, the gathering-in and grouping and encouragement of artists.

In my final paper of this series, I shall put forth certain plans for improvement.
It is no wonder that Mr. Thomas Hardy’s dramatic epic, *The Dynasts*, is being given as a pageant in London. Indeed, the wonder was that during the first months of the war, when every little poem on the subject was eagerly read, so little was said about this big poem, which stages enormously the huge tragedy of war.

It is a poem both old and new. More than ten years ago appeared the first volume of this dramatization of Europe disturbed—the period from Napoleon’s assumption of dynastic power to his defeat at Waterloo. War, as a kind of madness, a horror, a folly, has for decades been preached; yet this poem, which is a massive symbol of this doctrine, has been little read. Perhaps because *The Dynasts* is a departure in English patriot poetry, because it has none of the forced call to England’s past glory of Alfred Noyes’ *Drake*, nothing of Kipling’s tumult and shouting disguised as prayer, England finds the poem too subdued for her liking. Yet as a vision or prevision of the present war *The Dynasts* is for here and now.

There is a semblance of technical drama in this ten years of history. The poet has doubled the triangle of rise, climax and dénouement. Napoleon, as the supreme dynast, completes this program, from his crowning in Milan to Waterloo; England, his opponent, acts as a counter-force in her over-sea fighting from Trafalgar to Waterloo. This history everyone knows; its very closeness to fact is all the better.
basic substance of this symbolized "monster devastation." This is most vivid in the Dumb Shows, which, placed like parenthesses on the page, are really pictures of benumbing terror, more subtle than those in Tolstoi's War and Peace. Choruses body forth movements too vast for any stage; spirits chant their pity or their resignation, or their sneer at a "world so ill contrived."

In this pageant, which is too literal to be dramatic, and in this drama, which is too philosophic to more than flap the wings of poesy, there is a great idea. If this is held to, whatever is tedious in the twenty or more acts is overborne by the essential conception—the gratuitous gambling in life by dynasts, and the leaden cruelty of their war game. To dramatize this idea, Mr. Hardy had to depart from the usual type of historical play. There can be no hero with the halo light as in the old epics; no apotheosis of personal courage, as in Shakespeare's or Schiller's hero plays. We see, not the glory, but "the poor faint poesy of war;" we are placed behind the scenes of "this poor painted show called soldiering."

Tragedy, in the austere sense, is not possible where there are no staged heroes. The bitter-fate mood of tragic conflict is too fine for dynasts who drive their subjects like sheep to slaughter. Napoleon is sometimes made to speak as though fate and destiny were his counsellors; but his speeches are weak, too imitative of the heroic manner of Shakespeare. This poet has neither temperament nor philosophy for tragedy. His doctrine of the individual and the race as will-less
precludes a fight with fate. His dynasts and their subjects are, like Jude and Tess and Giles Winterbourne, victims of "eternal artistries in circumstance;" they know but "narrow freedom;" they "do but as they may, no further dare." All their movements are but an

Emerging with blind gropes from impertinence
By random sequence—luckless, tragic chance.

Of fatalism there is plenty:

Ere systemed suns were globed and lit
The slaughters of the race were writ,
And wasting war by land and sea
Fixed, like all else, immutably.

And we hear a deep complaint against some superworld, which hovers over the misery of this "mud-molded ball."

The whole drama is a presentment of a "mean monstrous ironism." The dynasts, from the forlorn Queen Louise, who begs Napoleon for Magdeburg, to Napoleon himself, are larger types of "time's laughing-stocks." Irony is easily the temperament of Mr. Thomas Hardy. His ironic range, with this great drama added to the novels, is complete. Life's little ironies and its big ones are never absent from his pages. The sinister and the pitying voices are for this reason his strongest dramatic as well as lyric instruments in this arraignment of war. We hear their resounding complaint of the plague of rulers and the pity of the ruled:

Alas! what prayers will save the struggling lands,
Whose lives are ninepins to these bowling hands!

