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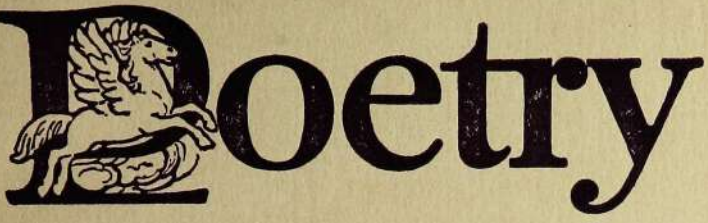

A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

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543 Cass Street, Chicago

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There is no magazine published in this country which has brought me such delight as your POETRY. I loved it from the beginning of its existence, and I hope that it may live forever. *A Subscriber*

Vol. XII No. VI

POETRY *for* SEPTEMBER, 1918

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XII
NO. VI

SEPTEMBER, 1918

THE EMPIRE OF CHINA IS CRUMBLING DOWN

Dedicated to William Rose Benét

I

NOW let the generations pass—
Like sand through Heaven's blue hour-glass.

By the capital where poetry began,
Near the only printing presses known to man,
Young Confucius walks the shore
On a sorrowful day.
The town, all books, is tumbling down
Through the blue bay.
From rusty musty walls the bookworms come;
They drown themselves like rabbits in the sea.
Venomous scholars harry mandarins
With pitchfork, blunderbuss and snickersnee.

In the book-slums there is thunder;
Gunpowder, that sad wonder,
Intoxicates the knights and beggar-men.
The old grotesques of war begin again:
Devils, furies, fairies are set free.

Confucius hears a carol and a hum:
A picture sea-child whirs from off his fan
In one quick breath of peach-bloom fantasy,
And in an instant bows the reverent knee—
A full-grown sweetheart, chanting his renown.
And then she darts into the Yellow Sea,
Calling, calling:
"Sage with holy brow,
Say farewell to China now;
Live like the swine,
Leave off your scholar-gown!
This city of books is falling, falling,
The Empire of China is crumbling down."

II

Confucius, Confucius, how great was Confucius—
The sunrise of Lu, and the master of Mencius?

Alexander fights the East.
Just as the Indus turns him back
He hears of swarming lands beyond,
And sword-swept cities on the rack

With crowns outshining India's crown:
The Empire of China, crumbling down.
Later the Roman sibyls say:
"Egypt, Persia and Macedon,
Tyre and Carthage, passed away;
And the Empire of China is crumbling down.
Rome will never crumble down."

III

See how the generations pass—
Like sand through Heaven's blue hour-glass.

Arthur waits on the British shore
One thankful day,
For Galahad sails back at last
To Camelot Bay.
The pure knight lands and tells the tale:
"Far in the east
A sea-girl led us to a king,
The king to a feast,
In a land where poppies bloom for miles,
Where books are made like bricks and tiles.
I taught that king to love your name—
Brother and Christian he became.

"His Town of Thunder-Powder keeps
A giant hound that never sleeps,
A crocodile that sits and weeps.

"His Town of Cheese the mouse affrights
With fire-winged cats that light the nights.
They glorify the land of rust;
Their sneeze is music in the dust.

"All towns have one same miracle
With the Town of Silk, the capital—
Vast book-worms in the book-built walls.
Their creeping shakes the silver halls;
They look like cables, and they seem
Like writhing roots on trees of dream.
Their sticky cobwebs cross the street,
Catching scholars by the feet,
Who own the tribes, yet rule them not,
Bitten by book-worms till they rot.
Beggars and clowns rebel in might
Bitten by book-worms till they fight."

Arthur calls his knights in rows:
"I will go if Merlin goes;
These rebels must be flayed and sliced—
Let us cut their throats for Christ."
But Merlin whispers in his beard:
"China has witchcraft to be feared."

Arthur stares at the sea-foam's rim
Amazed. The fan-girl beckons him!—
Her witch-ways all his senses drown.

She laughs in her wing, like the sleeve of a gown.
She lifts a key of crimson stone:
"The Great Gunpowder-town you own."
She lifts a key with chains and rings:
"I give the town where cats have wings."
She lifts a key as white as milk:
"This unlocks the Town of Silk"—
Throws forty keys at Arthur's feet:
"These unlock the land complete."

Then, frightened by suspicious knights,
And Merlin's eyes like altar-lights,
And the Christian towers of Arthur's town,
She spreads blue fins—she whirs away;
Fleeing far across the bay,
Wailing through the gorgeous day:
"My sick king begs you save his crown
And his learnèd chiefs from the worm and clown—
The Empire of China is crumbling down."

IV

Always the generations pass,
Like sand through Heaven's blue hour-glass!

