

Vol. XI

No. III

Poetry

A Magazine
of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

December 1917

Carlos Among the Candles
A Monologue by Wallace Stevens

War Angles and Chicago Notes
by John Gould Fletcher

Songs of Mexico
by Grace Hazard Conkling

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The liveliest art in America today is poetry, and the liveliest expression of that art is in this little Chicago monthly. *New York Tribune (Editorial)*

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ICU

DECEMBER, 1917

CARLOS AMONG THE CANDLES

THE stage is indistinguishable when the curtain rises. The room represented is semi-circular. In the center, at the back, is a large round window, covered by long curtains. There is a door at the right and one at the left. Farther forward on the stage there are two long, low, wooden tables, one at the right and one at the left. The walls and the curtains over the window are of a dark reddish-purple, with a dim pattern of antique gold.

Carlos is an eccentric pedant of about forty. He is dressed in black. He wears close-fitting breeches and a close-fitting, tightly-buttoned, short coat with long tails. His hair is ruffled. He leaps upon the stage through the door at the right. Nothing is visible through the door. He has a long thin white lighted taper, which he holds high above his head as he moves, fantastically, over the stage, examining the room in which he finds himself.

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When he has completed examining the room, he tip-toes to the table at the right and lights a single candle at the edge of the table nearest the front of the stage. It is a thin black candle, not less than two feet high. All the other candles are like it. They give very little light.

He speaks in a lively manner, but is over-nice in sounding his words.

As the candle begins to burn, he steps back, regarding it. Nothing else is visible on the table.

Carlos:

How the solitude of this candle penetrates me! I light a candle in the darkness. It fills the darkness with solitude, which becomes my own. I become a part of the solitude of the candle . . . of the darkness flowing over the house and into it. . . This room . . . and the profound room outside. . . Just to go through a door, and the change . . . the becoming a part, instantly, of that profounder room . . . and equally to feel it communicating, with the same persistency, its own mood, its own influence . . . and there, too, to feel the lesser influences of the shapes of things, of exhalations, sounds . . . to feel the mood of the candle vanishing and the mood of the special night coming to take its place. . .

[He sighs. After a pause he pirouettes, and then continues.]

I was always affected by the grand style. And yet I have been thinking neither of mountains nor of morgues. . .

To think of this light and of myself . . . it is a duty.
. . . Is it because it makes me think of myself in other
places in such a light . . . or of other people in other
places in such a light? How true that is: other people in
other places in such a light. . . If I looked in at that
window and saw a single candle burning in an empty room
. . . but if I saw a figure. . . If, now, I felt that there
was someone outside. . . The vague influence . . . the
influence that clutches. . . But it is not only here and
now. . . It is in the morning . . . the difference be-
tween a small window and a large window . . . a blue
window and a green window. . . It is in the afternoon
and in the evening . . . in effects, so drifting, that I
know myself to be incalculable, since the causes of what
I am are incalculable. . .

*[He springs toward the table, flourishing his taper. At
the end farthest from the front of the stage, he discovers a
second candle, which he lights. He goes back to his former
position.]*

The solitude dissolves. . . The light of two candles has
a meaning different from the light of one . . . and an ef-
fect different from the effect of one. . . And the proof that
that is so, is that I feel the difference. . . The associations
have drifted a little and changed, and I have followed in this
change. . . If I see myself in other places in such a light,
it is not as I saw myself before. If I see other people in
other places in such a light, the people and places are differ-

ent from the people and places I saw before. The solitude is gone. It is as if a company of two or three people had just separated, or as if they were about to gather. These candles are too far apart.

[He flourishes his taper above the table and finds a third candle in the center of it, which he lights.]

And yet with only two candles it would have been a cold and respectable company; for the feeling of coldness and respectability persists in the presence of three, modified a little, as if a kind of stateliness had modified into a kind of elegance. . . . How far away from the isolation of the single candle, as arrogant of the vacancy around it as three are arrogant of association. . . . It is no longer as if a company had just separated. It is only as if it were about to gather . . . as if one were soon to forget the room because of the people in the room . . . people tempered by the lights around them, affected by the lights around them . . . sensible that one more candle would turn this formative elegance into formative luxury.

[He lights a fourth candle. He indulges his humor.]

And the suggestion of luxury into the suggestion of magnificence.

[He lights a fifth candle.]

And the beginning of magnificence into the beginning of splendor.

[*He lights a sixth candle. He sighs deeply.*]

In how short a time have I been solitary, then respectable—in a company so cold as to be stately, then elegant, then conscious of luxury, even magnificence; and now I come, gradually, to the beginning of splendor. Truly, I am a modern.

[*He dances around the room.*]

To have changed so often and so much . . . or to have been changed . . . to have been carried by the lighting of six candles through so many lives and to have been brought among so many people. . . This grows more wonderful. Six candles burn like an adventure that has been completed. They are established. They are a city . . . six common candles . . . seven. . .

[*He lights another and another, until he has lighted twelve, saying after them, in turn:*]

Eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

[*Following this, he goes on tip-toe to the center of the stage, where he looks at the candles. Their brilliance has raised his spirits to the point of gaiety. He turns from the lighted table to face the dark one at the left. He holds his taper before him.*]

Darkness again . . . as if a night wind had come blowing . . . but too weakly to fling the cloth of darkness.

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[He goes to the window, draws one of the curtains a little and peers out. He sees nothing.]

I had as lief look into night as look into the dark corner of a room. Darkness expels me.

[He goes forward, holding his taper high above him, until he comes to the table at the left. He finds this covered with candles, like the table at the right, and lights them, with whimsical motions, one by one. When all the candles have been lighted, he runs to the center of the stage, holding his hands over his eyes. Then he returns to the window and flings aside the curtains. The light from the window falls on the tall stalks of flowers outside. The flowers are like hollyhocks, but they are unnaturally large, of gold and silver. He speaks excitedly.]

Where now is my solitude and the lonely figure of solitude? Where now are the two stately ones that left their coldness behind them? They have taken their bareness with them. Their coldness has followed them. Here there will be silks and fans . . . the movement of arms . . . rumors of Renoir . . . coiffures . . . hands . . . scorn of Debussy . . . communications of body to body. . . There will be servants, as fat as plums, bearing pineapples from the Azores . . . because of twenty-four candles, burning together, as if their light had dispelled a phantasm, falling on silks and fans . . . the movement of arms. . . The pulse of the crowd will beat out the shallow pulses . . . it will fill me.

[*A strong gust of wind suddenly blows into the room, extinguishing several of the candles on the table at the left. He runs to the table at the left and looks, as if startled, at the extinguished candles. He buries his head in his arms.*]

That, too, was phantasm. . . The night wind came into the room. . . The fans are invisible upon the floor.

[*In a burst of feeling, he blows out all the candles that are still burning on the table at the left. He crosses the stage and stands before the table at the right. After a moment he goes slowly to the back of the stage and draws the curtains over the window. He returns to the table at the right.*]

What is there in the extinguishing of light? It is like twelve wild birds flying in autumn.

[*He blows out one of the candles.*]

It is like an eleven-limbed oak tree, brass-colored in frost.
. . . Regret. . .

