

The Prize Play in this Number

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Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

JULY 1916

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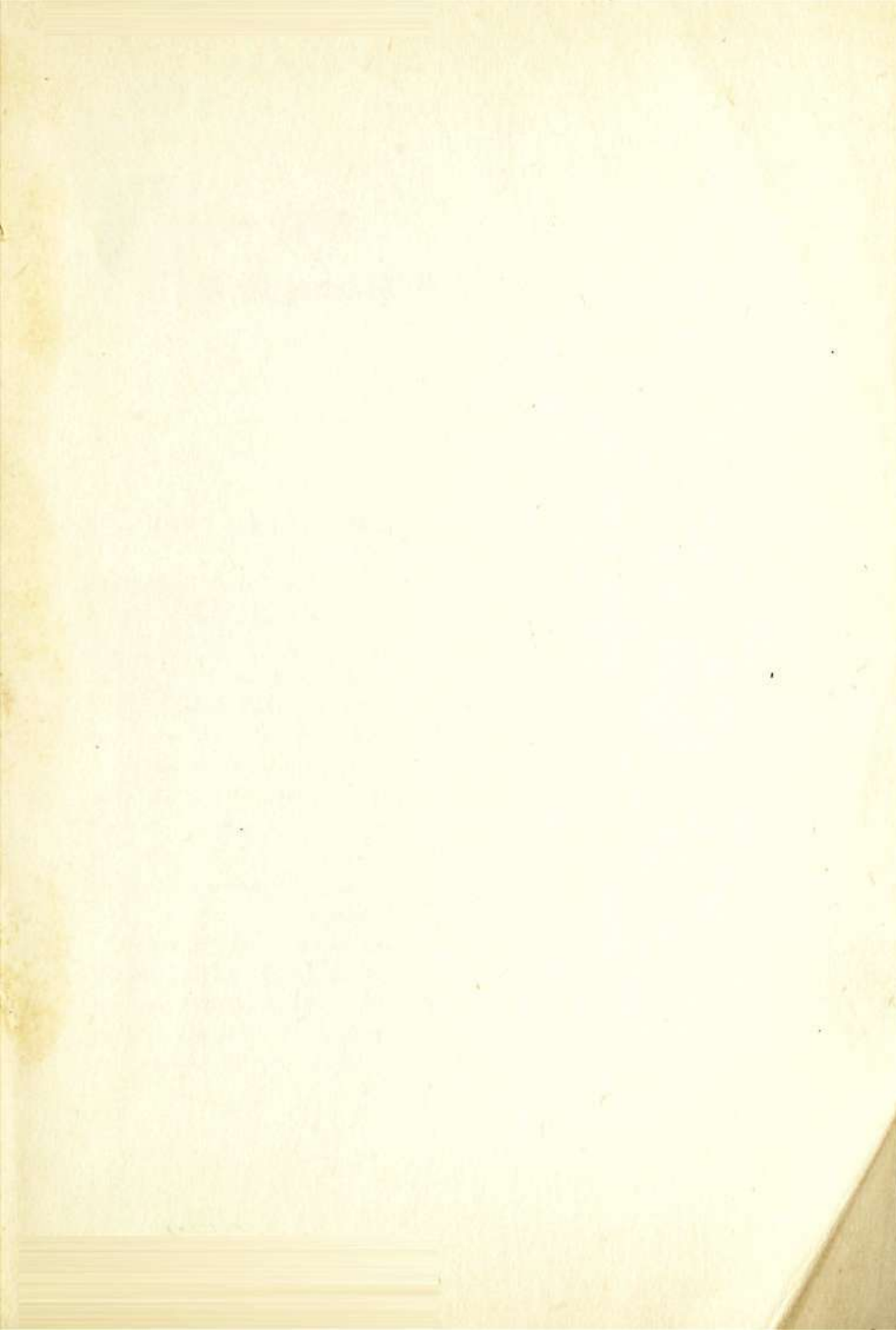
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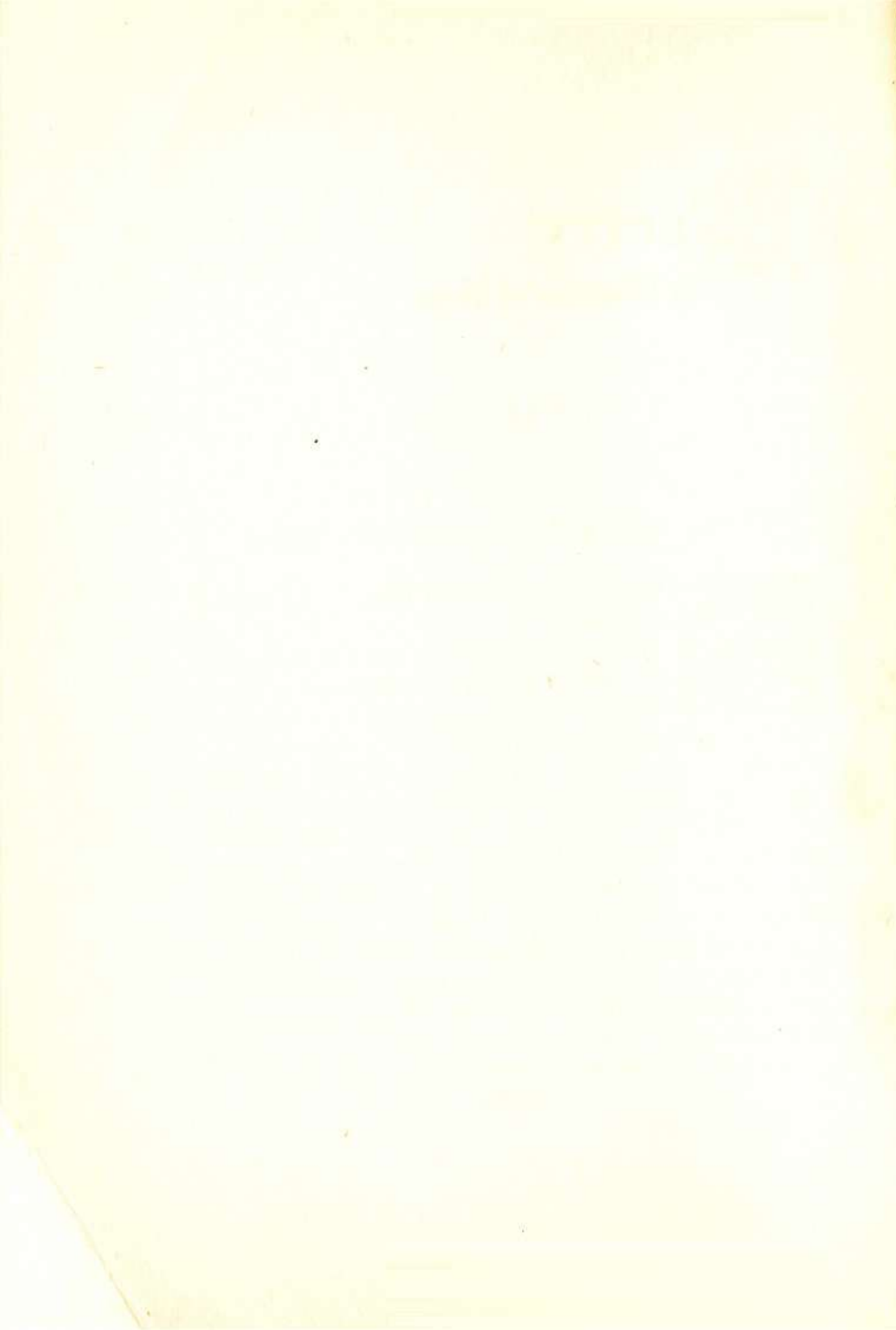
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JULY, 1916

THREE TRAVELERS WATCH A SUNRISE.*



THE characters are three Chinese, two negroes and a girl.

The scene represents a forest of heavy trees on a hilltop in eastern Pennsylvania. To the right is a road, obscured by bushes. It is about four o'clock of a morning in August, at the present time.