The time the King of Rome is born—
Napoleon's son, that eaglet thing—
Bonaparte finds beside his throne
One evening, laughing in her wing,

A Chinese sea-child; and she cries,
Breaking his heart with emerald eyes
And fairy-bred unearthly grace:
"Master, take your destined place—
Across white foam and water blue
The streets of China call to you:
The Empire of China is crumbling down."
Then he bends to kiss her mouth,
And gets but incense, dust and drouth.

In Tokio they cry: "O King,
China's way is a shameful thing."
In hard Berlin they cry: "O King,
China's way is a shameful thing."
And thus our song might call the roll
Of every land from pole to pole,
And every rumor known to time
Of China doddering—or sublime.

V

Slowly the generations pass—
Like sand through Heaven's blue hour-glass.

But let us find tomorrow now:
Our towns are gone;
Our books have passed; ten thousand years
Have thundered on.
The Sphinx looks far across the world

In fury black:
She sees all western nations spent
Or on the rack.
Eastward she sees one land she knew
When from the stone
Priests of the sunrise carved her out
And left her lone.
She sees the shore Confucius walked
On his sorrowful day:
Learnèd paupers riot yet
In the ancient way;
Officials, futile as of old,
Have gowns more bright;
Bookworms are fiercer than of old,
Their skins more white;
Dust is deeper than of old;
More bats are flying;
More songs are written than of old—
More songs are dying.

Where Galahad found forty towns
Now fade and glare
Ten thousand towns with book-tiled roof
And garden-stair,
Where beggars' babies come like showers
Of classic words:
They rule the world—immortal brooks
And magic birds.

The lion Sphinx roars at the sun:
"I hate this nursing you have done!
The meek inherit the earth too long—
When will the world belong to the strong?"
She soars; she claws his patient face—
The girl-moon screams at the disgrace.
The sun's blood fills the western sky;
He hurries not, and will not die.

The baffled Sphinx, on granite wings,
Turns now to where young China sings.
One thousand of ten thousand towns
Go down before her silent wrath;
Yet even lion-gods may faint
And die upon their brilliant path.
She sees the Chinese children romp
In dust that she must breathe and eat.
Her tongue is reddened by its lye;
She craves its grit, its cold and heat.
The Dust of Ages holds a glint
Of fire from the foundation-stones,
Of spangles from the sun's bright face,
Of sapphires from earth's marrow-bones.
Mad-drunk with it, she ends her day—
Slips when a high sea-wall gives way,
Drowns in the cold Confucian sea
Where the whirring fan-girl first flew free.

In the light of the maxims of Chesterfield, Mencius, Franklin or Nietzsche, how great was Confucius?

His fan's gay daughter, crowned with sand,
Between the water and the land
Now cries on high in irony,
With a voice of night-wind alchemy:
"O drownèd cat,
O stony-face,
The joke is on Egyptian pride,
The joke is on the human race:
'The meek inherit the earth too long—
When will the world belong to the strong?'
I am born from off the holy fan
Of the world's most civil gentleman.
So answer me,
O deathless sea!"

And thus will the answering Ocean call:
"China will fall,
The Empire of China will crumble down,
When the Alps and the Andes crumble down;
When the sun and the moon have crumbled down,
The Empire of China will crumble down,
Crumble down."

Vachel Lindsay

MOUNTAIN TRAILS

I

Night stands in the valley.
Her head
Is bound with stars,
While Dawn, a grey-eyed nun,
Steals through the silent trees.
Behind the mountains
Morning shouts and sings
And dances upward.

II

Down the eastern sky
A fleet of clouds drift toward the earth
Bearing a message of forgotten beauty.
Only the brooding mountains,
With robes of purple mist about their shoulders,
Can gaze into the glory
Of the sun.

III

The peaks, even today, show finger-prints
Where God last touched the earth,
Before he set it joyously in space
Finding it good.

IV

You, slender, shining—
You, downward leaping—
Born from silent snow
To drown at last in the blue, silent
Mountain lake—
You are not snow or water,
You are only a silver spirit
Singing.

V

Sharp crags of granite
Pointing—threatening—
Thrust fiercely at me;
And near the edge their menace
Would whirl me down.

VI

Climbing desperately toward the heights
I glance in terror behind me,
To be deafened—to be shattered—
By a thunderbolt of beauty.

VII

The mountains hold communion:
They are priests, silent and austere;

They have come together
In a secret place
With unbowed heads.

VIII

This hidden lake
Is a sapphire cup—
An offering clearer than wine,
Colder than tears.
The mountains hold it toward the sky
In silence.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert

FREEDOM

Give me the long, straight road before me,
A clear, cold day with a nipping air,
Tall, bare trees to run on beside me,
A heart that is light and free from care.
Then let me go!—I care not whither
My feet may lead, for my spirit shall be
Free as the brook that flows to the river,
Free as the river that flows to the sea.