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like ten green sparks of a rocket, oscillating in air. . .
The extinguishing of light . . . how closely regret follows it.

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like the diverging angles that follow nine leaves drift-

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ing in water, and that compose themselves brilliantly on the polished surface.

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like eight pears in a nude tree, flaming in twilight. . . The extinguishing of light is like that. The season is sorrowful. The air is cold.

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like the six Pleiades, and the hidden one, that makes them seven.

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like the seven Pleiades, and the hidden one, that makes them six.

[*He blows out another candle.*]

The extinguishing of light is like the five purple palmations of cinquefoil withering. . . It is full of the incipencies of darkness . . . of desolation that rises as a feeling rises. . . Imagination wills the five purple palmations of cinquefoil. But in this light they have the appearance of withering. . . To feel and, in the midst of feeling, to imagine . . .

[*He blows out another candle.*]

The extinguishing of light is like the four posts of a cadaver, two at its head and two at its feet, to-wit: its arms and legs.

Wallace Stevens

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like three peregrins, departing.

[*He blows out another candle.*]

It is like heaven and earth in the eye of the disbeliever.

[*He blows out another candle. He dances around the room. He returns to the single candle that remains burning.*]

The extinguishing of light is like that old Hesper, clapped upon by clouds.

[*He stands in front of the candle, so as to obscure it.*]

The spikes of his light bristle around the edge of the bulk. The spikes bristle among the clouds and behind them. There is a spot where he was bright in the sky. . . It remains fixed a little in the mind.

[*He opens the door at the right. Outside, the night is as blue as water. He crosses the stage and opens the door at the left. Once more he flings aside the curtains. He extinguishes his taper. He looks out. He speaks with elation.*]

Oh, ho! Here is matter beyond invention.

[*He springs through the window. Curtain.*]

Wallace Stevens

PINE RIVER BAY

Autumn, 1916.

The mimics dance in the cities,
Pavlowa in New York;
Death dances in Europe—
Like a bottle without cork,
Life loses its contents—
While the mimics dance in New York,
Offering the glories
Fabled in old stories.

But the leaves dance in the forest,
Gold and scarlet in the north;
And the gray waves dance,
And the wind stalks forth—
Like torn paper lanterns,
Like confetti in the north,
Leaves are whirling about,
A purple pallid rout.

Trees burn among the pines,
Rose and yellow torches;
The summer guests are gone,
Nobody sweeps their porches—
Two or three lumbermen
Among the golden torches
Swing huge sledge hammers,
While the gray lake clambers.

Dorothy Dudley

Two of them love whiskey,
One has loved the sea;
All of them have faces
The wind has carved in glee.
The mimics dance in the cities,
Death across the sea—
Leaves dance in the north,
And the deer run forth.

Dorothy Dudley

O DEAR BROWN LANDS

O dear brown lands, out of you I blossomed;
I feed on your rooted and wandering fruits.
And when my puzzled restlessness is done,
You clasp me again,
Scattering me over your brown bosom—
My mother, my sustainer, my children,
And my dusty immortality.

COIN OF THE YEAR

November, you old alchemist,
Who would have thought
You could turn the high arrogance of golden-rod
To still plumes of silver?

Clement Wood

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MINIATURES

I—THE WOOLWORTH

They will fashion their cities after you
When there is peace,
Pale glory in the mist,
White waterfall of granite
From heaven.

II

Have you ever seen the wind
Ruffle the rivers of people,
Down in the bottoms
Of streets?

III—THE RIVER

There were white petals, millions of them,
Fluttering over the water, to the very edge of our ship,
From the moon.

IV

Have you no pity for me,
Who have found
A little beauty?

v.

How many stars, how many
Cities,
Will you blow out with your breath
When you come to me?

vi

I squandered
All I had; I wanted to live. Now nothing
Is left me.

vii

With my own hands
I blotted out the sun.
God is a satirist.

viii

All my beautiful moments
I give away,
But the shadows in me
Are dumb.

Louis Grudin

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REED-SONG

A crescent moon
Behind the pines,
The cry of a loon
Where the river winds.

The blackened trees
On the long gray shore,
A sob in the breeze
That the day is no more.

DIRGE

A night of strange longing
Of dark unrest
Has fallen over the sands.

Like ghosts that are thronging,
Pale shapes from the waters
Arise and I see their hands.

I hear a faint weeping;
Autumn is dead;
Withered the leaves on the ground.

A gray mist is creeping
Out of the north
With the stealth of an Indian's hound.

Helen Dudley

SONGS FOR PLACES

Old Mexico

GUADALUPE

No matter how you love me
You cannot keep me home.
Along the airy lane of bells
Beyond the peacock dome,

I know the way to travel,
And I shall go at will—
Where the stone sails await the wind
Upon the holy hill.

The mariners who made them,
They have been long away:
But when a wind from Heaven blows,
They will come back some day;

And I shall hear them singing
And watch the stone sails fill,
Till the white city like a ship
Moves out across the hill.

POPOCATAPETL

Dusk, and the far volcano wears
A film of sunset sky.
The valley glimmers like the sea,
And little winds go by.

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The jasmine flower upon my breast
Is an insistent word,
But patiently my stubborn heart
Pretends it has not heard.

HUASTECA

Orchid, elfin orchid,
Made of purple air,
Yours is wistful silence,
Hard to bear.

Were he here, my lover,
Wiser far than I,
We should hear your beauty
Sing and sigh.

TAMPICO

Oh, cut me reeds to blow upon,
Or gather me a star,
But leave the sultry passion-flowers
Growing where they are.

I fear their sombre yellow deeps,
Their whirling fringe of black,
And he who gives a passion-flower
Always asks it back.

Grace Hazard Conkling

CUERNAVACA

You would not keep me near you,
You could not hold me far,
And now it does not matter
Where you are.

My heart has long forgotten
The ardent words you said,
But not the great stars blazing
Overhead.

DURANGO

The cactus candelabra
Are lit with yellow flowers:
Oh, take my jocund mornings,
My glancing April hours!

Do you not know the desert
Is slow to bloom again?—
The trail is long to April,
Across an arid plain;

And it is but a moment—
The time of cactus flowers.
Before the dusty journey,
Come share my April hours!

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ORIZABA

Is it long to Orizaba?
Have I far to go?
When I ask the carrier-pigeons,
They don't know.

There's a mountain I am seeking,
Feathered all with snow.
When I ask the valley orchids,
They don't know.

Like an orchid pale and folded,
Like a snowy bird,
That's the mountain I am seeking:
Have you heard?

You can see it on the sunrise
When the clear winds blow.
Is it far to Orizaba,
Do you know?

AMECAMECA

I climb the sacred hillside
Up through the evening blue:
The ancient steps are silvered
By starlight and the dew.

And if the gray church vanish,
My soul may worship still,

Grace Hazard Conkling

For God has hung the Southern Cross
Above the kneeling hill.

VERA CRUZ

I see them in the storm-washed light,
Like ebony against the sand;
The wrecks of ships lost long ago
From many a mellow land.

Oh, may the sand soon cover them,
And all their sorrow be unlearned!
They are too like those dreams of mine
That nevermore returned.