When the curtain rises, the stage is dark. The limb of a tree creaks. A negro carrying a lantern passes along the road. The sound is repeated. The negro comes through the bushes, raises his lantern and looks through the trees. Discerning a dark object among the branches, he shrinks back, crosses stage, and goes out through the wood to the left.

A second negro comes through the bushes to the right. He carries two large baskets, which he places on the ground just inside of the bushes. Enter three Chinese, one of whom carries a lantern. They pause on the road.

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Second Chinese. All you need,
To find poetry,
Is to look for it with a lantern. [*The Chinese laugh.*]

Third Chinese. I could find it without,
On an August night,
If I saw no more
Than the dew on the barns.

[*The Second Negro makes a sound to attract their attention. The three Chinese come through the bushes. The first is short, fat, quizzical, and of middle age. The second is of middle height, thin and turning gray; a man of sense and sympathy. The third is a young man, intent, detached. They wear European clothes.*]

Second Chinese. [*Glancing at the baskets.*]
Dew is water to see,
Not water to drink:
We have forgotten water to drink.
Yet I am content
Just to see sunrise again.
I have not seen it
Since the day we left Peking.
It filled my doorway,
Like whispering women.

First Chinese. And I have never seen it.
If we have no water,
Do find a melon for me
In the baskets.

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

[*The Second Negro, who has been opening the baskets, hands the First Chinese a melon.*]

First Chinese. Is there no spring?

[*The negro takes a water bottle of red porcelain from one of the baskets and places it near the Third Chinese.*]

Second Chinese. [*To Third Chinese.*] Your porcelain water bottle.

[*One of the baskets contains costumes of silk, red, blue and green. During the following speeches, the Chinese put on these costumes, with the assistance of the negro, and seat themselves on the ground.*]

Third Chinese. This fetches its own water.

[*Takes the bottle and places it on the ground in the center of the stage.*]

I drink from it, dry as it is,

As you from maxims, [*To Second Chinese.*]

Or you from melons. [*To First Chinese.*]

First Chinese. Not as I, from melons.

Be sure of that.

Second Chinese. Well, it is true of maxims.

[*He finds a book in the pocket of his costume, and reads from it.*]

"The court had known poverty and wretchedness; humanity had invaded its seclusion, with its suffering and its pity."

[*The limb of the tree creaks.*]

Yes: it is true of maxims,

Just as it is true of poets,

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Or wise men, or nobles,
Or jade.

First Chinese. Drink from wise men? From jade?
Is there no spring?

[*Turning to the negro, who has taken a jug from one of the baskets.*]

Fill it and return.

[*The negro removes a large candle from one of the baskets and hands it to the First Chinese; then takes the jug and the lantern and enters the trees to the left. The First Chinese lights the candle and places it on the ground near the water bottle.*]

Third Chinese. There is a seclusion of porcelain
That humanity never invades.

First Chinese. [*With sarcasm.*] Porcelain!

Third Chinese. It is like the seclusion of sunrise,
Before it shines on any house.

First Chinese. Pooh!

Second Chinese. This candle is the sun;
This bottle is earth:
It is an illustration
Used by generations of hermits.
The point of difference from reality
Is this:

That, in this illustration,
The earth remains of one color—
It remains red,
It remains what it is.

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

But when the sun shines on the earth,
In reality
It does not shine on a thing that remains
What it was yesterday.
The sun rises
On whatever the earth happens to be.

Third Chinese. And there are indeterminate moments
Before it rises,
Like this, [*With a backward gesture.*]
Before one can tell
What the bottle is going to be—
Porcelain, Venetian glass,
Egyptian . . .
Well, there are moments
When the candle, sputtering up,
Finds itself in seclusion, [*He raises the candle in the air.*]
And shines, perhaps, for the beauty of shining.
That is the seclusion of sunrise
Before it shines on any house. [*Replacing the candle.*]

First Chinese. [*Wagging his head.*] As abstract as
porcelain.

Second Chinese. Such seclusion knows beauty
As the court knew it.
The court woke
In its windless pavilions,
And gazed on chosen mornings,
As it gazed
On chosen porcelain.

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What the court saw was always of the same color,
And well shaped,
And seen in a clear light. [*He points to the candle.*]
It never woke to see,
And never knew,
The flawed jars,
The weak colors,
The contorted glass.

It never knew
The poor lights. [*He opens his book significantly.*]
When the court knew beauty only,
And in seclusion,
It had neither love nor wisdom.
These came through poverty
And wretchedness,
Through suffering and pity. [*He pauses.*]
It is the invasion of humanity
That counts.

[*The limb of the tree creaks. The First Chinese turns, for a moment, in the direction of the sound.*]

First Chinese. [*Thoughtfully.*] The light of the most
tranquil candle
Would shudder on a bloody salver.

Second Chinese. [*With a gesture of disregard.*] It is the
invasion

That counts.
If it be supposed that we are three figures
Painted on porcelain

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

As we sit here,
That we are painted on this very bottle,
The hermit of the place,
Holding this candle to us,
Would wonder;
But if it be supposed
That we are painted as warriors,
The candle would tremble in his hands;
Or if it be supposed, for example,
That we are painted as three dead men,
He could not see the steadiest light,
For sorrow.

It would be true
If an emperor himself
Held the candle.
He would forget the porcelain
For the figures painted on it.

Third Chinese. [*Shrugging his shoulders.*] Let the candle
shine for the beauty of shining.

I dislike the invasion
And long for the windless pavilions.
And yet it may be true
That nothing is beautiful
Except with reference to ourselves,
Nor ugly,
Nor high, [*Pointing to the sky.*]
Nor low. [*Pointing to the candle.*]
No: not even sunrise.

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Can you play of this [*Mockingly to First Chinese.*]

For us? [*He stands up.*]

First Chinese. [*Hesitatingly.*] I have a song
Called *Mistress and Maid*.

It is of no interest to hermits

Or emperors,

Yet it has a bearing;

For if we affect sunrise,

We affect all things.

Third Chinese. It is a pity it is of women.

Sing it.

[*He takes an instrument from one of the baskets and hands it to the First Chinese, who sings the following song, accompanying himself, somewhat tunelessly, on the instrument. The Third Chinese takes various things out of the basket for tea. He arranges fruit. The First Chinese watches him while he plays. The Second Chinese gazes at the ground. The sky shows the first signs of morning.*]

First Chinese. The mistress says, in a harsh voice,

“He will be thinking in strange countries

Of the white stones near my door,

And I—I am tired of him.”

She says sharply, to her maid,

“Sing to yourself no more.”

Then the maid says, to herself,

“He will be thinking in strange countries

Of the white stones near her door;

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

But it is me he will see
At the window, as before.

"He will be thinking in strange countries
Of the green gown I wore.
He was saying good-by to her."

The maid drops her eyes and says to her mistress,
"I shall sing to myself no more."

Third Chinese. That affects the white stones,
To be sure. [*They laugh.*]

First Chinese. And it affects the green gown.

Second Chinese. Here comes our black man.

[*The Second Negro returns, somewhat agitated, with water but without his lantern. He hands the jug to the Third Chinese. The First Chinese from time to time strikes the instrument. The Third Chinese, who faces the left, peers in the direction from which the negro has come.*]

Third Chinese. You have left your lantern behind you.
It shines, among the trees,
Like evening Venus in a cloud-top.

[*The Second Negro grins but makes no explanation. He seats himself behind the Chinese to the right.*]

First Chinese. Or like a ripe strawberry
Among its leaves. [*They laugh.*]
I heard tonight
That they are searching the hill
For an Italian.
He disappeared with his neighbor's daughter.

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Second Chinese. [*Confidingly.*] I am sure you heard
The first eloping footfall,
And the drum
Of pursuing feet.

First Chinese. [*Amusedly.*] It was not an elopement.
The young gentleman was seen
To climb the hill,
In the manner of a tragedian
Who sweats.
Such things happen in the evening.
He was

Un misérable.

Second Chinese. Reach the lady quickly.