Nothing could be more ironical than a Peace Congress described thus:

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Where every power perpends withal
Its dues as large, its friends as small,
Till Priests of Peace prepare once more
To fight as they have fought before.

Picture after picture enforces the grim irony of war. Soldiers of opposing armies drink from the same stream, grasping hands across the rill before they take each other's lives.

What more could plead the wryness of the times
Than such unstudied piteous pantomimes?

Again are shown soldiers peacefully sleeping by the bivouac embers,

There to pursue at dawn the dynasts' death game
Unto the ending.

Humorous irony, delightful in the novels, is not lacking in this complete show, which moves from cabinet to camp, from ship to field, stopping on the varied routes to allow the humblest to complain or to approve. These delicious bits are in the best manner of the Wessex peasants, whom Hardy can logically put into this great drama. It is Wessex which is threatened with Napoleon's invasion; Wessex has more than indirect part in the glory of Trafalgar. It is this inherited tradition of Wessex as soldiering ground, which may have urged the most intensely local of novelists into this world-poem in which not Wessex but all England has a part.

How is England to be glorified in a drama which cannot glorify war? This, I think, is its great achievement, that England's full due of glory is given her. She is the arbiter of the great struggle. Her part is becomingly sung or
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chanted, and the spirit of the verse is one with the patriot poetry of England in affirming the right of England to be arbiter; but the whole tone of the drama is so uniformly in the minor key that there is not a single swashbuckling note in the verse. There is no disguising that England's fighting with or against dynasts is bitter business. We are spared any special adjusting of dramatic moments which might appeal to national vanity. A hero like Sir John Moore wins the meed of sincere if not a melodious tear; Nelson's death does not lack the sentiment appropriate to one whose life was deeply sentimental; the most woeful picture of war is reserved for a remnant of the English army left to die on an island in the Scheldt, "in dynasts' discords, not their own." A really epic effect is secured in the battle of Waterloo; an effect beside which Victor Hugo's much quoted chapter is a burden of detail.

There are choruses to sing the power of the English fleet; they are simple and modest in effect, for the victory of England is no occasion for shout or triumph. All is restrained by a deep sense of the sacrifice which victory demands. *The Dynasts* is thus an advance in English patriot poetry; it avoids both the bombast of *Rule, Britannia*, and the apologetic whine which has crept into English patriot verse since the Boer war. The English hate war; no one has expressed its tragic folly so simply as Southey in a child's persistent asking, "What was it all about?" in *The Battle of Blenheim*. Shakespeare satirized soldiering more acutely than Bernard Shaw has done. And this poem of
A Modern Epic of War

England's dear-bought glory should be worth much to England now that she is again paying the price of dynasts' quarrels.

It is worth much to all of us for the prophetic irony interpretative of the present war, which meets one on every page:

Behold again the Dynasts' gory gear;
And people are enmeshed in new calamities—
seems to have been written yesterday. As to prayer for success in battle, Napoleon calls it trying to hire the enginery of heaven.

The transport of the English troops to Spain reads as though it were that of Lord Kitchener's men to France; and these lines are ironically close to the present time:

England is fierce for fighting on—
(Strange humor in a concord-loving land).

There is a hint that nations may sometime settle their disputes "by modern reason and the urbaner sense," but the whole poem is so suffused with a justifiable pessimism that one heeds but little any forward-looking thought that they will ever come to this. At best, the poem sings a kind of august pity that such a madness as war is the story of the ages. To possess one great literary rendering of its stark iniquity may be a prophecy of its doom.

Ellen FitzGerald

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REVIEWS

The Sharing, by Agnes Lee. Sherman, French & Co.
The Congo and Other Poems, by Vachel Lindsay. Macmillan.