SAN LUIS POTOSI

Oh, for the comet's trail
Across the purple sky,
So far we could not hear
The glory rushing by!

It will not come again
For more than ninety years,
When we shall have forgotten
All our tears!

Grace Hazard Conkling

LOVE UNTOLD

I cannot tell
How much I love you.
A haunting legend frightens me.

The men who dared for Helen
Knew sacredly
What I have learned and fear:
The swan that sings its soul
Must die, my dear,
Must die.

I cannot tell
How much I love you.
But—

There was a Man
Once, long ago,
Who loved you so divinely,
That he hung upon a cross
And died—
Died shamefully—for you.

My darling, would you understand?

I cannot tell
How much I love you, sweet-my-dear,
Unless I die—
Unless I die.

PEOPLE

I cannot understand people.
They are so strange.

I had a sweetheart
Who seemed to love me.
I gave her roses, sweets, and gems.
I gave her all I had—my heart—
And she broke it.

I cannot forgive her.
Women are heartless.

God had a world
That should have loved Him.
He gave it beauty, light, and life.
He gave it all He had—His Son—
And it crucified Him.

People are strange.
I cannot understand them.
But God—
He loves them.

Earl Marlatt

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NEW LIFE

WITH CHILD

Ah, I am heavy now and patient,
Moving as the dumb, tamed animals move, ploddingly,
Burdened, burdened;
Knowing ahead of me the iron pain—yet am I dumb and
patient.

A stillness is thick and heavy upon me . . .
Waiting . . .

Inevitably you unfold within me.
Sudden I am smitten with terror—
How shall I carry the burden of a soul!

ATTACK

My nerves are riding a race-horse.
I shall storm, storm through the gates of pain, I shall win
victory.

Huzzah, I am coming!
I shall shatter the gates of pain,
I shall go hurtling through pain!
I am riding, riding. . . .

THE MOMENT

They have me again in the birth-room,
Where all night long I lay in a rhythm of agony,
Horrible hell-rhythm of birth-giving!
Pain . . .

A gasping cessation . . .

Pain. . . .

.

How I loathe the white nurses!

Yet they too are women,

They too . . . are women . . .

I should be sorry . . . for women. . .

AFTERWARDS

There is a single white, sweet star in the sky.

It is afloat in illimitable peace.

I have achieved it, I have set it in the sky—

My baby!

WITHIN MY ARMS

Little tigger,

Little drawer of milk,

Feeding from me as your life drew through mine in the
darkness,

What flows again from you to me, seeker?

Currents are about us . . .

Do you think it you tugging,

My breast that is being tugged!

Ah, little beloved,

We do not know rightly

In what stream we are drifting!

Florence Kiper Frank

TO A CHILD

I

You are my silent laughter;
You are my unshed tears;
You are the elfin wonder
Of my ecstasy and fears.

You are my heart that dances;
You are my soul that leaps.
You have hidden the key of the lonely room
Where my troubled spirit sleeps.

II

Dear changeling, how I love your smile!—
Fleet as a timid fawn
It breaks upon me suddenly
And with a flash is gone.

It's hardly like a smile at all,
More like a blinding light
That darts across the starless sky—
A fire-fly of the night.

Florence K. Mixer

CHICAGO NOTES

LAKE FRONT AT NIGHT

At the edge of a beautiful gulf of gloom and stillness
The city rises—
Glittering with millions of spangles
Seen between the dull smoke of the trains,
That struggle and tug laboriously
And bump empty freight-cars into each other
With a noise like surf collapsing.

Beyond there is windy darkness—
One or two lights low down
Seemingly blurred by mist,
And waterish stars;
For the wind is bringing rain
To stream down the spangled faces,
And make the light-terraces melt together
Growing more dim.

But the engines cough and call;
One or two lights in the silence
Watch the night shutting slowly down dark doors on the
city.
Behind her spangled mask
She frowns a little, standing more weary,
But still casting out on the darkness

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Her glory, where winds will whirl it
Through dry splinters of grass on the dunes

THE MONADNOCK

Pylon for some incomplete gateway
Through which the high priests of the sun
Might blow their trumpets in the morning,
Strong red and yellow buttress,
What breed of desert dwellers
Left you here in the midst of the city,
To mock with your severity
The gaudy frippery of more bright façades,
To smolder like a polished block
Of dark Egyptian stone?

LA SALLE STREET—EVENING

The façades glower bleakly,
Each one a successive fiat.

They oppose with unwearied sombreness
The greenish light of the sky.

They extend themselves frontally:
Immense stubborn cliffs of fatality,
Motionless summits of denial,
Striving with silent ambition
To crush the last glimmer out.

John Gould Fletcher

People go hastily beneath them with embittered glances.
They do not heed the throng,
They do not hesitate at all:
Their treasuries are locked and barred behind triple-brazed
armor of steel.
They are an army in massive alignment:
We are the trampled grass quivering beneath their feet.

WAR ANGLES

I

Queen Victoria's statue
Was surrounded with geraniums,
Red as the massive backs
Of scarlet-coated grenadiers.

Queen Victoria's statue
Today is encircled
With a flourishing crop
Of early potatoes.

Thus the world changes,
And we change with it.

II

You are not utterly desolate,
War-tired soldiers.
You lie down in the churned mud,
Slaves in mud-colored garments.
The storm passes over your heads;
When it is over,
Whatever is left of you
Will get up and make a new world.

It is we who are desolate,
We older people;
Hearing the stale chatter
On life, love, art, the war.

We are the bitter ones
Who cannot smile;
For in our heart of hearts,
We know we are dried specimens in the museum
Of older things—
Dried specimens set under glass,
Soon to be peered at curiously by searching alien
eyes.

III

Let us never forget
Joy has two faces:
One soft and transient,
Broken by the lightest shadow;
Another one harder,
Time-worn and wrinkled,
Facing its pain,
As if fighting to get the last drop
Out of the cup.

Let us never forget
Sometimes to shrug our shoulders.
There is always this drift,
Always this chaos,
Always renewal.
Let us remember
That over this chaos
There is sometimes moonlight,
And sometimes dawn.

John Gould Fletcher

COMMENT

CHRISTMAS AND WAR

THE Christmas of this year of grace will be the first of fifty-three to find the United States at war. Since the mournful Christmas of 1864—the last of Lincoln's first administration, the last he was to pass on earth—Santa Claus has had clean, white sledding for his pack of toys. No, I have not forgotten the Spanish-American flurry of war—it began in April and was over the tenth of December: peace was the nation's gift from the cheery saint, with Porto Rico and the Philippines for its stocking.

Now the gift we long for is victory, with the kaiser's crown for a bauble of price—the kaiser's crown, to be tossed over the fence by the German people and set in a museum by the republics. If the world can not longer exist half slave and half free, how long must we labor and fight to free ourselves and the world, to free ourselves that we may be worthy and able to free the world?

The arts must do what they can, not through preaching and propaganda—that is not their function—but through that freeing of the mind and lifting of the spirit which the perception of beauty brings. Thus do they spur men on to clear thought and keen action, to high and gallant endeavor; and the records they keep—the tale of the tribe they tell—may become an immortal possession of glory. Through beauty alone can men be inspired—the beauty of a command, an idea, a dream. Through the beauty of

art alone can their deeds resist time's slander; they must be forgotten unless art records them in stone or bronze, in color, or in the beaten gold of words.