[*The First Chinese strikes the instrument twice as a prelude to his narrative.*]

First Chinese. There are as many points of view
From which to regard her
As there are sides to a round bottle. [*Pointing to the water
bottle.*]

She was represented to me
As beautiful.

[*They laugh. The First Chinese strikes the instrument,
and looks at the Third Chinese, who yawns.*]

First Chinese. [*Reciting.*] She was as beautiful as a
porcelain water bottle.

[*He strikes the instrument in an insinuating manner.*]

First Chinese. She was represented to me
As young.

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

Therefore my song should go
Of the color of blood.

[He strikes the instrument. The limb of the tree creaks. The First Chinese notices it and puts his hand on the knee of the Second Chinese, who is seated between him and the Third Chinese, to call attention to the sound. They are all seated so that they do not face the spot from which the sound comes. A dark object, hanging to the limb of the tree, becomes a dim silhouette. The sky grows constantly brighter. No color is to be seen until the end of the play.]

Second Chinese. [To First Chinese.] It is only a tree
Creaking in the night wind.

Third Chinese. [Shrugging his shoulders.] There would
be no creaking
In the windless pavilions.

First Chinese. [Resuming.] So far the lady of the present
ballad

Would have been studied
By the hermit and his candle
With much philosophy;
And possibly the emperor would have cried,
"More light!"

But it is a way with ballads
That the more pleasing they are
The worse end they come to;
For here it was also represented
That the lady was poor—
The hermit's candle would have thrown

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Alarming shadows,
And the emperor would have held
The porcelain in one hand . . .
She was represented as clinging
To that sweaty tragedian,
And weeping up the hill.

Second Chinese. [*With a grimace.*] It does not sound
like an elopement.

First Chinese. It is a doleful ballad,
Fit for keyholes.

Third Chinese. Shall we hear more?

Second Chinese. Why not?

Third Chinese. We came for isolation,
To rest in sunrise.

Second Chinese. [*Raising his book slightly.*] But this
will be a part of sunrise,

And can you tell how it will end?—

Venetian,

Egyptian,

Contorted glass . . .

[*He turns toward the light in the sky to the right, dark-
ening the candle with his hands.*]

In the meantime, the candle shines, [*Indicating the sunrise.*]

As you say, [*To the Third Chinese.*]

For the beauty of shining.

First Chinese. [*Sympathetically.*] Oh! it will end badly.

The lady's father

Came clapping behind them

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

To the foot of the hill.
He came crying,
"Anna, Anna, Anna!" [*Imitating.*]
He was alone without her,
Just as the young gentleman
Was alone without her:
Three beggars, you see,
Begging for one another.

[*The First Negro, carrying two lanterns, approaches cautiously through the trees. At the sight of him, the Second Negro, seated near the Chinese, jumps to his feet. The Chinese get up in alarm. The Second Negro goes around the Chinese toward the First Negro. All see the body of a man hanging to the limb of the tree. They gather together, keeping their eyes fixed on it. The First Negro comes out of the trees and places the lanterns on the ground. He looks at the group and then at the body.*]

First Chinese. [*Moved.*] The young gentleman of the ballad.

Third Chinese. [*Slowly, approaching the body.*] And the end of the ballad.

Take away the bushes.

[*The negroes commence to pull away the bushes.*]

Second Chinese. Death, the hermit,
Needs no candle
In his hermitage.

[*The Second Chinese snuffs out the candle. The First Chinese puts out the lanterns. As the bushes are pulled*

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away, the figure of a girl, sitting half stupefied under the tree, suddenly becomes apparent to the Second Chinese and then to the Third Chinese. They step back. The negroes move to the left. When the First Chinese sees the girl, the instrument slips from his hands and falls noisily to the ground. The girl stirs.]

Second Chinese. [To the girl.] Is that you, Anna?

[The girl starts. She raises her head, looks around slowly, leaps to her feet and screams.]

Second Chinese. [Gently.] Is that you, Anna?

[She turns quickly toward the body, looks at it fixedly and totters up the stage.]

Anna. [Bitterly.] Go.

Tell my father:

He is dead.

[The Second and Third Chinese support her. The First Negro whispers to the First Chinese, then takes the lanterns and goes through the opening to the road, where he disappears in the direction of the valley.]

First Chinese. [To Second Negro.] Bring us fresh water

From the spring.

[The Second Negro takes the jug and enters the trees to the left. The girl comes gradually to herself. She looks at the Chinese and at the sky. She turns her back toward the body, shuddering, and does not look at it again.]

Anna. It will soon be sunrise.

Second Chinese. One candle replaces

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

Another.

[*The First Chinese walks toward the bushes to the right. He stands by the roadside, as if to attract the attention of anyone passing.*]

Anna. [Simply.] When he was in his fields,
I worked in ours—
Wore purple to see;
And when I was in his garden
I wore gold ear-rings.
Last evening I met him on the road.
He asked me to walk with him
To the top of the hill.
I felt the evil,
But he wanted nothing.
He hanged himself in front of me.

[*She looks for support. The Second and Third Chinese help her toward the road. At the roadside, the First Chinese takes the place of the Third Chinese. The girl and the two Chinese go through the bushes and disappear down the road. The stage is empty except for the Third Chinese. He walks slowly across the stage, pushing the instrument out of his way with his foot. It reverberates. He looks at the water bottle.*]

Third Chinese. Of the color of blood . . .
Seclusion of porcelain . . .
Seclusion of sunrise . . .

[*He picks up the water bottle.*]
The candle of the sun

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Will shine soon
On this hermit earth. [*Indicating the bottle.*]
It will shine soon
Upon the trees,
And find a new thing [*Indicating the body.*]
Painted on this porcelain, [*Indicating the trees.*]
But not on this. [*Indicating the bottle.*]

[He places the bottle on the ground. A narrow cloud over the valley becomes red. He turns toward it, then walks to the right. He finds the book of the Second Chinese lying on the ground, picks it up and turns over the leaves.]

Red is not only
The color of blood,
Or [*Indicating the body.*]
Of a man's eyes,
Or [*Pointedly.*]
Of a girl's.
And as the red of the sun
Is one thing to me
And one thing to another,
So it is the green of one tree [*Indicating.*]
And the green of another,
Which without it would all be black.
Sunrise is multiplied,
Like the earth on which it shines,
By the eyes that open on it,
Even dead eyes,
As red is multiplied by the leaves of trees.

Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise

[*Toward the end of this speech, the Second Negro comes from the trees to the left, without being seen. The Third Chinese, whose back is turned toward the negro, walks through the bushes to the right and disappears on the road. The negro looks around at the objects on the stage. He sees the instrument, seats himself before it and strikes it several times, listening to the sound. One or two birds twitter. A voice, urging a horse, is heard at a distance. There is the crack of a whip. The negro stands up, walks to the right and remains at the side of the road. The curtain falls slowly.*]

Wallace Stevens

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IN MEMORY OF BRYAN LATHROP

Who bequeathed to Chicago a School of Music.

So in Pieria, from the wedded bliss
Of Time and Memory, the Muses came
To be the means of rich oblivion,
And rest from cares. And when the Thunderer
Took heaven, then the Titans warred on him
For pity of mankind. But the great law,
Which is the law of music, not of bread,
Set Atlas for a pillar, manacled
His brother to the rocks in Scythia,
And under Aetna fixed the furious Typhon.
So should thought rule, not force. And Amphion,
Pursuing justice, entered Thebes and slew
His mother's spouse; but when he would make sure
And fortify the city, then he took
The lyre that Hermes gave, and played, and watched
The stones move and assemble, till a wall
Engirded Thebes and kept the citadel
Beyond the reach of arrows and of fire.
What other power but harmony can build
A city, and what gift so magical
As that by which a city lifts its walls?
So men, in years to come, shall feel the power
Of this man moving through the high-ranged thought
Which plans for beauty, builds for larger life.
The stones shall rise in towers to answer him.