Olive Runner

SUNRISE AT SANTA BARBARA

The sea hides its curious heart
Under a bridal robe of mother-o'-pearl,
Mother-o'-pearl flushed with rose,
Waiting.

Against a turquoise sky
The mountains kneel, mauve-gray
In the gray-pink sand
Of the curving shore,
Waiting.

The moon, pale and wan,
Hangs a flat design in silver
On the expectant sky,
Waiting.

The palm trees, in parallel rows
Along the Plaza, clasp
Nervous, wavering fingers,
Waiting.

Riding on a many-fluted shell
Held on the backs of jade tritons,
Comes Venus Anadyomene, straight and slim,
Combing the night curls
From her ruddy hair,
Blown by the four winds
To the meeting with her lover.

Then, he comes—the young Sun,
Glorious in amazing strength and splendor,
Striding across the mountains
To pave a path of brazen metal
For the whiteness of her feet,
The two little feet of his bride.
He surrounds, covers, hides her
In golden madness.

The sea roughens,
Sending her waves with the morning breeze
Against the shore.
It is day!

THE POMEGRANATE BUSH

When she was alive
She moved like a frail ghost,
The spirit of a wraith.
Her chiffons trailed about her
Like spirals of smoke.
The wail in her voice was gray and pining
Like the sea after twilight.

She died and was buried.
Now, she has returned—a woman
Among us.

She passed down the street
Wrapped in a Spanish shawl,
Flaming with hybiscus
And amber roses:
The silk fringe caught in a small, green bush;
She stooped and swayed,
With long pointed fingers disengaged
The silk fringe of the shawl.

I closed my eyes,
So poignant was the grace
Of her swaying and stooping.
When I opened them again,
She had gone.
Up and down the street
I looked—
She had disappeared!

But the small green bush,
Where her long, pointed fingers
Disengaged the silk fringe
Of the shawl,
Was covered with vermilion flowers
Like her mouth—
A flare of color
In the sun.

Pauline B. Barrington

THE SAND DUNES

There I know blue, blue water,
  And a waving line of land,
With pines that grow in a wind-swept row
  As set by a dreamer's hand;
And where the winds will, in hollow or hill,
  Sand and sand and sand.

Sand as soft as a snowfall—
  Drifting, eddying, whirled—
Sweeping into the valleys,
  Over the grasses swirled,
And billowing up to the tree-tops
  That look out on the world.

Sand of romantic patterns
  New for each passer fleet.
Here a flower has lain, there the leaf-like chain
  That was marked by a sea-gull's feet;
And the pebbled trace as of scalloped lace
  Where the waves and the shore-line meet.

Gleaming sands in the morning
  When the little waves run white,
While gay wings fan the shining span
  And float a song in flight;
And the lupine blue spreads a heaven new
  Where the stars might rest till night.

But gray, gray sands at evening,
When haunting voices blow
Over twilight-faded water
From trees of long ago,
Hushed by the drifting silence
As by eternal snow.

O grass, flowers, trees unfruitful,
Caught while your sun was high,
Buried deep in the sand-dune's keep,
Is all of life gone by?
Can a springing bough lift your glory now
And give it back to the sky?

Janet Norris Bangs

THE BIRCHES

Around the stretch of hemlock and pine and cedar,
Sport of the wind which flutters them up and down,
They stand in line, the luminous, slender birches—
A silver fringe for trimming the wood's green gown.

Antoinette DeCoursey Patterson

THE MOON ROSE

The moon rose:
She spread a circle of fire on the waters,
She drew a path of golden fire across the ocean
Straight to us, sitting idly on the balcony after supper.
She waited.

We looked too long upon the shining path:
We arose and went down to the sea;
We dropped our dark earth-skins upon the sands,
And stood up white with edges of fire.
The moon laid a blazing finger on our bodies,
And drew us into the dark waters.

Each gleaming ripple touched our bodies, left its gold on them,
And returned black to the black water;
Until we lay in the circle of fire,
Until we swayed in the arms of the moon.
The black waves reached for us—
She lifted us gently.
The waves broke into points of fire against our bodies
And fell back—
She sang to us, rocking,
"Sleep, sleep!"
But all the fire of the moon-path was in our bodies—
We could not sleep.

We leapt from the arms of the moon,
We raced through the black waters
Scattering showers of sparks.
Our bodies were transparent with edges of fire—
The sea was black before us.

We had become strangely thin,
Our dark earth-skins fitted us ill.
And when we looked,
The moon-path lay behind us across the ocean—
We had dropped it in our haste.

Marguerite Zorach

LOOK, THE SEA!

Look, the sea—how it lifts me in its arms like a child!
Oh, how I love to ride on the white foam of the waves
And dive down into the deep bottom of the sea!

Look, the sun—how it burns me like a leaf!
Oh, how I love to bathe in the hot rays of the sun
And burn like a flame in the sands!