The whole world is moved, as never before, to unities and enmities. War is now no isolated quarrel—all nations are aflame. Will the artists feel the universal emotion, so that a spirit of fire will leap from mind to mind and kindle the new era? Faith moves mountains still—will they believe in the new era, believe in their world? And will their world believe in them?—will it catch their flame as it flies?

Art must be powerful indeed, must be generous and devoted indeed, to match the prodigious energies now aroused. In the *Scientific American* for October 27th I read the epic of the motor truck which is to carry food and ammunition to our soldiers in France. Rival inventors, meeting in Washington, pooled their secrets, competing manufacturers pooled their plants; for all rivalries were forgotten, all competitions obliterated, in the common purpose—to make the best possible machine for the nation's need. The new motor for airplanes represents a similar union of energies, a similar devotion of individual genius to a common cause; the greatest experts in this inventive nation, men formerly rivals, locking themselves together through days and nights for the solution of a difficult problem.

Here we find men of science and business, men representing the keenest commercialism of a so-called "materialistic" age and country, all forgetting their battles and jealousies,

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forgetting profits, omitting from their plans both the ego and the dollar, thinking only of the best possible combination of brains for the best possible product, uniting their powers for a result more powerful than any individual could possibly have attained.

In the past the united arts have achieved results as wonderful; the Parthenon, the mediaeval cathedrals, the carved and painted churches of Italy, the Maya monuments of Yucatan, all represent an obliteration of rivalries, a union of individual energies, for the triumph of a common purpose. In these cases religion was the motive, or a combination of religion and patriotism; the motive becoming transfigured in the tribal mind to an ideal which only beauty could fitly serve. In the case of the truck and the motor we find, if not religion, a fundamental sense of brotherhood, of democratic tribal unity, expressing itself, if not in beauty, in something scarcely less noble—the fittest possible instrument of service.

When the motives of artists become once more united and spiritualized by a common emotion beyond individual profit or glory, we shall have great art to vie with the art of the past. We shall have it because individual power, the power of genius, will be reinforced, incalculably multiplied, by the reactions of sympathy; because the men of vision, magically stimulating each other, will create beauty beyond the dreams of any one of them. We shall have it because of the common will to eliminate waste—the waste of futile effort, despair, thwarted desire, suicidal agonies of body and

soul—which strews the paths of art with human wreckage. We shall have it because of a mystic force in the human will, a force compelling even in the individual unit, a force multiplied beyond mere numbers in the group, and overwhelmingly irresistible when the tribal will is aroused.

It is something like this that the Christmas of 1917 should bring to our poets and other artists, as they watch our young men going to war, or march along in the ranks. These boys in khaki, with complete simplicity and abandon, are giving themselves to a cause; by their union, by their courage and joy in it, they will make the cause irresistible. Do the men of vision feel a loosening of veils from their eyes, a falling of walls in their hearts, as they see the youth of the nation giving itself away? Do they see wider horizons, feel deeper loves? Do their spirits fuse together for heat and power in the great fire that is burning? Will they give us the miracle that they alone can give—the *beauty* of the new era that must come when war has burned away the old?

H. M.

AGAIN THE NEGRO

A very real Negro Samson came "into my mind" as I read Mr. Vachel Lindsay's *Negro Sermon* in the birthday number of *POETRY*; for in my ears awoke the strains of an old plantation melody, *Gawd's a-gwine t' move all de troubles away*, whose verses tell of Samson with all the artless familiarity of the true folk-singer. And then Mr. Lindsay's use of the phrase, *My Lord is riding high*, vividly

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recalled to me the triumphant Negro song, *Ride on Jesus*, which probably originated in a "shout," as they called those exuberant melodies composed in the ecstasy of "camp-meet'n," and was evidently inspired by the description of the Savior's entrance into Jerusalem, the hosannas, the palms, and Jesus riding on an ass.

Both these "plantations," as the Negroes call the old slave-songs, I first heard through a colored man from St. Helena's Island, off the coast of South Carolina, where the population is almost wholly Negro and the language and music typically "black." Though the songs, being genuine folk-songs, are common property, I made a careful record of them, words and music, just as they are sung by Negroes in the South, and these will be published in a collection for the benefit of Hampton Institute in Virginia. Meanwhile it might perhaps interest those readers of POETRY who have been stirred by Mr. Lindsay's *Sermon* to meet in a purely literary form these two genuine Negro folk-poems. As the poems were really conceived by their creators as songs, and the music forms an absolutely integral part of the rhythmic values, I shall italicize the accented syllables as sung, so as to reproduce the typical Negro syncopation of the melody, which, to the song-maker's mind, was one with the verse. (Not, however, that every Negro in singing, would stress the song in exactly the same way, for the freedom of complete individualism is the inalienable right of every Negro bard!) Here is the first song:

Gawd's a-gwine t' move *all* de troubles away,
Gawd's a-gwine t' move *all* de troubles away,

Fer Gawd's a-gwine t' move *all de troubles away—*
See'm no more till de com-in'—day!

Now follow lines about Methusaleh and Nicodemus, and then the swiftly graphic verses devoted to Samson.

All who are familiar with Negro folk-songs understand how subtly and delightfully the vowel *a* (pronounced *ah* of course), tacked on in front of a word or at the end of it, gives a needed stroke of emphasis, furnishes an introductory grace-note, or softens and binds in that fluency demanded by the Negro ear the sterner syllables of the English tongue. The graceful little word *twill* is a Negro beautification of our prosaic-sounding *till*.

A—read about Sam-son
From *his* birth—
De stronges' man ev-er *walked* on earth!
A—read way back
In de an-*cient* time
He slew ten thou-*sand* Phil-*is-tine*.
A—Samson he *went*
A—walkin' a-*bout*,
A—Sam-son's strength-*a* was never found out
Twill his wife set *down*
Upon *his—knee*
“An' a-tell me whar yo' strength-*a* lies ef *you—please!*”
A—Samson's *wife*
She done talk so *fair*
A—Samson tol' her, “Cut off-*a* ma hair—
If yo' shave ma *hade*
Jes' as clean as yo' *han'*
Ma strength-*a* will become-*a* like a natch-*erl* man!
For Gawd's a-gwine t' move *all de troubles away*”
—etc.

The effusion of Samson's confession to his “wife” is thoroughly Negro in its enthusiasm. Not content with telling

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her merely that his strength lies in his hair, he rapidly goes on to bid her shave his head. And as of course the tight-curling Negro hair can hardly be much cut *without* shaving, we can readily see that to the singer's mind Samson is indeed, as Mr. Lindsay states, a "Jack Johnson," a full blooded black Strong Man.

The other song, *Ride on, Jesus!* is superb in the royal dignity and victory of its melody:

O, Ride on, Jesus,
Ride on, Jesus,
Ride on—conquerin' King!
Want t' go t' hebb'n in de mo-'nin'.
Ef yo' see *ma*
Mud-der (*Shouted by the solo singer.*)
(*Oh yes!*) (*Shouted by the chorus.*)
Jes-a tell *her*
Fo' *me*
(*Oh yes!*)
Fo' t' meet me tomorrow in Gali-lee—
Want t' go t' hebb'n in de mo'n-in!