Edgar Lee Masters

SACRIFICE

Love suffereth all things,
And we,
Out of the travail and pain of our striving,
Bring unto Thee the perfect prayer:
For the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

For us no splendid apparel of pageantry—
Burnished breast-plates, scarlet banners, and trumpets
Sounding exultantly.
But the mean things of the earth Thou has chosen,
Decked them with suffering;
Made them beautiful with the passion for rightness,
Strong with the pride of love.

Yea, though our praise of Thee slayeth us,
Yet love shall exalt us beside Thee triumphant,
Dying that these live;
And the earth again be beautiful with orchards,
Yellow with wheatfields;
And the lips of others praise Thee, though our lips
Be stopped with earth, and songless.
Yet we shall have brought Thee their praises
Brought unto Thee the perfect prayer:
For the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

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O God of sorrows,
Whose feet come softly through the dews,
Stoop Thou unto us,
For we die so Thou livest,
Our hearts the cups of Thy vintage:
And the lips of no man utter love,
Suffering even for love's sake.

1922: Private Frederic Manning, 3rd R. S. L. I.

THE WILD BIRD

Like silence of a starlit sky,
Like wild birds rising into night,
Such was her dying, such her flight
Into eternity.

But I, who dwell with memory,
Dream in my grief that she may soar
Too high, and needing love no more
Come nevermore to me.

Gretchen Warren

HE BUILDETH HIS HOUSE

He hewed him the gray cold rock
To make the foundations under.
The walls and the towers should lock
Past the power of the earth to sunder,
Then, masking the bastions' frown,
Art came, embroidered and gilded
That beauty and joy might crown
The palace which power had builded.

God sighed: "*Why build so tall
Thy prison wall?*"

THE POET'S PART

It is a little world where poets dwell—
A little, hidden world; and few there be
Who know its sign or language, or can tell
Whence come the visions that the poets see.
The great world beats about it heedlessly,
With things to win, to own, to buy, to sell,
With myriad cares that leave no mortal free,
With hopes that spur and bafflements that quell.

Yet ever does the great world in its might
Swing onward through the darkness by the light

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Caught up by poet hand from poet hand;
And if but once should sink that flaming brand,
Why, then would come at last the endless night,
To hide the ruin of what God had planned.

Lily A. Long

THE WIND IN THE TREES

The wind goes whispering
The leaves among;
It has a silken,
A siren tongue.

The leaves all listen
Quivering there;
A thousand kisses
Caress the air.

So stirs my heart
When he goes by:
Wind is a breath,
Love is a sigh.

Lulu W. Knight

GOOD MORNING

Why, there's the morning and get-up-o'clock!
The dream-dewed freshness and the keen delight—
Do you remember? There—those ashes were
Our fire last night; the sun is laughing at them.
Look in the valley where we passed before—
You see—that little winding of the road?
The selfsame, big, important yesterday
That seemed so steep and threatening a hill!
Come, let us bathe and break the fast and start!

Peter Norden

TO A CERTAIN FAIR LADY

Your heart is like a poplar tree,
Full of sunlit greenery,
A thin lace pattern on the sky,
That trembles when the winds go by.

And every zephyr, every day,
That comes adventuring that way,
Feels it as tremulously waken,
As if it never had been shaken.

Lyman Bryson

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A COLLOQUY IN SLEEP

Did ever aught make love to you as I?

Ah, no!

Oh, yes—the mirror and the sea;
The sea communes with you as silently,
The mirror and I hold your beauties high—
We love you as our queen and never lie.

You scarcely know my voice—how can I be
Your queen? You must give over seeing me.

Raiment and food and drink would you deny?
You have the worship of mine eyes, and rare
Devotion such as none may mar or break:
What more?

Your very silence is unfair—
Nor will you let me speak when I'm awake!

You speak to me in music everywhere,
Through all sweet music that the masters make.

John Regnault Ellyson

POEMS

THE FLEDGLING

The fire is nearly out,
The lamp is nearly out.
The room is untidy after the long day.
I am here, unhappy,
Longing to leave the hearth,
Longing to escape from the home.
The others are asleep,
But I am here, unhappy.
The fire is nearly out,
The lamp is nearly out.

IMPRESSION

The orchards are white again . . .
There was one I knew
Whose body was white as they: fairer.

Alas! that we drifted apart
Faster than pear-petals fall to the ground!

STUDY

Oh carrot cat, slinking over the snow,
Your skin is blue, where the bitter wind ruffles your fur.
Can you not find one shivering sparrow in all this white
world?

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DOMESTIC

Sometimes,
Having read
By the fireside
Through a long evening,
I look up.
The old people
Apathetically
Are sitting,
The dim eyes gazing
In the past
That seems so good.
And then pity
Dews all my sight.
For old age
Is the guerdon,
The only laurels,
Of their life.
And mine, uncrowned,
So far away,
I cannot cry
"Hail!"

DOUBLE

Through the day, meekly,
I am my mother's child.
Through the night riotously
I ride great horses.

Double

In ranks we gallop, gallop,
Thundering on
Through the night
With the wind.

But in the pale day I sit, quiet.

TOWN-MOUSE

These things for today:
The threat of rain,
And great hasting clouds;
Wet soil's scent;
Fine cobwebs on the heather;
Keen air!
Even a park of green lawns,
Bare boughs and brown sparrows!
Oh, for no roof overhead
And full lungs!

These things for today.

ENOUGH HAS BEEN SAID OF SUNSET

I

Light—imperceptible as
One thin veil drawn across blackness:
Is it dawn? . . .

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Comes the twitter-whistle of sleepy birds
Crescendo . . .
Now bright grayness creeping
Drowns the dark; and waves of sea-wind
Rock the thin leaves . . .
A door bangs; sharp barks from dogs released, scampering.
After some silence, footsteps.
And the rising bustle of people
Roused by the day-break.

II

Mysterious; threatening:
Dawn over housetops silhouetted
Like crenelated battlements
Against light of a stage scene.

IMPRESSION

At night
Neither joy, ambition, love nor want
In my heart.
But the leaves called
And the earth called,
And there was only waiting
Against the coming of rain,
And the whipping of hair
About my head.

Iris Barry

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POEMS BY CHILDREN

THE PURPLE GRAY

Star like a little candle,
Moon like a silver sickle
Which has lost its handle,
Glowes that downward trickle,
Clouds that are pinkened by the glimmer of the faintly-blinking sun;

Shadows across the road,
Scurries in the bushes—
Made perhaps by a toad
Or a stone one pushes,
Lamp-light faintly shining through the twitching vines;

After sunset glows
In the purple gray—
Gray that no one knows,
Parting of the day:
That's when grayish, trickling, drowsy things are dreamed.
Arvia MacKaye

SONGS

I

Rosy plum-tree, think of me
When Spring comes down the world.

II

There's dozens full of dandelions
Down in the field:
Little gold plates,
Little gold dishes in the grass.
I cannot count them,
But the fairies know every one.

III

Oh wrinkling star, wrinkling up so wise,
When you go to sleep do you shut your eyes?

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IV

The red moon comes out in the night:
When I'm asleep, the moon comes pattering up
Into the trees.
Then I peep out my window
To watch the moon go by.

V

Sparkle up, little tired flower,
Leaning in the grass!
Did you find the rain of night
Too heavy to hold?

VI

Blossoms in the growing tree,
Why don't you speak to me?
I want to grow like you—
Smiling—smiling.

VII

The garden is full of flowers,
All dancing round and round.
 John-flowers,
 Mary-flowers,
 Polly-flowers,
 Cauli-flowers—
They dance round and round,
And they bow down and down
To a black-eyed daisy.

VIII

I will sing you a song,
Sweets-of-my-heart,
With love in it—
(How I love you!)—
And a rose to swing in the wind,
The wind that swings roses.

Hilda Conkling (four years old)

SUMMERTIME

I

Babies are running all around
In the fields,
Getting a waxful of honey.
The honey was made of blue flowers,
But the babies had pink in their wings.

II

Rosebushes on a happy day,
Rosebushes on a happy day,
Are you all calling your roses,
On a happy day?