Look, the moon—how it rides me in sky!
Oh, how I love to sail on the shining edge of the clouds,
And sleep in the cool depths of the blue!

William Zorach

THE DJINN

The gaunt old man
Who teaches Latin and Greek in High School
Is not as old as he looks.
He has a lean ill-fed soul
And has missed the real nourishment of life
Because he has merely nibbled at it,
Canned,
Out of books.

But the Recording Angel
Has inscribed one good deed to his credit.
When Jane Howe was all on edge to go as a missionary to India
Although her orphaned brothers and sisters needed her at home
He got Jane to read queer books—
The Mahabarata and the Zend Avesta—
And they discouraged her
And opened her eyes to the impertinence
Of going to India as a missionary;
They impelled her to stay at home,
Where she helped to bring up the younger children.
After a while she married a good provider,
And has a family of young and savage Americans
Who need her prayers and labors
Much more than the Hindoos.

They say that the teacher of Greek and Latin
Was in love with Jane.
If he was he never breathed it.
He always hid his desires
And crushed them,
And never had the courage
Even to make to himself
The apology he thought they merited.

Sometimes the gaunt old man
Who teaches Latin and Greek in High School
Sits in Weinberg's Café
On rainy nights;
And in the hazy, half-lighted room,
Through the wavering smoke from many cigars,
He suddenly looms up large
Like a Djinn out of a bottle.

READERS

In the reading room of the public library
A queer group gathers about the table.
The tired man at one end
Has been called by some persons a tramp.
He merely pretends to read
So that he may stay here
Safe in the warmth,

Shut away from the wind and the rain.
His eyelids are not merely lowered,
They are actually closed;
And he is sleeping lightly as a cat.

The old woman near the other end
Slipped away from her cheerless hall-room,
And came here because she likes the lights
And the changing human faces.
She has her supper hidden in her pocket;
She slips a bite into her mouth
When none is looking,
And pretends that she is reading the *Outlook.*

The tall thin boy with the exciting mauve shirt
Is reading the chapters of a lurid serial,
Just to fill in the hour
Until the burlesquers begin
In the theatre on the next block.

And in the shelves behind them all,
The masters of the world,
In reserve and silence,
Await the coming of a sympathetic friend.

Robert Gilbert Welsh

QUILTS

They gave me the quilt that Great-aunt Elizabeth made—
A quilt of pink roses, and tiny careful stitches.
It goes in my chest, for in October I marry.

Pink roses, with stems of green on a background of white,
And Great-aunt Elizabeth pieced it for her own chest.
She pieced it with trembling hands, for her lover had gone
To fight with the South.
Elizabeth filled in the long days with squares of pink,
Fitting the pattern together with quick, nervous fingers;
Roses of pink, for love and a bride.

But here is a spot of red among the pink roses.

I wonder what is stitched into the quilting.
She finished it long afterwards, when war
Had taken all she had but memories.
She pieced her life into a pink-rose quilt
When war was making patch-work of her soul.

They gave me the quilt that Great-aunt Elizabeth made—
A quilt of pink roses with stems of green, for a bride.
But I see all the time the splotch of blood in the roses.

October is so far when war is near.

Mary Willis Shuey

CLAY HILLS

It is easy to mould the yielding clay,
And many shapes grow into beauty
Under the facile hand.
But forms of clay are lightly broken;
They will lie shattered and forgotten in a dingy corner.

But underneath the slipping clay
Is rock. . . .
I would rather work in stubborn rock
All the years of my life,
And make one strong thing;
And set it in a high, clean place
To recall the granite strength of my desire.

DISCOVER ME AGAIN

Discover me again—
Look at me with new eyes, O my beloved!
See, my aspect changes to the need of love,
Even as the stable earth answers the call of the seasons.

Do not regard me only as a winter-wife,
A peddler of homely comforts.
Indeed I am also your girl of spring—
Dreams possess and inhabit me.

But these lie sick and languid;
They quicken to the call of life,
Only at the recognition of your glance,
At the hail of your love.

Discover me again!

Jean Starr Untermeyer

THOUGH ONE SHOULD STRIVE

Love is the heart's last light to die!
  Though one should strive in stubborn pain
To quench its beauty utterly,
  Yet were his labor vain.

Yes, often, when the night is deep—
  For all the far forgetful years—
A face looks star-like on my sleep,
  And I awake with tears!

Nancy Byrd Turner

DRIFTWOOD BURNING

You who behold me,
You—the strangers,
The dwellers in the low lands
Here by the river—
Can you indeed
Behold me, burning,
Without wonder, without dreaming?

The great flames
Are taking me;
They are consuming me;
Even as you—
Dwellers in the low lands—
Are to return unto dust
In the end,
I, the driftwood burning,
Am going my way
To the nothingness
Of ashes in the wind.
Yet I go
Not slowly—not a slow fog
Creeping from one valley
To another—
But flamingly,
Flamingly—
A light, a warmth, a signal,
Leaping out of the darkness!