Then come endless verses appointing a like meeting to father, brother, sister, deacon, preacher, et cetera. And next these glorious lines shouting a glad certainty of salvation, the services of John the Baptist being now unnecessary:

Ef yo' see *John*
D' Baptist
(*Oh yes!*)
Jes-a tell *him*
Fo' *me*
(*Oh yes!*)
Dat I's bin to de ribber an' I's bin baptize'!
Want t' go t' hebb'n in de mo'n-in!"

And at the last follows the sudden flash of imagery that

so often proclaims the ingenuous Negro folk-singer a true poet:

Ef—yo' wanter go t' hebb'n

(Oh yes!)

I'll-a tell yo' how

(Oh yes!)

Jes' keep yo' han's on de Gospel plow

Want t' go t' hebb'n in de mo'n-in'!

Natalie Curtis

REVIEWS

MISS LOWELL ON TENDENCIES

Tendencies in Modern American Poetry, by Amy Lowell.
Macmillan Co.

It is a relief to have at last an absorbing book on the new movement in American poetry, a book by one who is in the movement and who is up to date in her point of view. Whether one agrees with Miss Lowell's opinions or not, no one can question her knowledge of the subject, and of the literature in English, French, and perhaps other languages which forms the historic and immediate background of the subject. She is trained, she is competent; and being herself a poet of high repute in the movement, she is sympathetic with its manifestations. Indeed, her attitude is one of enthusiasm and confidence; sighs for the past and apologies for the present are now definitely relegated to the limbo of old fashions.

But, competent and informed as Miss Lowell is, she has given us rather the book of a theorist than of a student

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open-minded and open-eyed. Theories are dangerous in either art or life. The man of science accumulates thousands of facts before he ventures on a theory, and unless his theory stands the test of every fact then or thereafter presented it goes upon the scrap-heap. In the fluidities of art and life, however, this scientific precision is difficult. The facts lack definite outline—each observer sees them differently. Conclusions thus tend to become merely the expression of an individual temperament or preference, and they are valuable according to the breadth and universality of the critic's intellectual horizon.

Miss Lowell has tried to formulate and systematize a wide and rather disorderly literary democracy by a running comment on the lives and works of six poets who, in her opinion, concentrate and express its "movement." Others, she seems to say in her introduction, may be interesting, even admirable, but they are less typical, being either on the edge of the main current, or outside of it in little pools or eddies of their own.

The book states the author's case but makes no effort to prove it. It is the opening argument of a law-suit, with the examination of six witnesses and the presentation of facts—the narrative part of her case. But nowhere does she gather her facts together, round up and discuss all possible cross-examinations and opposing arguments, and complete her case with a convincing appeal. One feels that here is an author of firm conviction, strong will, and intense imaginative enthusiasm, who thinks that American

poetry either does, or ought to, follow a certain marked-off path; and that any American poetry which does not conform is thereby outside "the movement."

There is a curious familiarity in this attitude of mind. Miss Lowell is caught unaware by her Puritan inheritance—we have once more orthodoxy and heresy, once more a laying-down of the law. But the trouble is, the law won't stay laid.

What, for example, can be done with Vachel Lindsay? Miss Lowell tries to dispose of him in a sentence of the introduction as "rather popularizing the second stage of the movement"—the stage of Masters and Sandburg—"than heading a completely new tendency of his own." But, although no tendency whatever is completely new, Mr. Lindsay is no corollary of his Chicago confreres, and any discussion of American poetry which leaves him out is in danger of being discarded by the next age. If the thesis is not big enough to account for him, then the thesis has to be scrapped. Mr. Lindsay represents a tendency much richer and more indigenious than that personified by the imagists, for example, however fine and high theirs may be. His roots run deep into the past of American literature; Mark Twain and Riley and Brer-Rabbit Harris were his collateral relatives, and all the wild lore that is in our western blood—our love of the wilderness, the folk-sense of magic in nature and life, the instinct of sympathy with all kinds and races of men—all this is in Vachel Lindsay's tendency, and he carries a good share of the new movement

on his shoulders. And more or less in the same group with him march poets like Benét, Miss Wyatt, Dr. Gordon, Miss Skinner, and a troop of youngsters, each of whom is inspired by some particular local or racial group of our myriad-minded country.

We will pass by the conservatives, the poets who conform, on the whole, to the elder tendencies, although any complete study of our subject would have to discuss and estimate values in the work of men and women like Arthur Ficke, Agnes Lee, Witter Bynner, Sara Teasdale and others.

But in presenting the claim of the radicals, Miss Lowell can not justly confine it to four poets. Her study of these four is on the whole sympathetic, though I should question many details. Mr. Masters' work, for example, springs out of a social experience unusually rich, varied and profound. He knows whereof he speaks, and no one who knows—no lawyer, doctor, man or woman of affairs, who has plunged to the deeps of modern society and who does not gloss over what he sees—could call *Spoon River* "brutal," or say that its author "sees life through the medium of sex." And to us, who long ago noted the "flaming idealism" of this poet, it seems strange indeed to find Miss Lowell including him among the "professed realists" who "are apt to forget that idealism, a perception of beauty, an aspiration after fineness and nobleness, are also real." In the study of Carl Sandburg there is less to criticize; in fact, this section and the one on Robert Frost are in my opinion the best of the book—for I find Robinson somewhat overstressed.

The final chapter—the one on the imagists, with H. D. and John Gould Fletcher as American exemplars—we must again criticize as incomplete, considered as a study of present-day radical symbolism, to speak broadly, in this country. If Miss Lowell were not the author we might begin by objecting to the omission of her own name. If the imagists fairly represented the whole story, we might further specify Ezra Pound, whose work, whether always strictly bounded by the tenets of imagism or not, has been immensely fecund—as Carl Sandburg pointed out long ago in POETRY—and certainly represents a tendency.

But the imagists are by no means the whole story. The delicate and whimsical art of Wallace Stevens, for example, art too individual to be listed under any school, is yet extremely significant. The spiritual vision of Cloyd Head also represents more than a passing or personal phase. Nor can anyone safely omit the fascinating experiments in moods and rhythms of Alfred Kreyborg, T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Helen Hoyt and others. All these demand consideration as representing a tendency of which the imagists are only one element.

The truth is that American poetry today is a rather large democracy. Mr. Stuart Walker, director of the adventurous Portmanteau Theatre, gives a lecture entitled *Every Little Theatre has a Movement all its Own*. So in the poetic movement also it is unsafe to select special groups, and set metes and bounds, for every American poet has a movement all his own. One may recognize that a widespread

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renaissance is certainly in process, one may study its multi-form manifestations, but whither it is leading us, and who will emerge as the leaders, it is much too early to say.