III

Oh, the apple-blossoms will be apples, some day,
And cherries will be ripe first of March or first of May.

IV

Gay as the flowers,
Nice as the night,
I for one
Am in delight.

V

Clover tops are coming.
Cows will soon arise.
The sun comes up
And the stars go by.
Green grasses are growing,
Your trees are blooming with apples:
And flowers grow right near the water
To get a drink today.

VI

The violin makes brown music,
Brown like bees and honey,

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Gold like the sun.
Oh, my violin!

VII

The daisies are shining in the sun.
March till you come to the creek—
The creek will show you the way to the moon.
March, march, march!
The little creek runs by all day
Singing, "River, river!"—
And never stops to play.
It just keeps going night and day.
March!

VIII

O cherry tree,
Why don't you give me some cherries?
I love to see you bow them down
On the grass.
Cherries, red in your cheeks,
Did you come out of the white blossoms?

IX

I saw the clovers flow through the field
Like a spread of cloud,
A wing of pink cloud.
Clovers, are you playing sunset?

X

I think of you, Mr. Mapletree,
And I know you have loads of pleasure,
For you stand so sweet.
Now this is my farewell song.

Elsa Conkling (five years old)

EDITORIAL COMMENT

HOW NOT TO DO IT



WE have often discussed in these pages the question of prizes, arguing in favor of them in the art of poetry as in the other arts. The editors of POETRY believe that prizes, properly endowed and awarded, conduce to the advancement of the art, and increase a little its very small financial returns. But we would not be understood as approving the method adopted by the Poetry Society of America for the impending award of two prizes of one hundred and twenty-five dollars each, the first ever placed, by a generous and well-intentioned donor, at the disposal of the Society.

The prizes are to be awarded by popular vote of members and others in the following fashion:

During the past season the society has held, at the National Arts Club, New York, five monthly meetings open to members of the Poetry Society and their guests; meetings attended chiefly, of course, by the local members, with an unlimited number of guests. At each of these meetings from ten to twenty poems were read without the disclosure of their authorship, after which all "those present," both members and guests, were asked to vote for their favorites. As the second stage in the award, unsigned copies of the ten poems which received the highest votes—two poems from each meeting—were mailed to all members of the Poetry Society. The prizes are to be given, presumably, to the two

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poems receiving the greatest number of votes from those members whose consciences permit them to sanction with their votes such a method of choice.

It may be true that no completely satisfactory manner of awarding prizes will ever be devised, but meantime it is safe to say that the above method is the worst that could possibly be devised. The jury is not even professional, since guests as well as members voted at the five meetings; and such voting represents, not thoughtful and deliberate judgment, but the casual and hasty preference of people competent and incompetent, who listen, more or less attentively, to a group of poems read once or twice aloud.

At the only meeting which I attended—that of March—the two poems receiving the largest votes were, of all the twelve or fifteen read, the two which most closely fulfilled the journalistic ideal of popular poetry, an ideal which should hardly be set up as the Poetry's Society standard of excellence in the art. Meantime poems submitted by Robert Frost, Witter Bynner, Margaret Widdemer, and the guest of the evening, Lawrence Housman (for the poets' names were disclosed after the voting), are not even eligible for the prizes, because a casual crowd turned them down.

Naturally not one of the ten poems thus selected deserves to be honored with a prize bearing the cachet of the Poetry Society, and many members who respect their art have refrained from considering them.

The result of such a method of choice can have no significance whatever, and its lack of significance will of course tend to discredit the Poetry Society of America. The society

is not obliged to award prizes, but if it assumes this obligation, it should fulfil it with due dignity and effort at justice, so that the award will be an honor. No doubt the officers of the Society have already recognized the futility of their first year's experiment, and resolved to change the method of award next year. It is to be hoped that they will abandon altogether the present limitation of the award to poems read at the meetings, and give the prizes simply to the two most distinguished poems, or books of poems, published by any two members of the society during the year. And the Jury of Award should be small and of the highest professional standing, as with similar juries in painters' and sculptors' exhibitions.

H. M.

THE REJECTION SLIP

If the subscription list of this magazine approximated the yearly inflow of manuscripts—the editors would hire a long string of assistants, have cut flowers replenished daily on their desks, and be less harassed generally. Even then, however, the impossibility of answering personally each letter that reaches the office would be equally manifest.

What is one to do about such a condition? One can not turn oneself into a human machine; the capacity even of an inhuman machine is limited. When visiting poets are shown the bulging drawers full of one day's incoming verse, and are asked how they would like to have to read it, they usually faint on the spot.

A few facts may induce a more sympathetic feeling for

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the editors, a less impatient denunciation of the rejection slip as brutal and dispiriting. What sort of rejection slip would not be brutal and dispiriting? As one who is responsible for so many of these barbed arrows, I must confess that not even I can steel my sensitiveness against the rebuke on those few occasions when I have been bold enough to invite it.

But for the facts: All the verse that has come into this office up-to-date has been read by the editors. The first reading has been considered extremely important, and the editors have not been willing to relegate this to underlings or to outside readers. If this is the usual method, as I have heard, with the larger magazines, it may be one reason why a certain conventional standard has so oftentimes marked the poetry printed in them. The first reading is vitally important, and exciting as well, for in this vast heap of manuscripts may lurk a discovery. The handwriting may be slovenly, apparently illiterate, yet who knows if it may not be the accidental disguise of a real poet? Or the name may be quite unfamiliar, the work uneven, yet something startles one to a closer scrutiny. I could, in fact, give instances of some important discoveries which were made in just this manner.

So even he who receives a rejection slip may count upon this much editorial attention and consideration from this magazine. I wish often that the poets would show a little more consideration for the editors: that they would beg, borrow, or steal a type-writer; that they would not enclose a return envelope three sizes too small for their manuscript; that they would not send their poems unfolded in an enormous stiffened envelope too large for any office cubbyhole,

The Rejection Slip

which consequently gets misplaced and delayed; that they would not fold each poem separately—where—oh, where—did this custom start?—is it a trick to catch the editor?—is it—well, heaven only knows what it is, except that it is infinitely wearing.

After three years and a half—about four years—of reading a mixed assortment of verse, the danger is not so much in a growing tolerance for the mistakes of editors—though that is considerable—as it is in a certain relaxation of one's expectation of the poets—a softening of discipline which makes it harder than ever to send out the rejection slip. Yet punctually with each morning's mail the hope renews itself that genius may be discovered beneath the flap of each envelope; and punctually with the outgoing mail this hope is sealed beneath the flap of the three-sizes-too-small envelope which the poet has so kindly enclosed with his manuscript. (N. B. Any envelope is better than none.)

In the familiar language of childhood, the rejection slip hurts the editor far more than it does the poet. The poet *knows* that he is a genius; and the editor still hopes to discover that he is in each manuscript examined. The editor has a hundred sorrows for the poet's one. The poet may swear at the editor, and rather adds to his dignity in doing so; but the editor, in addressing the poet, has to assume the polite demeanor of the dancing master. (I once forsook the official manner of a machine for that of a human being in writing to a poet; the result was a cataclysm.)

Truly, the lot of an editor is a hard one!

A. C. H.

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RUBEN DARIO

Rubén Darío's work has a threefold significance: aesthetical, historical and social. As an aesthete, in the purest meaning of this term, Rubén Darío is the Spanish Keats: he taught that "beauty is truth, truth beauty," and that sincerity is the highest virtue. This message he delivered to his people, the family of Spanish-speaking countries, with such power that through his influence and that of the other poets and writers who, with him for a leader, formed the revolutionary modernist school, Spanish poetry during the last generation was changed from the rhetorical, conventional sort of thing into which it degenerated after it had flourished gloriously in the time of Góngora, to vibrant, real, sincere song.