Time found me
Before I was I—
Long ago, far away
In a deep forest;
And Time took me,
Rooting me up
From the ground that bore me—
Away from the circling arms
Of my brothers and sisters about me—
Time took me
And gave me,
Frightened and broken,
To the Great River.

My brothers and sisters
Of the forest
Where Time found me
Lamented perhaps
That I was broken
And sent to drift
On the unreturning waves
Of the unreturning river.
They have gone perhaps—
My brothers and sisters—
Into the building of ships
Or the building of homes. . . .
But it was my destiny
To drift, to burn. . . .

Bronze are my flames,
And opal,
Like the breasts
Of the wild geese
In the bronze mirror;
And green are my flames
Like the young willow trees
That lean to the river
From thousands of islands
And from long low shores. . . .

I burn
With all the beauty
That I have known
And have dreamed of
Under the quivering fountains
Of light flowing
From the radiant sun,
Or in the pale
Amethystine twilights
Of gathering snows. . . .

And my flames
Ride upward into smoke
Exulting
That they are akin
To the proudest elements
That gave the light to the stars,
The heat to the sun—

Akin, but more beautiful
With secrets and colors
That the stars and the sun
Have yet to learn.
And there is a gladness in me
That is like the gladness
Of dancers and birds,
For Eternity vexes me not
With the glories and duties
Perpetual
She has given
To the stars and the sun,
The lightning, the wind. . . .

It was my destiny
To burn,
To be a light, a warmth, a signal
Here on your shore
By the Great River
That brought me down
And nursed me on her breast,
And whispered her secrets to me,
And gave me her colors,
And flung me to my fate. . . .

Can you behold me
Burning—
O strangers,
Without wonder, without dreaming?

COMMENT

THE GREAT RENEWAL

OF all the so-called civilized peoples, at least in the Occident, Americans have been credited with the greatest love of wild nature. The people of "these states" instinctively take to the woods for a holiday—the woods or the waters or the mountains—to a greater degree than any Europeans; or, it has been averred, than any Central or Southern Americans. Our ancestors, coming here from crowded Europe, gradually discovered the wilderness and became infected with its lure. The magnificence of Nature in our ever-growing West—its infinite variety of beauty and grandeur—was a perpetual invitation to the pioneer. And now that those days have well-nigh passed, the children of pioneers feel the same call, and obey it as they can by camping and mountaineering under primitive conditions, and by setting aside vast areas of wild scenery as people's playgrounds for all time to come.

Nothing could be wiser—it is almost a platitude to repeat that Mother Earth is the great renewer of the race, both physically and spiritually. But it would be well if we were to search the platitude more deeply, and realize that she is also the great renewer of the arts, and that it is to her, rather than to schools and precedents of the past, that our artists, our poets, should go for their deep draughts of the nectar of the gods. Since men began to build houses and gather together in villages and towns, they have been too

prone to accept roofs and walls as a normal condition of human existence, and to confine their interests more and more to the small efforts and small talk incident to small and confined areas. Thus artistic traditions which began generously, with a free out-of-door range, become narrowed down as the generations pass, become fixed in the walls and roofs of precedent and law, acquiring a definiteness and sanctity to which they are not entitled. The arts, like groups and races of men, inherit too much from the super-civilized past; even more than super-civilized human beings do they need the great renewal from Mother Earth who bore them.

In this country we have been, on the whole, too content with those walls and roofs of precedent built by the arts of the past. Yet in spite of this handicap our best work in the various arts rides free more or less, and carries a message from the wilderness. We hear a hint of it in the finest poems of Emerson and Bryant, Whittier and Longfellow. We detect a sentimentalized version of it in the landscapes of the Hudson River School and in the out-of-door yearnings of colonial houses. We feel its freedom more strongly in the simple porch-winged villas, and in certain frankly expressive sky-scrapers, which are developing architectural style without much aid from historic design. It became a dominant motive in such painters of land and sea as Winslow Homer, Inness, Wyant and Martin; and some of their successors are carrying on the proud tradition. Cooper of course handed it over in chunks; in Hawthorne it was a longing and an agony; and Thoreau subdued it to

a scholar's use and nobly philosophized it. Poe was lyric with its passion and color—a caged mocking-bird beating its wings; and in another art Albert Pinkham Ryder was a somewhat more fortunate parallel. Even in Whistler, who carried the war into Europe, we feel the flavor through all the sophistication. Mark Twain preserved its epic bigness through all his social and literary adventures. And in Whitman it was the breath of life, the force which enabled him to over-ride all confining barriers. In the future, as we become more self-confident, less colonial, our art should inevitably get more and more free of walls and roofs. Its triumphs will come from those who knock down, not those who prop up, such erections; or perhaps rather from those who, enriched by the discipline of their somewhat imprisoning beauty, are strong enough to pass through and beyond it and go free. Edgar Lee Masters gave us *Spoon River* in this spirit; and Vachel Lindsay and Carl Sandburg as well are, artistically considered, the educated sons of pioneers.