Meantime we may welcome Miss Lowell's book as important in the discussion. No one can fail to be thrilled by the six portraits it exhibits, records of singularly typical American lives: Robinson isolate, contemplative, sternly observant; Frost the Yankee, "plastic and passive," wandering but always drawn back to his own place; Masters, son of the "middle border," richly impassioned in life as in art; Sandburg, the northern offshoot powerful in growth, tender in bloom, under our bluer sky; H. D., shy and sensitive pilgrim of beauty; and John Gould Fletcher, American by in-born passion, cosmopolite by training and taste, a brooding and melancholy seer of visions. Could any six characters, six lives, be more representative than these of our far-flung nation of many bloods and creeds?

Miss Lowell paints these portraits in vivid colors. If we think her book rather six portraits than a single complete composition, if we find its title too general for its content, it is at any rate a big gun for a certain point of view. The danger is that the public will think it covers the whole subject, will be too ready to accept it as final and authoritative. And to admit this danger is to admit the author's power and repute both as poet and critic. H. M.

A POET OF THE PRESENT

These Times, by Louis Untermeyer. Henry Holt & Co.

In *The Atlantic Monthly* for October, Mr. O. W. Firkins makes a plea for the closer union of poetry and life. He urges the necessity for variation in the one to conform to the irregular pace of the other. He deplores the constant, artificial mood of exaltation which had come to be a common convention of verse before the flood of the recent poetic renaissance swept away the dikes of false sentiment and the dams of hyperbolic diction. That Mr. Firkins refuses to see the beginnings of just such a change in the "new poetry," is merely to state that Mr. Firkins is a conservative and an academe. The Biblical camel confronted with the eye of the needle is no more at a loss than are the English Departments of our colleges placed face to face with the work of living men. After all, why should we quarrel with such an attitude? It is the business of a college to teach the past; it is the business of the collegians to create the future. But that the conservatives admit that a change was needed is more than encouraging; it is extraordinary. Let us be glad, my brothers, that we are not yet dead and mummified into "prescribed reading." Let us be glad that we are still lusty with splendid thoughts of beauty and revolt, and that nobody has yet cursed us for keeping him from a football game.

Still, Mr. Firkins is right in demanding a brisker, more robust, expression for contemporary American life. These times are not the England of the mid-nineteenth century.

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These times are largely what Louis Untermeyer says they are in his book which bears this exceedingly happy title.

In *Challenge*, Mr. Untermeyer was the youth flashing against this and that fact of daily life, parrying, thrusting, rollicking, and following a banner partially obscured in clouds of chimney smoke. His reactions were fine and adolescent, he shouted old songs and infused into them his own fresh, irresponsible meaning. *Challenge* was a book of promise, but not a book of achievement.

The important thing about *These Times* is that the poet has not abandoned his wondering delight at life. There is knowledge, but no disillusion. There is less kicking up of heels in a patch of sunlight, but the satisfaction with the sun remains. The whole has taken on a wider sweep. Mr. Untermeyer sees things in a less isolated manner, more in the whole, as it were. There is the same tilting at abuses, but the tilting is aimed, not at the outgrowth as before, but at the roots. There is less sentimentality and more sentiment. Altogether, the book has a greater seriousness than *Challenge*, and is consequently more emotional and compelling.

In my book, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*, I have endeavored to show that the present poetical revolt has three distinct phases. That its beginning is a vague unrest, perhaps only partially understood even by the men who labor under it; that the second phase is conscious revolution, a desire for change and reform, a change and reform largely taking shape in concrete suggestions; action wins over con-

templation, and violence for the time drowns out the lyric impulse. The third phase is that of accomplished evolution, even though the evolution be but at the very beginning of its term. The result is leisure and a cessation of internal conflict, leaving the mind of the poet free once more to receive the impressions of external beauty.

I refer to this idea here merely to place Mr. Untermeyer in his niche in the present movement in which he is a potent factor. He belongs to the second of these phases, the revolutionary one; but, unlike so many of the men who compose this second phase, he has reached it through sympathy rather than through conflict. He has had no cramping Puritanic ideals to combat; he has not been forced to fight his surroundings, but has been blown along with them. For this reason we see in him a different trend from that of Mr. Masters, for instance, or Mr. Sandburg. Mr. Masters is steeped in bitterness; Mr. Sandburg is only partially freed from the matrix of dumbness which bound his ancestors. He is like a sculptured figure escaping from its granite mesh, here an arm is free, there a foot, but at a little distance there is just a huge, ungainly block of marble. Mr. Untermeyer is no wholesome unpalatable draught; he is no granite pillar, shapeless, but full of potentialities. Rather is he like a song of Schumann drifting down an empty street, a sudden hymn sung by soldiers after a victory. For Mr. Untermeyer sings of defeat, and yet every pulse of his beats victory.

There is a simple answer to this difference. Mr. Untermeyer is a Jew, and in thinking of the Jews one should

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never forget Matthew Arnold's illuminating epigram: "The Jewish race has a flair for religion." This flair for religion is in all that Mr. Untermeyer writes. We see the same thing more obviously expressed in the work of another Jewish poet—James Oppenheim.

It makes no difference whether Mr. Untermeyer is a professing Jew or not, the flair is here. Much of his poetry reminds one of the ritualistic dances of the Old Testament. There are pipes and timbrels in plenty, but they are played with the ecstasy of dedication. It is not Mr. Untermeyer's sociological bias which stirred the students of Columbia and Barnard to name their little paper after his book, *Challenge*, although they may think that this was the reason; it is the compelling force of religious enthusiasm which shouts from its pages. And it is just this religious fire which makes *These Times* such an important contribution to the poetry of to-day.

Every man has a religion, no one can live without, and it is of no moment under what symbol it presents itself. But those few in every generation whose religion is at once militant, joyful, and sustaining, become leaders in thought and action.

It is true that Mr. Untermeyer's technique lags behind his impulse. But the impulse is so sincere and masterful that it carries the poems forward on an engulfing wave. No matter what the subject—lyric, drama, satire—we feel behind it the man, standing bareheaded and exultant before the tables of stone. In *Eve Speaks* and *Moses on Sinai*, we have the most absolute examples of this attitude, and it is

a characteristic of this impassioned devotion that these poems are all intermingled with everyday thoughts and actions. Eve's fall was no mere following the line of least resistance; it was a conscious act to rid Adam of a life of thoughtless ease, to gird him for a battle and fling him into its midst. Life is a battle, again and again Mr. Untermeyer affirms it, and the will to fight for the cause is a glorious possession. *Moses on Sinai* again strips off symbol to reveal fact, and in so doing but rears a greater symbol. A Pantheist? Perhaps; but what is Pantheism but a symbol! Mr. Untermeyer admits the universe; and, admitting it, worships, beyond it, the unknowable.

This is a modern attitude. Science is no more the negative of religion, but its ally. Science takes us step by step to truth; that it has not yet reached the final truth is nothing. Dare we say it will? And if it does? Is a great man less great because we know him? Will truth be less appalling when it is entirely revealed? Mr. Untermeyer sees life starkly and honestly, and still worships. So should we all if we could free ourselves of shibboleths. In *The Dead Horse*, the poet shows us a fact, disagreeable to the eye of convention, of an awe-inspiring magnificence to the eye of science, of a supreme beauty to the eye of religion. For *The Dead Horse* is a parable of the perpetual resurrection of life.