His was a fine "horror of literature"—you will recall Verlaine's dictum. *Le pauvre Lelian* was his master; not his only master, it is true, for, seeking orientation for his genius in that pilgrimage of discriminate assimilation that all great poets must make before they find themselves, Darío worshiped at many a shrine. Nor did our poet lose his own personality, but rather enriched it, when he chose, in one of his earliest phases, to become a symbolist. The song he made on the bald faun's flute came from within his own self. To critics who would tag him as belonging to this, that or the other school, he would cry: "I am myself!" He despised servility, and warned those that sought to imitate his writings that at best they would be but as lackeys bearing the uniform of his house. Sincerity of expression only can bring forth real poetry, and this he knew could not be attained through

mere imitation. But he was eager to learn, and the Pre-Raphaelites of England, the Parnassians and Symbolists of France, Carducci among the Italians, and Poe and Whitman of the Americans, as well, of course, as the classics of all languages, had much to teach him. And the wealth of knowledge that he made his own, brought to bear upon his work, gave it that cosmopolitan bigness that made him a truly universal poet. His work, like America, as he would often say, is for all humanity.

With this ideal always before him, it is not surprising that he should be, as the phrase goes, a coiner of words, and an enemy of steel-ribbed grammars. His work, always impeccable and rich in form, is of supreme importance in the history of Spanish literature not only because of the spiritual renaissance of which it was the dawn—the awakening of Latin America to a realization of its literary individuality—but chiefly because of the changes that he wrought in the language, giving it a treasure of new expressions, new turns of phrase, *nuances*, in prose as well as in verse.

To appreciate this achievement justly, it must be remembered that for centuries the Spanish language had hardly been free to follow new paths of development such as English and French and German had taken. The dykes of linguistical traditions raised by the conservative and tyrannical Royal Academy of Spain had all but stagnated literary style. Up to Darío's time Spanish prosody was perhaps the poorest in Europe; it is true that sundry measures new to the language, such as the Graeco-Latin hexameter, the French alexandrine, and verses based on a four-syllable foot, had

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been essayed now and then; but there had not been a poet of sufficient power to use them as medium for great poetry and so to give them permanence.

The enneasyllabic verse, for instance, in which Rubén Darío wrote some of his best poems, had for a long time been used by comic opera librettists in Spain, but the makers of serious poetry had always shown utter disregard for it, never realizing its musical virtues and possibilities. And so with no less than a score of other metres which Darío invented or introduced and gave permanence to, or dignified, or revived. He was an indefatigable prosodist; and his poetry, magnificently sonorous at times, always elfin-touched, reveals the master craftsman no less than the born poet. His verse possesses the very magic of pure music. Rubén Darío was a virtuoso of words fully as great as Swinburne or D'Annunzio, with more ideas than either.

And since the publication of *Prosas Profanas*, his fourth book, in 1893, the poetical leadership in Spanish is incontestably no longer of the mother country but of the neo-Latin republics of America. It was the wresting of this leadership that made Darío a social power in all the countries south of the United States. To realize fully what this means we must consider the poet's position in all the Latin, and especially in the Spanish-American, countries. The poet there is a prophet, an inspired, God-anointed leader of the people. He is for us the treasurer of hope, the master of the tomorrow.

It is true that we have never enriched him with worldly goods as, for instance, Kipling and Masfield and Walt

Mason are said to have been enriched; true that the publications that print his verses do not often pay him for it. But, on the other hand, we believe in him. We alone of all peoples have elected poets to be our presidents and political leaders solely on the ground that they were great poets; and we have not fared so ill as readers of Plato's *Republic* might imagine. For instance, José Martí, the Cuban liberator, was also one of her chief poets; and it was because he was a poet that he realized the epic task of uniting his people solidly and enlisting on their side the sympathy of the entire world. The American guns at San Juan Hill and at Santiago but echoed the patriot-poet's songs.

And Darío, by his singing, united all the Latin-American countries, intellectually and morally, arousing them to a sense of their true grandeur. When, in one of his sincerest poems he said:

La patria es para el hombre lo que siente o que sueña,

which freely translated means: "a man's country is as great as his mind and heart are great," each *petit pays chaud* (the bitter phrase is Daudet's) shook from itself that terrible feeling of littleness in size that had so weighed upon it.

Horrified by the war, he left Europe, where he had lived for some time as minister of Nicaragua, his native country, to Spain and France, and came to America, late in 1914, to preach peace, and to work for a Pan-American Union based on a community of ideals and the intellectual fellowship of the two Americas. His last great poem, not yet published entire, is a magnificent ode voicing this aspiration. During

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his visit to this country, early in 1915, he read this poem at Columbia University. He had planned to make a continental tour, starting here. But death blocked his path. He became seriously ill in New York; and in February of this year, the forty-ninth of his life, he died at León, Nicaragua, his native town.

The solemnity of death has served to emphasize his message of fraternity. Latin America waits to hear it echoed by the poets of this country. It is dawn.

Salomón de la Selva

REVIEWS

SHELLEY IN HIS LETTERS

The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley: Edited by Roger Ingpen. Bohn's Library, G. Bell and Sons, London.

That light whose smile kindles the universe,
That beauty in which all things work and move,
That benediction which the eclipsing curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

This stanza of *Adonais* will recur often to the reader of the contradictions and the complications of Shelley's life, as these are revealed in his fascinating correspondence.

Without strength to hold up for long at a time the magnificent torch of his belief that human love is the light that kindles the beauty of creation, Shelley could yet wave the

wild gleam of that flame with a free grace which will long waylay mankind's imagination. He waves it in his extremely candid and vital letters as expressively as in his verse; for me, in general, more expressively. Few of his admirers, I believe, will deny that the stuff of Shelley's poetry is more sympathetically communicated in his correspondence with Claire Clairmont alone, or Thomas Love Peacock, or Hogg, or Byron alone, than in *Julian and Maddalo*, *Rosalind and Helen*, and all his controversial verse put together.

Absorbing as it is to follow the gusty flame of the poet's torch of creative thought through the labyrinths of mortal life where he leads us, it must be confessed that in the course of the two volumes I often forgot to look at the divine fire, in my interest in the endlessly wonderful scene of human figures, which that light chances to illuminate. Lord Byron, Claire Clairmont, John Keats, Leigh Hunt, Godwin, Mary Shelley, the gifted Mrs. Boinville—never was a poet's biography more fully peopled than Shelley's with men and women of brilliant endowment and striking character. This element of the interest commonly attributed to novels, and so sadly to seek in numbers of them, is greatly enhanced by quotations from Peacock's memoir, from Mrs. Shelley's prefatory notes accompanying the first collected edition of her husband's poems, and from various other sources, as well as by the addition of letters heretofore unpublished, or only privately published.

Time has walked past the day of apologies for Shelley, and of defamations. Time has put these in his fabular bag;

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and at last has given us a book void alike of Jeaffrean miserable malice, and of Professor Dowden's excessive zeal in partisanship—a book of amazing and convincing spiritual portraits. This is not the place for comment on the wonderful tale we may find here of Shelley's relations to men and women, beyond the remark that few of its readers will be found to deny its power as a human document. "I couldn't skip a word of it," cried a friend; "I read even the letters to the money-lenders."

About poetry, *qua* poetry, perhaps the most curious and arresting observation one will have to make on the topic as presented in these two volumes is that Shelley seems to have paid on the whole very little attention to it. The fluent and voluminous expression of an ardent mind, a delightful resource, a natural exercise, Shelley's poetry—and by this I mean his writing of poetry—was never with him an absorbing obsession. He could never have averred for himself Poe's saying, "For me, poetry has ever been less a pursuit than a passion." Keats' few words on poetry, in his distinguished letter to the "beautiful and ineffectual angel," outweigh in force and dignity anything presented on the subject by his generous admirer. Shelley writes to Peacock:

I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science, and if I were well, certainly I would aspire to the latter; for I can conceive a great work, embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonizing the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled. Far from me is such an attempt, and I shall be content, by exercising my fancy, to amuse myself, and perhaps some others, and cast what weight I can into the scale of the balance which the Giant of Arthegall holds.

Shelley in His Letters

The Giant of Arthegall, one is asked to remember, is that defeated hero and lover of justice in the *Faerie Queene*, who is knocked into the sea by mere brute power. And it is on record that Shelley once said beautifully, to the "forceful" author of

The mountain sheep were sweeter,
But the valley sheep were fatter—

"I am of the Giant's faction."