In the education of the spirit wild Nature is the supreme teacher. The artist who remains in towns, or in suburban parks and gardens, or even he who takes summers out-of-doors in cultivated farm-lands, misses the spiritual discipline of freedom, the supreme renewal. He may be unaware of this loss; super-sophisticated worldling, clinging to the skirts of civilization, he may be content to repeat and elaborate—to build French chateaus in North Carolina or Ionic-colonnaded sky-scrapers in New York, to plant Italian gardens on the sand-dune bluffs of Lake Michigan, to

carve out archaic-Greek rhythms in sculpture and Miltonic or Swinburnian rhythms in poetry. Meantime our vast western wonderland is waiting for him; Nature, the ultimate modernist, is ready to broaden his vision and enormously increase his range, ready to give him, not more learning but power over all his learning, not man-made facts and monuments but God-made grandeur with its lesson of spiritual energy and control.

A young New York poet who has recently gone west for the first time, writes from Taos, New Mexico, of "the influence of the beautiful maternal West upon my jaded sense"; and adds:

> I shall like the West when I get used to its generosity. The East is so small and I have been lessened in its presence far beyond my wishes.

There we have a truly enlightened acknowledgment of what our south-western wonderland may do for and with the soul of man: a wonderland in which Nature herself has conceived and developed the vast pre-Adamite architecture of the Grand Cañon and of those strange terraced fortresses in the Painted Desert; and in which old barbaric tribes have taken Nature's hint in mesa-pueblos that grow out of the desert as expressively as the cactus or the mesquite. This magic wonderland is destined to an immense authority over the future of American art—the only question is, how soon will its influence begin as a recognizable force? Our painters, shut off from Europe by the War, are going there more and more; and more and more not only our painters, but our sculptors and architects as well, will inevitably

feel the primitive art of this region, and its more developed masterpieces among the kindred Aztecs and Incas to the south, as a newly revealed ancient Style of imperishable power and beauty—a Style as authentic as the Greek or the Chinese, as fit in its human expression of a region and a race. In nature of such incomparable forms and colors, and in primitive art so right, so expressive, our artists should slough off their sophistication and find that Great Renewal which may energize the art of the world.

Our poets also must face the issue. As with their confrères in the other arts Europe has hitherto been their place of pilgrimage, and those who stay there almost inevitably become wandering cosmopolites who, fascinated by the extremes of a sophisticated culture, become more adept in expressing these extremes than the natives themselves. Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot are cases in point: born under the flag, they do not lose their love of freedom—in fact, it gives a special edge, a tang, to their observations and interpretations of a life too long cribbed, cabined and confined; but practically they become limited to these aspects of life, and lose touch with, and faith in, bigger spaces and larger realities. Even the War which, brutally destroying man's walls and roofs and casting him back upon savagery, has somehow proved a Great Renewer of the spirit in over-burdened Europe—even the War does not entrap them with its ferocious glamour; their art goes by unscathed. If John Gould Fletcher and H. D. have yielded less to the world, is it not because of a deeper pioneer strain of wildness in them—

Fletcher with his adoration of scenic beauty, and H. D. with her virginal innocence of civilization, her Greek kinship with the early gods?

Europe or the wilderness?—the choice will become more and more urgent for our seers of visions.

Twenty years ago I travelled from Italy to Arizona, and to my profound surprise found Arizona the bigger thing of the two. It is not unlikely that after this War which is to make the whole world wise, American art, American poetry, will have the same illuminating experience.

Search not in cities for the Pierian spring! *H. M.*

POETRY AS AN ART

It may sound exaggerated, yet it is true, that people are more interested in art than in anything else in life. All that we need and crave for, above the mere protection and maintenance of our bodies, can be reduced to art needs. It is some sense of form—of balance, harmony, decoration—which makes our clothes, our furniture, our houses, what they are. We work for this and we go to war for this. It is true of rich and poor, of the civilized man and the savage.

The human mind finds nature and its own existence beyond and above its own proud self. Even the most practical man sitting in his office has moments in which he is haunted, consciously or subconsciously, by what we can not but call the mystery of life. On this brink, reached in

a flash, the human mind totters; it is seeking for support. In art it finds a refuge and a ballast. To this is due its religious cravings, its feeling for harmony, even its desire for display. It would fall all in a heap without these. Knowledge, discovery—the mind gently scoffs at these. It is in art that there is a real grip—a hold and a rest—for the abeyance of being.