Lovers shows this same fearless facing of facts. Love is not enough; it is never enough. To Mr. Untermeyer, love is the healer and fortifier, but the battle must be faced. Love gives power, and the fight is resumed.

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It is this belief in life which makes real war seem so hideous. The *Battle-Cries* section is all a protest against the waste of war. The very militance and courage which goes willingly into the war for ideas, holds aloof from a carnage in which the idea is for the moment lost sight of. This is from no lack of personal courage, but from the conviction that thought is more potent than fact, which it is; but all men are not thinkers, and, to such, facts alone speak. Also, Mr. Untermeyer's sociological bias urges him to conserve men, and he loses sight of the fact that it is not any men which it is important to conserve, but such men as can advance the race. War is an ordeal by fire out of which must come purification.

I think *The Laughters* is the finest poem in the book. The progression from the light, happy laughter of Spring to the hideous realities of war, to the "laughter of ghouls" who find men so little advanced that they need such an ordeal, is really tremendous. This is one of the strongest poems which the present war has produced.

The Victory of the Beet-fields is another war poem the power of which is not to be denied, and in it is a lyric note which is one of Mr. Untermeyer's most characteristic qualities. For the poet is not merely a strong and virile thinker, he is an artist and a singer as well, although I think his lyricism is more effective where he uses it to point his serious pieces than when it is the main purport of the poem. In his more obvious lyrics there is a too reminiscent quality, a tendency to employ the stamped and usual, which seriously

injures them; they are not sufficiently pointed, not sharp enough. For instance, in *Bacchanal*, death is a "giddy precipice," life "a brimming goblet," and the poet even permits himself to "quaff the fiery Spring." It is such expressions as these which cause that lagging of technique which I have mentioned. And this is strange, as in — and *Other Poets*, Mr. Untermeyer showed a rare mastery over words and manners. The truth would seem to be that his taste leans ever so slightly to the Teutonic vice of sentimentality, that *schwärmerei* from which Heine saved himself by a fine irony. Not that Mr. Untermeyer is devoid of irony. It is the chief ingredient of many of his *Thirteen Portraits*, but it deserts him in his songs, and is not even present in the slight form of a corrective. It is when the articulate bones of a strong, serious subject decline to be obscured that we see Mr. Untermeyer producing a poem at once lyric and firm. *Immortal* illustrates what I mean, and might be placed as a motto before all Mr. Untermeyer's work.

I wish I had space to comment on those excellent poems: *Swimmers*, *On the Palisades*, *Still Life*—a beautiful little *genre* piece, and *Victories*. Mr. Untermeyer's love of nature is no whit behind his love of humanity, and he possesses to a marked extent that *sine qua non* of the true poet: the seeing of romance in the full expression of life, in its sordid elements no less than in its most exalted. The *Portrait of a Jewelry Drummer* is a splendid rebuke to the blind, and its light satiric touch but heightens the sense of beauty and awe.

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From squalid realism on the one hand, from nebulous aestheticism on the other, *These Times* is happily free, and if Mr. Untermeyer pursues the path he has so fearlessly chosen, we need not doubt that his next book will be a still further advance.

Amy Lowell

SONG AND PROPAGANDA

Roads and What is Your Legion? By Grace Fallow Norton.
Houghton Mifflin Co.

Among the poems in the first of these volumes one comes on strange and fragrant verse like this:

If my mother knew
How our doves at dawn
Shake me with their wings,
Wild, bewildered, wan,
When the white star sings,
And they would be gone.

One poem especially, *In a Green Place*, makes an intriguing pattern:

In a green place,
A vine-twined green place,
Where I wished to lie sweetly dreaming and sleeping,
Where I wished to wake laughing and leaping,
In a green place,
A tree-guarded green place,
I saw a little girl in a black dress weeping.

A number of other poems too one must credit with a richness of sound, alluring like some glamorous fabric on a bargain counter. To read the whole volume, however, is to be surfeited with windiness of thought, phrase and rhythm; with a kind of "gladness," coarsely sentimental in

texture. It seems a pity that more writers have not the instinct to publish only the piquant fragments of their work; their art then might at least appear to be more complete.

What Is Your Legion? is propaganda rather than poetry—written before this country had entered the war, to rouse America from its indifference. It rings with sentiments usually called “fine” or “noble,” the way a busy street-car rings with its fares. It testifies, I think, to the elusiveness of the arts, to the futility of trying to mobilize them or volunteer their service for any unintrinsic purpose.

In this, to veer slightly from Miss Norton, in whose work at least shines the zeal of the volunteer, there is a moral for societies like the Vigilantes who would offer their goddess to war as a kind of advertising girl. Very swiftly she evades them, and leaves them to perpetrate atrocities alone—paintings that shriek through an acre of brazen paint and impotent line for men to go to war, and poems too often empty and blatant.

Work like this they should leave frankly to the commercial craftsman, realizing that no fine art will ever result because some artist has “come across” or been drafted in; that the great poem, for example, will speak of war only because the poet has wanted to, having loved or hated it, or caught some passionate glimpse of it; and that perhaps he will not speak of it at all. Abandoning the idea of a liaison between art and war, such a society could then turn rather toward making possible the integrity of the artist in time of war. Conservation being the fashion, should it not

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extend beyond material food—if we believe that, when peace comes, men cannot live by bread alone?

Or, would this be an impractical and over-provident measure—the policy of the idealist? Doubtless there is no wind so evil as to blow nobody good. In the war-ridden countries, one hears, already the ceremony of marriage is becoming somewhat irrelevant. This perhaps is the glorious day of the prostitute—in art as well as in life. Admitting this possibility, at least one enjoys a glimmer of the truth and its attendant freedom.

Dorothy Dudley

CORRESPONDENCE

ABOUT EMERSON

Dear POETRY: There are many who, like myself, have liked your editorials in *POETRY* and who agree with your attitude towards the artificial and stilted style of certain academic verse. But your remarks on Emerson in the September number, while extremely novel, do not impress us as quite just to the ideas of the great sage.

During a twenty years' exploration of his *Templa Serena* I have found that before his essays were published they were trimmed and shorn—made safe for New-England democracy. "I mixed them with a little Boston water, so they would sell in New York and London:" these are his own words. And if the *English Traits* were re-written according to Emerson's true opinion as expressed in his journals, what splendid shadows would offset the present high lights

of that book! And what of Emerson's *Poet*—is he really a "grand inaccessible figure"? Let the master speak for himself:

"The poet is least a poet when he sits crowned." (*Journal*, vol. 7, p. 198.) "Out upon scholars with their pale sickly indoor thoughts!" (*Journal*, vol. 8, p. 532)—and so on through ten fascinating volumes. Even the cubists are anticipated. He flung his mental doors and windows open to infinite possibilities when he said: "Think how many more eggs remain to be hatched!" Emerson's idea of a poet is a loving genius who scorns dignity, laurels, authorities and rhymes in order, as he says, "to straddle that wild horse, the people."