Too little concerned with poetry as an art, Shelley can yet hardly say a word about it without revealing the grace of a great nature, nobly indifferent to the mere question of career, modest and impersonal concerning his own achievements, very splendidly occupied with the eternal verities. Shelley is indeed too modest by far concerning his own achievements; and yet you would not have him in this respect other than he was.

You will go back again after you have read the letters, and read the poetry: and you will agree with Shelley that *Adonais* is his greatest work; and look with his vision on the vibrant light and cloud-swept way of our mortal lives through cosmos. The charm of reading his verse will be re-created for you by the fine pleasure of reading the correspondence of one of the world's greatest letter-writers.

These volumes have another haunting beauty, the beauty of a way of human intercourse which has now all but disappeared. Deserted for the short-cuts of telegrams and telephones and the trails of an earth compressed by innumerable conveniences of travel and information, the old great

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highway of vitally expressive correspondence has been almost overgrown. About it breathes the air surrounding yellow cave-cliffs, classic plinths and Theocritean idyls, the air of something vanished but immemorial. As an admirer closing the book exclaimed, "No one will ever write such letters again!"

E. W.

ARENSBERG AND THE NEW REALITY

Idols, by Walter Conrad Arensberg. Houghton Mifflin Co.

The problem that chiefly agitates the mind of the modern artist—I mean the artist who is possessed by life and who must express its beauty as clearly and sincerely as he can—is, what position he should take toward reality.

The positions that for many years used to be taken as a matter of course by English or American artists, are no longer tenable. The modern painter, for instance, if he is a student, a searcher, will no longer be satisfied with expressing the poetry of nature, not even in the styles of Inness or Corot. Prettiness, which used to be called beauty; preachiness, wistfulness, more or less refined allegory; realism, whether of light, line or substance; spirituality—none of these will answer his soul's needs, not entirely. His aim is to express the rhythm—the color or line rhythm—the song of reality. His manner may be fantastic, whimsical, or even "realistic." His highest ideal perhaps is to be excited enough by the wine drunk by his senses to create something. Create! Something new! As the trees and the moon and the sun were new on the first day.

Arensberg and the New Reality

Of course his attainments are not always so great as his aspirations.

How far are these new strivings—these new effects—attainable in poetry?

Poetry has some advantages over painting, and it is also under some disadvantages. Its advantages lie in the fact that the poet has always used reality with more freedom—boldness—than the painter; and so has escaped, even in its most conservative form, the prettiness and other defects so distasteful to the modern palate. In his free handling of reality he has to a certain extent reached the ideal of the modern artist.

But poetry being made up of words, of which each one has a distinct sense, it is hard for the poet to escape realism, with its temptation toward prettiness, more or less refined allegory, etc. A combination of colors, even if one could not understand the harmony underlying it, might still seem beautiful. I believe that a color-symphony of Kandinsky's has some charm even for those who can not see in it what that painter expects them to see. While words without sense would of course be nonsense.

Mallarmé has tried to overcome this difficulty by devising a new kind of symbolism, or rather by emphasizing an established poetic form: he tried to express emotions pictorially. But this, if accepted, could hardly bring us any nearer, as it would turn an art in many ways more advanced than painting back to an earlier stage of painting; and Mallarmé himself seems to have recognized this.

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These thoughts occurred to me while reading Mr. Arensberg's *Idols*. This poet, modern as he is, and scorning to conceal the influence of Mallarmé on his mind, seems to have recognized the difficulty of expressing in poetry the effects the modern painter expresses in his art. With perhaps two or three exceptions, he submits to what appears inevitable. In most of his poems there is a boldness in the handling of symbols, or a capricious mysticism, which distinguishes them as twentieth-century work; but on the whole they are not, as regards their newness alone, different from other poems.

The present reviewer, though not ready to admit that poetry could not be brought more into accord with the ideals of the modern painter, has read this book with very great pleasure. I can read again and again the *Song of the Souls Set Free*, sung from above the clouds:

What can they be bowing under,
Wild and wan?
Peep, and draw the clouds asunder,
Peep, and wave a dawn.

Or, in a somewhat similar strain though in a dissimilar mood, and speaking probably of the poet, in a poem entitled *Dirge*:

Make of the moon about the eaves of space,
You who upon the earth are doing nothing,
The circle of a swallow
In the twilight.

When this poet is a little mystical he is convincing—a rare and felicitous faculty; as in *After-Thought* and in *To the Gatherer*. Among so many beautiful poems, I really do not know which to single out. In *Falling Asleep*, perhaps the most modern poem in the book, the author speaks of the

Arensberg and the New Reality

mind's vague wanderings, before losing consciousness, in this charming manner:

Lay aside your sandals
That have fled
Down a night of candles
By the bed.

Consider the Lilies, with its wistful-worldly advice, *Landscape and Figures*, *At Daybreak*, *Servant*, *June*, *The Swan*—each one of these is as beautiful as the other. *Human* reads too much like a translation of Mallarmé. *Autobiographic* I do not clearly understand; it seems to be based on the mystical side of Cubism—its least important side, strange as this may sound.

Max Michelson

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

I

"Timeliness is not one of POETRY'S vices," writes one of our contributors, adding a "thank heaven!" by way of propitiation. Because of an effort to practice this vice we must make amends to Señor de la Selva, the distinguished young Nicaraguan poet and critic, whose article on Rubén Darío, listed for our May number, was delayed till June, and then July, because of the pressure of subjects more immediate; until his topic had been appropriated by Mr. Silvester Baxter in the June *Poetry Review of America*.

In this, the second number of the new Boston paper, the editor graciously thanks POETRY and the later organs of the art for "breaking a path through an unknown field beset with great obstacles." The path of progress, like that of true love,

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never did run smooth for either poet or editor, but we may wish for Mr. Braithwaite the minimum of rocks and brambles. In size of page and weight of paper the new sheet seems a bit formidable, but it looks important with its large type, and there is room in it for contrasts. We find Joyce Kilmer and John Gould Fletcher side by side, Amy Lowell talking about imagists and Amelia Josephine Burr praising Hermann Hagedorn. The *pièce de résistance* of the number is Louis Ledoux's *Persephone in Hades*, no doubt a very distinguished classic-lyric-dramatic poem of a kind which I find it difficult to read.

Contemporary Verse for June devotes itself to "poems of childhood." Of these W. A. Percy's *Little Page's Song*, Alwin West's *Yesterday*, and Mary Carolyn Davies' *Ambition* seem the most childlike.

But Miss Davies is at her best in *Others* for April, which arrives rather tardily. We always look for *Others*, no matter who or what is waiting. "There is an aviator spirit in that magazine," says Carl Sandburg—a gay defiance of wind and weather. Mr. Bodenheim inaugurates cleverly a review department, but I don't know—reviews are less aviatory than poems.

H. M.

II

The St. Louis Art League offers a prize of one hundred dollars for the "best lyric poem," defining "lyric" to mean "any short impassioned utterance in rhythmical language," whether in a "regular" form or free verse. The contest will

close December first, 1916. Further conditions may be learned by addressing The St. Louis Art League, St. Louis, Mo.

III

A portrait medallion of Rupert Brooke is to be set up in the chapel at Rugby, where he was born, and lived till he went to Cambridge. It will be done in marble by J. Havard Thomas, on the basis of Schell's portrait. Admirers of the poet may send any contribution, from a dime to five dollars, to the Chicago treasurer, Mr. Maurice Browne, 434 Fine Arts Building. The money will be sent to England without deduction, and any excess will be given to the Royal Literary Fund.

CORRESPONDENCE

AUGUST STRAMM

Dear Poetry: Too little notice has been taken of the death of Captain August Stramm, the young German soldier and poet, who was killed last autumn during a cavalry charge in Russia.