In two ways it finds assuagement. One way is music, in which is a spurring excitement and comfort at the same time. The other way is, to put it very crudely, explanation of at least a part of the haunting mystery—interpretation. Rhythm in other arts is music received through the eyes instead of through the ear. To these—rhythm and interpretation, separated or combined—all art forms can be reduced. In a painted landscape whatever is not rhythm is interpretation of life. The same is true of a portrait. What there is in it of the photographic is desecration of life; since it is impossible to render in any medium the thousand qualities pregnant in reality, any rendering not imbued with the reverential spirits of rhythm and interpretation is deadly and treacherous. This is also true of idealization, which usually means a sentimental rendering. In addition to being superficial it is also false—bad photography.

Rhythm and interpretation then are the only important art-qualities. In a certain work of art the one or the other may predominate. But interpretation, to be art, must be extremely simplified. Through simplification interpre-

tation becomes an art-language. In concentrating on the subject, and in cutting away all but what is absolutely and directly needed for the interpretation, lies the function of art. Whatever is more than this serves only to show the artisan's so-called skill, which in reality is just the opposite of skill. In spite of what art-critics may usually entitle it, it is merely rhetoric, padding, ranting, etc.—not art.

The Egyptian figure El Beled might be taken as an example of interpretation. It might appear mere realism if superficially observed. But the sculptor knew his subject with a sort of god-like knowledge, and he spun from the depth and strength of his knowledge. I would say played with it, but the word play is usually misunderstood; true play is extremely serious. The sculptor of the great Chephron ennobled his subject—idealized it. This was entirely different from our modern way; when we idealize we are more or less deceitful. There is no real attainment of depth. The artist's brain is either too lazy or shallow, or he is content to bank on the observer's shallowness or laziness.

Rhythm as an art-element is above interpretation, just as interpretation is above didacticism or photography. But being human, with immediate human needs, it is hard for us to believe that rhythm is a greater art-need than interpretation, or even than the various forms of photography—didactic detail, etc.

The recent revolution in the other arts which is divesting them of the various forms of the photographic—didactic,

story, pseudo-rhythm—has had its effect also on poetry. Yet owing to certain peculiarities in the nature of poetry, the modern poet, unlike the other artist, has very few models.

Words being so closely associated with immediate human needs, it is always hard for the poet to escape from these to the greater needs of the human spirit. It is true that even the greatest of the ancient works of art were not entirely free from these influences; still, if the Assyrian man-headed lion or bull had a taint of the didactic, the artist succeeded in melting it almost completely in rhythm. The Egyptians, who did not always bother with rhythm as such, have succeeded in giving us the most perfect interpretive art imaginable. One can see that readily in Thoueris, the statuette representing maternity, and more or less readily in most of their best work. In the early Chinese sculpture, we find a pure and tender handling of reality combined with simplification. In the Hindu art the imagination rambles freely. In the American aboriginal art, we find a noble symbolism; and extreme simplification, not only of the human being, but of almost everything in nature. Rhythm is to be found in most of these, and is predominant in Assyrian art, in Hittite art, and, in a simple or complex form, in Chinese and Japanese paintings.

In poetry the art-quality was less present. Greek poetry was effected by outer elements—nationalistic, philosophic, etc.—which are not pure art-elements. This is true of other ancient poetry.

Reluctant as one may be to admit this, the ardent expression of emotion is not art—it is generally a form of photography. It is only when it is interpretive and combined with simplification, or when the imagination, as it were, melts it and forms something grotesque or fantastic, that it becomes the spirit-food called art. It is only in rare cases, when the poet's soul is very gentle and childlike, that the mere expression of personal moods forms art: in Catullus, Villon, and to a lesser degree in Burns, Keats, Heine, the moods reveal to us something surprising and fresh—are interpretive.

The better models for the modern poet are the ancient sculptors or oriental painters, as the art elements in them are purer and more readily discernible. He should learn from them to simplify his subject, or to idealize it in the pure and genuine way they did. He should learn from them what true idealization is, in order to avoid the pseudo, the shallow, the sentimental, the vulgar and the stupid, all often mistaken among us for idealization.

As for the rhythm of words, the words in poetry must be as if born together with the rhythm. But the reader must learn to distinguish between sing-song or rag-time rhythm, and deep, pure rhythm. It can be laid down almost as a rule that a rhythm that carries the reader too strongly is bad. It will be found to be poor through monotony, and through lack of control. One will usually find the same symptoms in the ideas of the poem.

The poet should remember that there is much good and

bad verse, and that humanity can bear waiting till his work is ripe in every sense of the word.