Many new books of verse provide convenient handles for the critic—there are easy, ready-made methods of approach, or obvious points of attack, which the harassed reviewer would be blind indeed if he did not seize upon and expand into journalistic material. This, in a sense, is not disadvantageous for the poet in an age when, to get a hearing at all, it is necessary that his work should be presented with some sort of a literary trade-mark or preface in order to attract a public singularly heedless of anything that requires more than superficial attention. But the situation is not favorable for a new book of verse which does not afford the reviewer these easy facilities. Poetry of intrinsic beauty, without any "tag," without a note of ultra-modernity, a defiant use of new form, or the expression of sentiments supposedly revolutionary—this is a difficult thing to define—or to exploit.

The Sharing by Agnes Lee (Mrs. Freer) is a book of this kind. The poet's vision is concentric, rather than eccentric. She does not give us a lens through which to view the external world, but a crystal sphere in which to find a world of finer forms and essences. Her work, to borrow a painter's term, has "quality," an attribute that must be felt rather than stated. Her lyrics, to borrow another phrase, this time from an "authoritative" critic in The Dial, are
"not easily reducible to any form of intellectual statement." But was there ever any poetry, unless it be Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, that could be reduced to such a formula? If one says of *The Sharing* that the setting free of three caged canaries reveals the moving history of a soul that has itself been caged and broken, one yet misses all the keen delight in liberty, in beautiful, wide, untrammeled spaces, so sensitively suggested in the poem. Clearly, with a book of this sort, the only possibility for the reviewer lies in suggestion also. And the suggestion will not be missed by the reader who cares for something more than superficial cleverness. Among the poems in the book that may be singled out for special mention are *The Sharing, The Silent House, A Statue in a Garden, Song of a Queen of Lombardy, The Drudge, Numbers, Her Going*. This last is a keenly psychological study of jealousy, delicately incisive:

    Hard it was to live down the day, and wonder,
    Wonder why the tears were forever welling,
    Wonder if on his lips her kiss I tasted,
    Turning to claim him. . . .

    Sharp tongue, have pity! . . .
    Yes, I knew. But I loved him, hoping for all.
    I said in my heart: "Time shall bring buds to blossom."
    Almost I saw the flower of the flame descending.
    Then—she came toying.

    He is mine, mine, by the law of ages!
    Mine, mine, mine—yes, body and spirit!
    Glad I am she has gone her way to the shadow.
    Hate is upon me.
Oh, the bar over which my soul would see
All that eludes my soul, while he remembers!
You, dispel if you can my avenging passion!—
Clouds are before me!

Mr. Vachel Lindsay's work presents very little difficulty to the reviewer, except that there are so many different angles from which it may be exploited! There is his creed of optimistic sincerity, and there is his invention of a new choric form adapted to all the strident blaring noises of our blatant life today—for he is no shirker, but an accepter of all that conventional poets have been wont to decry. Yet, in the process by which poetry is turned into journalistic capital in the reviews, so much of the finer quality of his work is lost, that one is moved to go against the tide and record the subtler shades upon which a deeper enjoyment of his poetry will rest.

In this poet's work there is much that is fanciful, but it is the higher quality of imagination that attracts us in his more serious poems—imagination that is at once concrete and visionary. Even when he seems to be slipping off into some indefinite, incorporeal region of mid-air, it is the unexpected concrete touch that ties us to earth and awakens in us that vivid pleasure of experience which is always the poet's true touchstone. Mr. Lindsay has the mythopoeic faculty. He has converted a fireman's ball, or a group of Salvation Army psalm-singers, into a tribal image. I know that I never see such a group now in North Clark Street that the image of General William Booth Entering
Reviews

Into Heaven does not take possession of my mind; and I never see the fire-engine rushing past that I do not spontaneously recall the symbol of passion that Mr. Lindsay has made of it:

Said the swift white horse
To the swift black horse,
"There goes the alarm—
There goes the alarm."