From Concord, on July 21st, 1885, he wrote a memorable letter to Whitman, quoted by J. A. Symonds in his study of Whitman. What more could you wish? And when we remember that even Nietzsche, that supreme iconoclast, bowed in reverence before Emerson long after he had turned away from Schopenhauer's "funereal perfume," must we not be careful before we attempt to interpret so deep a thinker?

Ernest Nelson

Note by the Editor: Our correspondent mentions the chief cause for criticism of Emerson—that he did not stick to his colors. A "great sage" should either speak the truth or be silent—he should not mix the truth with "a little Boston water" to please his publishers and public.

The same spirit of compromise affected his attitude toward Whitman. It is true that he wrote Whitman a "memorable letter" praising the *Leaves of Grass*. But afterwards, when the hue and cry was raised, did he not retract? did not his later remarks differ materially from this first letter?

FIFTY YEARS SINCE BAUDELAIRE

The American correspondent of the *Mercur de France* writes us apropos of the recent semi-centennial of the death of Charles Baudelaire:

Perhaps it is not too late to send you two or three items concerning this literary event which has attracted wide attention in France.

Of the several new editions of *Les Fleurs du Mal* which have appeared in Paris during the past year, that issued by M. Robert Helleu, the well-known art printer and publisher, seems to me the most attractive in every respect. It contains a short introduction by M. André Gide, one of the best Baudelaire authorities in France, and includes three striking portraits of the poet, one of which was drawn by Baudelaire himself.

M. Helleu says: "In the midst of our more serious troubles, the semi-centennial of the death of Baudelaire is an event which has stirred up considerable heated discussion. Never have the significance and the influence of this poet been so preponderant as today. Like all true artists, Baudelaire is loved warmly or not understood; a middle course, which some are trying to follow, is difficult to hold. In the presence of such a perfect work of art as *Les Fleurs du Mal*, which has been before the public for over a half-century, one must admire it or condemn it. Two opposing systems of æsthetics stand face to face, and those who have labored not to make a choice between them have made a choice in spite of themselves. Even the journalistic polemics which this anniversary have given rise to, show in themselves how alive today is the aristocratic figure of this admirable singer."

On September 30th the *Souvenir Littéraire*, a Paris association of men of letters, whose *raison d'être* is the celebration of literary events, commemorated Baudelaire. The poet, M. Robert Lestrangé, who was one of the organizers of the ceremony, writes me in this connection: "As it is impossible to fête the author of *Les Fleurs du Mal* without also fêting Edgar Poe, whose works he translated in such a masterly way, the occasion united in the same tribute of admiration the two great writers." *Theodore Stanton*

NOTES

Mr. Wallace Stevens, a New York lawyer, now living in Hartford, Conn., is well known to our readers. In July, 1916, his play, *Three Travellers Watch a Sunrise*, received POETRY'S prize of one hundred dollars in a one-act poetic play contest which brought in nearly one hundred plays. The monologue now published was presented, during the autumn of this year, by the Wisconsin Players, with Mrs. Laura Sherry as director, first in Milwaukee and later in New York. Though its rhythms are those of poetic prose rather than of free or metrical verse, we think our readers will agree that it is not out of place in POETRY.

Mr. John Gould Fletcher, now resident in London, is also an early contributor and a prize-winner of a year ago.

Mrs. Grace Hazard Conkling, of Northampton, Mass., author of *Afternoons of April* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), appeared in the first number of POETRY. Also Miss Helen Dudley, of Chicago, who is now serving her country abroad. Dorothy Dudley (Mrs. Henry B. Harvey), is a later contributor. Florence Kiper Frank (Mrs. Jerome N.), of Chicago, author of *The Jew to Jesus and Other Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), and Mr. Clement Wood, of New York, are also familiar to our readers.

Of the poets now presented for the first time: Florence K. Mixer (Mrs. George W.), of Moline, Ill., but resident this winter in Washington, has published little as yet; ditto Mr. Earl Marlatt, a young journalist of Kenosha, Wis.; and Mr. Louis Grudin of New York.

Poets on our "accepted" list, and one or two friends besides, have sent to POETRY, for the *Poets' Ambulances in Italy Fund*, \$322.50. If any others desire to express thus their gratitude to the beautiful country of great art and boundless hospitality, we shall be very glad to receive and forward their contributions.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

- To the Lost Friend*—A Sonnet Sequence from the French of Auguste Angellier, translated by Mildred J. Knight and Chas. R. Murphy. John Lane Co.
- The Closed Door*, by Jean de Bosschère, illustrated by the Author; with a Translation by F. S. Flint and Introduction by May Sinclair. John Lane.
- There Is No Death*: Poems by Richard Dennys, with Foreword by Desmond Coke. John Lane.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

- The Runes of Virginia the Vala*, by Mary Virginia del Castillo. Christopher Pub. House, Boston.
- Boyhood Dreams*, by Joe Lee Davis. Privately printed, Lexington, Ky.
- Weights and Measures*, by Franklin P. Adams. Doubleday, Page & Co.
- In Stratford and the Plays—Sonnets on Shakespeare*, by Herbert Spencer Fiske. Stratford Co.
- Across the Years*, Translations from the Latin Poets, by Chas. Ernest Bennett. Stratford Co.
- Reverie—A Little Book of Poems for H. D.*, by Richard Aldington. Clerk's Press, Cleveland, O.
- Mandragora*, Poems by John Cowper Powys. G. Arnold Shaw.
- First Offering—a Book of Sonnets and Lyrics*, by Samuel Roth. Lyric Pub. Co., New York.
- Prufrock and Other Observations*, by T. S. Eliot. The Egoist Ltd., London.
- The Star Fields and other Poems*, by Willoughby Weaving, with Introduction by Robert Bridges. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.
- Western Waters and other Poems*, by Elizabeth Sewell Hill. The Roadside Press, Chicago.
- Early Days on the Western Range*, by C. C. Walsh. Sherman, French & Co.
- In Divers Tones*, Lyrics by Clarence Watt Heazlitt. Sherman, French & Co.
- The Wind in the Corn and Other Poems*, by Edith Franklin Wyatt. D. Appleton & Co.
- Verses of Idle Hours*, by O. Chester Brodway. Frederick C. Browne, Chicago.
- My Ship and Other Verses*, by Edmund Leamy, with Foreword by Katherine Tynan. John Lane Co.
- Songs of Gladness and Growth*, by James L. Hughes. Privately printed, Toronto.
- "*Chester*," by James L. Hughes. Privately printed, Toronto.
- Beggar and King*, by Richard Butler Glaenzer. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven.
- The Little Flag on Main Street*, by McLandburg Wilson. Macmillan Co.
- If I Could Fly—Stories in Free Verse for Children*, by Rose Strong Hubbell, with Illustrations by Harold Gaze. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Sonnets from the Crimea*, by Adam Mickiewicz, Translated by Edna Worthley Underwood. Paul Elder & Co., San Francisco.

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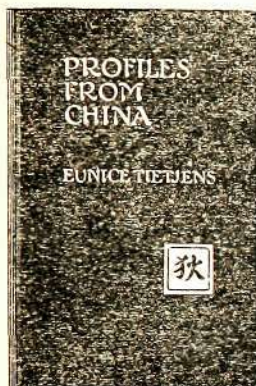
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