Stramm gave poetry a new method, poetic drama a new field of imaginative vision. Yet he was but little known, even in Germany, when he died. As with Rupert Brooke, the glamor of his death may render tardy justice to his poetry. His gift to imaginative literature was just beginning to be perceived, and one or two French literary circles began to show signs of his influence. Eventually he might have meant to Germany what Synge did to Ireland.

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He created five *Storm-Books*, and it is by these that I know him. He may have published other volumes. If so, it was obscurely. *Sancta Susanna* and *Die Haidebraut* are the two little books by which he will be longest remembered. English translations of these plays (a typographical mess) were published in *Poet-Lore* during 1914. A great many of Stramm's poems remain uncollected in the pages of *Der Sturm*, and probably elsewhere.

I know of no contemporary poet who has compressed vaster distances of wind and sunlight into a line or two. He absorbed a wide moor in a single pulsation, and restored it in an inevitable rhythm transformed by his own vision of its beauty into a personal utterance. He was plunged in the mystery of open spaces. He denied nothing a secret.

I think that mountains would have been a revelation to him. He required shadows to satisfy his play of light, and he wove them into wonderful lyric patterns of terror and exultation, as if they were flaming projections of his own spirit of worship, animate in form. But he required distances, if only for contrast. Sometimes they were spiritual distances, to be found only in the uttermost reaches of the human heart, but always they were passionately linked to nature by some form of creative prayer. He was not at all interested in the surface embodiments of nature, in "pretty" landscapes. What he felt behind all the beauty of the world was its elemental passions, and he believed these to be the projections of human passions in waves of wind and light and water, in flames of earth. He felt the terror of beauty rather

than its charm, and he surrendered his heart to that. Perhaps he always saw nature in a human image.

Because his heaven was subjective, the material facts of life did not press him closely. He lived in a world he had created in the image of a personal ideal. He probably regarded his death on the battlefield as a casual incident.

I find it impossible to convey the method by which Stramm, out of the simplest words, evokes the sense of space and fatality that encompasses all his action. He can wring the most tremendous emotional values out of utter stillness. In his plays, the characters more often than not speak by their silences. The words he gives to them to utter are often merely counters, or masks if you like, to conceal the passions smouldering just beneath the surface. His own life must have been a concealment.

He was a strange man drifting through life; in the world, but not of it; never puzzled, but often unhappy; feeding the fires of his inspiration with his own passion for nature; relieving his spiritual nostalgia, in the only way in which it can be relieved, by artistic expression; a man out of his time, who walked alone, yet had friends; a man whom Germany felt that she could afford to waste. Perhaps it was because he had a Russian soul. *Edward J. O'Brien*

THE PARTING

We receive the following report of a conversation from a contributor who leads a double life, being not only a poet but also the fortunate half-author of that witty and gently

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satiric and altogether delightful, as well as very popular, comedy, *Bunker Bean*:

"Lee, I don't like this gutter stuff
You modern poets pull; I think
Your feeling crude, your verses rough,
Your sense of beauty on the blink.
Now you take Tennyson . . ." I took,
Instead, a second cigarette:
"Fine! fire away! bring us to book—
Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

"But seriously," Bill returned,
"This Masters fellow, with his crew
Of God-forsaken ghosts who burned
Their tongues, once, with the Devil's stew!
Can't they stop howling now they're dead?
Why should we worry if Jared Hill
Drank whiskey, or grieve because he fed
His jim-jams through a rolling mill?
What's it to us that Susan Gotch
Went mad when his bastard-babe she choked
Down in the swamp by the melon-patch?
And what do we care *how* Susan croaked?"

"What do we care, Bill?—What do we care
When we find a screech-owl dead on the snow?
Nothing; unless in its life we share—
And we share so little in life, I know.
'Queens have died, young and fair' . . . we weep
At the image of fair youth fallen . . . Good God,
Fair youth has fallen, heap upon heap,
And it isn't our tears, Bill, that color the sod.
But here and there since the world began
Some hearts have ached that young queens should fall;
And once in a blue moon happens a man
Whose great heart aches for the fate of all:
A man who isn't set upon queens
Any more than on crones, who seems to detect
In even a prostitute's soul what means—
Well, something not measured by intellect!
And when that man speaks, Bill, we listen! His name

The Parting

May be Villon (a thief, by the way), or may be
Jesus, who died a death of shame
Between two thieves once on Calvary.
Or it may be Burns, or Masefield—who knows?—
Or Masters, or—”

“Rubbish, my boy! you’re dreaming!
When Masefield can write, ‘Where are last year’s snows?’
I promise to let you go on—blaspheming.
But you’ll never convince me that Susan Gotch
Is the peer of Yseult or Elaine! I might
Say more but—I’m tired. Have you got a match?
Tennyson . . . Masters . . . Hell! Good night!”

Lee Wilson Dodd

NOTES

Our readers of last month will remember that *Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise*, which opens this number, received the prize of one hundred dollars which was offered last autumn by the Players’ Producing Company, to be awarded by the staff of POETRY and the donor for a one-act play in verse. About eighty plays were received, five of which received Honorable Mention.

Mr. Wallace Stevens, author of the prize-winning play, is a young New York lawyer, now resident for a time in Hartford, Conn. The first publication of his verse was in our war number—November, 1914—and since then he has appeared in POETRY, *Others*, and elsewhere.

Mr. Frederic Manning, a young English poet, who is now serving his country in the army, was one of the earliest contributors to POETRY. His books of verse are: *The Vigil of Brunhild*, *Scenes and Portraits*, and *Poems*, all published by John Murray.

Miss Iris Barry, another young English poet, has published little as yet.

Mr. Edgar Lee Masters, of Chicago, needs no introduction. His latest book is *Songs and Satires* (Macmillan Co.).

Miss Lily A. Long, of St. Paul, Minn., was an early contributor to POETRY.

Of the five young poets who are now introduced to our readers with brief poems:

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"Peter Norden" (Mr. P. G. Norberg), who was born in Sweden and is now in Stockholm, has been chief editor of *Hemlandet*, a Chicago Swedish weekly, and has published two books of poems in his native language.

Mr. Lyman Bryson, when an undergraduate of the University of Michigan in 1909, was the first winner of the Field Prize for poetry. Since 1913 he has been a member of the faculty and a resident of Ann Arbor. He has published verse in various magazines.

Gretchen Warren (Mrs. Fiske Warren), of Harvard, Mass.; Lulu Weeks Knight, (Mrs. Maurice Knight), of Akron, Ohio; and Mr. John Regnault Ellyson, of Richmond, Va., have published little as yet.

The three little girls represented in our *Poems by Children* are all daughters of poets—Arvia Mackaye of Mr. Percy Mackaye, and Elsa and Hilda Conkling of Grace Hazard Conkling (Mrs. R. P.). Mrs. Conkling of course transcribed her daughters' little songs. In sending them she wrote: "My two baby girls have sung or chanted these 'poems' to themselves, unconscious that I was putting them down."

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Reprieve, and Other Poems, by Charles Josiah Adams. J. S. Ogilvie Pub. Co., New York.

The Heart of the Singer, by Fred Whitney. Stanford Univ. Press.

Humorous Poems, by Ignatius Brennan. Richard G. Badger.

What is Your Legion? by Grace Fallow Norton. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Will o' the World, A Shakespearean Tercentenary Masque, by Isabelle Fiske Conant. Privately printed, Wellesley, Mass.

On the Overland and Other Poems, by Frederick Mortimer Clapp. Yale Univ. Press.

Flashlights, by Mary Aldis. Duffield & Co.

Helderberg Harmonies, by Magdalene Merritt. Privately printed.

Mushrooms, by Alfred Kreymborg. John Marshall Co., Ltd.

Chicago Poems, by Carl Sandburg. Henry Holt & Co.

Over the Brazier, by Robert Graves. Poetry Bookshop, London.

Ships in Port, by Lewis Worthington Smith. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

PLAYS:

Euripides: Iphigenia in Tauris, an English Version, by Witter Bynner. Mitchell Kennerley.

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Madame Ciolkowska will continue the "Paris Chronicle" and her series of articles on "The French Word in Modern Prose."

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