Even the automobile horn has become as powerfully suggestive as the trumpet that shook the walls of Jericho. That Mr. Lindsay has been able to evoke this image out of certain apparent banalities of our life is no small thing. It is not only a credit to his power, but it argues much for the future of poetry in these states. In this connection it is perhaps well to state that his growth has been peculiarly independent of foreign influence. The suggested similarity between his work and that of the Futurists is merely an interesting parallel. He has perhaps done what Signor Marinetti suggested should be done, but his achievement was not due to Signor Marinetti's suggestion. The record of his growth is apparent, and his groping toward a form that would unite delicacy and strength, and give full play to the choric appeal of mobile, vocal sound, has been followed step by step by his friends. It is characteristic of his personality that his book should include poems of widely dissimilar vein, and even of unequal merit. His inclusion of the Dirge for a Righteous Kitten so incensed one serious-minded critic that he refused to consider the volume at all; but I know several small children to whom that poem is as meat and
drink, and who, with this as a starting-point, have quickly assimilated all the deep round vowel sounds and rolling bass of *The Congo* as well as the light graceful step of *Judith the Dancer*—again not a bad thing for the future of poetry in these states!

But it must not be thought that Mr. Lindsay’s muse is merely the muse of rag-time. It is true that he has molded and remolded his vehicle to fit the voice, but the lasting power of his verse is, as I have suggested, in its power to evoke an image. The effect of the image is increased through every means at his disposal—by his selection of sounds, of words, and his hypnotic use of the refrain. Many of the poems are too well known to need quotation; *The Fireman’s Ball, The Santa Fé Trail*, and several others, have been published in *Poetry*. *The Congo*, his impressionist poem of the negro temperament, is published for the first time. This is, of course, too long to quote, but the heading of one section, *Their Irrepressible High Spirits*, reminds me forcefully of a certain quality of Mr. Lindsay’s work that should not go unremarked—its “high spirits.” This in itself is characteristically American, but this is probably the first time that we have found it turned to account in American verse not manifestly light or comic.

I have often thought that translations of certain modern European dramas do not appeal to our audiences because of a difference in temperment rather than because of any definite hostility to a form of drama fine in itself; and that when our young playwrights attempt the art they curiously
enough shroud themselves in an imitative black coat of despair which is alike unnatural to them and to their audiences. Whatever else our American temperament may be, it is not bowed down by weight of woe, and doesn't want to be. In giving rein to his naturally high spirits, and in frankly combining the sincere with the light or even frivolous, it may be that Mr. Lindsay is far more instinctively national than we suspect. Those who look for the finesse of out-worn European models in his work may not find it; but they will find something that is abundantly alive and vital, and destined to live by the inherent force of this vitality.

A. C. H.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

Boston is discovering Imagism! The Houghton-Mifflin Company will soon publish Miss Lowell's new anthology of certain members of the group, and so we find Mr. Ferris Greenslet presenting "their creed, their Kensington catechism," to readers of The New Republic in the course of his review of Miss Lowell's latest book.

It is all very interesting, even if Mr. Greenslet needs a few more lessons in his catechism. But, strangely enough, he quite forgets to mention that POETRY discovered the imagist poets over two years ago, and printed their creed with apostolic exactness in March, 1913, in Mr. Flint's article Imagisme, followed by Mr. Pound's Don'ts by an Imagist. Mr. Greenslet forgets also to mention Mr. Pound,
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whose early authority and present vitality in the school Miss Lowell, editor of the coming anthology, would be the last to deny. Indeed, probably no one regrets more than she that he will not be represented in it.

. . . . . . . .

Congratulations to Miss Margaret C. Anderson, editor of The Little Review, upon the completion of the first year of her high-stepping charger! May it spurn the ground and sniff the air and champ the bit for many years to come, and never quite throw its rider!

We commend the spirit of Miss Anderson's editorial, Our First Year. She tells how she was once trained by a "veteran editor" to be "efficient" in his business, told how she must print the poor but respectable stuff, and send back the good but disturbing, until "I used to feel that I was in the midst of some demoniacal scheme for achieving the ultimate futility." And so she resolves against an "editorial policy," for it is "likely to be, or to become, quite a damning thing." And thus she throws down her gauge of battle:

In the face of new magazines of excellent quality and no personality we shall continue to soar and flash and flame, to be swamped at intervals and scramble to new heights, to be young and fearless and reckless and imaginative—

Rêver, rire, passer, être seul, être libre,
Avoir l'œil qui regarde bien, la voix qui vibre—

to die for these things if necessary, but to live for them vividly first.
NOTES

Mr. Ezra Pound's propensity for languages has led him of late to approach Chinese lyrics through study of the late Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts, with the co-operation of oriental scholars. Like other delvers into this field, he is convinced of the supreme beauty of old Chinese poetry, and of its future value as an inspiring force in occidental culture.

Li Po, called in Japan Rihaku, was a vagabond genius of the eighth century. After years of wandering with other tippling "Idlers of the Bamboo Grove," he was received as a "banished angel" by one of the T'ang emperors, and encouraged to make merry at court. Falling a victim to intrigue at last, he left in disgrace, and, after more years of vagabondage, was drowned by leaning too far over the edge of a boat in a tipsy effort to embrace the image of the moon.

A volume of Mr. Pound's recent poems will soon be published in London.

Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke, of Davenport, Iowa, author of Mr. Faust, Twelve Japanese Painters, and other books of verse, needs no introduction to our readers. Nor do Fannie Stearns Davis, (Mrs. A. McK. Gifford) of Pittsfield, Mass., whose Crack o' Dawn (Macmillan) is just out, and Mrs. Eunice Tietjens, of Chicago, whose first book of poems will soon be issued by Mr. Kennerley. H. D., an American imagist living in London, has also appeared in Poetry.
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Miss Moireen Fox, of Dublin, is a young Irish poet who has contributed to British reviews and will soon publish a volume.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Song of Roland, translated into English Verse by Leonard Bacon. Yale University Press.
Arrows in the Gale, by Arturo Giovannitti. Frederick C. Bursch, Hillacre Book-house, Riverside, Conn.
The Olive Tree, by L. Leigh Mudge. The Methodist Book Concern, New York.
Hæleðia, the Ænil de Retsæ Series. The Harvey E. Nelson Press, Petaluma, Cal.
Crack O’ Dawn, by Fannie Stearns Davis. Macmillan.
Rhymes of Little Folks, by Burges Johnson. G. P. Putnam’s Sons.
THE GRAND CANYON AND OTHER POEMS
By Henry van Dyke

This collection of Dr. van Dyke's recent verse takes its title from that impressive description of the Grand Canyon of Arizona at daybreak, which stands among the most beautiful of Dr. van Dyke's poems. The rest of the collection is characterized by those rare qualities that, as The Outlook has said, have enabled the author "to win the suffrage of the few as well as the applause of the many." $1.25 net; postage extra

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Editor of Poetry and author of The Passing Show (five American plays in verse), The Columbian Ode, etc.

The most notable volume of verse published this year in this country, is Miss Harriet Monroe's volume entitled "You and I." The book is sentient with things in the heart of today: the dominant note is the rising note of human sympathy.—William Allen White in the Emporia (Kan.) Gazette.

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Chicago Evening Post.

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Page 19, line 4 from bottom—for bend read bent.
Page 22, last line of poem—for Some brandy! read Some brandy, sir!
Page 39—insert space, to indicate end of poem, after the line:
You also are laid aside.
Page 97—for lines 17 and 18 substitute:
Miss Marian Ramie is a young English poet who has worked more or less for the wounded.
Page 147—for lines 6 and 7 substitute:
Mr. Seumas O'Sullivan is an Irish poet, author of several brief books of verse, from which Thomas B. Mosher, of Portland, Maine, has published a selection.
Page 169—first line of poem omitted. Insert:
Long time my mother lived in Culm,
This error is corrected also on page 240.
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To have great poets
there must be great audiences too.
—Whitman.