Max Michelson

THE SIXTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH

There is need in many quarters to-day, as is invariably the case in a war era, for a defense of the avocation of poesy. That which isn't active in the light of the outer eye must be ostracized, says your hot-headed citizen, devoid of that vision of the inner which sees warfare as a material combat brought on by spiritual forces, among which that supreme lover of liberty, the poet, is, as any mere history demonstrates, a generalissimo. For the benefit of the street-corner or parliamentary soap-box braggart who sneers at the parchment-faced beauty-priest doing his quiet and presumably innocuous work in the dark of privacy, one might stretch forth a list of the poets now dead, wounded or still engaged on the European battleground; or, for his still larger benefit, one might cite the works which these men and countless others before them have contributed—works which, more than any impassioned outburst in legislatures, have kept liberty driving, digging, scrambling and climbing against and conquering its enemies. In modern times one has only to breathe the single name and the multifarious performances, public as well as personal, of Walt Whitman. However, since it is necessary to bring the achievement of the past to substantiate the ideals and theories of the present against opponents who are always skeptical un-

less confronted with records, one might with subtler persuasion echo the name of Sir Philip Sidney, through whom the sixteenth century addresses the twentieth.

A month before his thirty-second birthday, Sir Philip, the star of Elizabethan knighthood, godson of Philip the Second of Spain, son of the lord deputy of Ireland, and a diplomat in the service of Queen Bess—soldier first and poet second—was mortally wounded in the battle of Zutphen. Poetry faced the same criticism in his day which it faces to-day, so much so that Sir Philip was forced to write, "It hath so hard a time that the very earth lamenteth it;" and to lift his hand in that glorious attack on his age which he termed *The Defense of Poesy*. Surely it would not prove amiss for POETRY to repeat the long drum-roll of this single sentence from the oracular utterance of the great patriot of the sixteenth century; surely it must penetrate the ear-drum of the most veritable deaf-and-dumb asylum in military Germany itself:

> Since poetry is of all human learnings the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquity, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings; since it is so universal that no learned nation doth despise it, nor barbarous nation is without it; since both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto it, the one of "prophesying," the other of "making," and that indeed that name of "making" is fit for him, considering that whereas other arts retain themselves within their subjects and receive, as it were, their being from it, the poet only bringeth his own stuffs, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit; since neither his description nor his end containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness, and delight the learner of it; since therein—namely in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges—he doth not only pass the historian, but for instructing is well-nigh comparable to the philosopher, and for

moving leaveth him behind him; since the Holy Scripture, wherein there is no uncleanness, hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; since all his kinds are not only in their united forms, but in their several dissections fully commendable; I think, and think I think rightly, the laurel crown appointed for triumphant captains doth worthily, of all other learnings, honor the poet's triumph.

Who among your brawling detractors dares brave this machine-gun challenge; or, if he considers a bayonet-thrust easier to parry, let him try riposting this shorter sentence of Sidney's: "It is not riming and versing that maketh a poet." *A. K.*

REVIEWS

ONCE MORE THE GEORGIANS

Georgian Poetry, 1916-1917. The Poetry Bookshop, London.

The third instalment of *Georgian Poetry* does not give us so many changes as its list of contents seems to indicate. True, Mr. Abercrombie is absent; but his calculated essays in brutality, his dramas of frigid violence, were already beginning to stale before the second issue was published. For the rest, there are a number of new names, most of them safe upholders of the Georgian tradition; with the exception of two or three, who have tried to discover a new note in the all-absorbing spectacle of England at war. Let us take the work as it stands.

W. J. Turner, who is given pride of place, and whom many English critics are acclaiming as a great discovery,

sets up the characteristic Georgian note at the outset in *Romance:*

> When I was but thirteen or so
> I went into a golden land;
> Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
> Took me by the hand.
>
> My father died, my brother too,
> They passed like fleeting dreams.
> I stood where Popocatapetl
> In the sunlight gleams.

It is obvious that this sort of poetry can go on indefinitely until the supply of high-sounding geographical names runs out. And what excuse Mr. Turner can find for coupling in the same sentence a verb in the past tense with a verb in the present tense I do not know. Little things like grammar and syntax are perhaps negligible.

Ecstasy is, as one would expect, an etiolated echo of Oscar Wilde. One gets a frieze of youths, a beach with shells on it, and such like; also a great display of "limbs," meaning of course, legs. Thus Mr. Turner:

> And the wind came and purified my limbs.

With *Magic,* the poet enters a conservatory—a true Georgian, to seek for magic in a hot-house. Nine labored stanzas of perfervid description end in these lines, which need no comment:

> When silence creeps among the leaves
> And the echoing heart deceives.

We turn to *The Hunter,* after a vain struggle to discover who or what it is that "the echoing heart deceives,"

and are regaled with another imaginary journey through a thicket of geographical names to the "haunting land of Yucatan"—a land of whose fever-stricken jungle, overgrowing strange old ruins, Mr. Hunter prefers to remain blissfully ignorant.

In *The Sky-sent Death* we are back again on Greek territory listening to these witching strains:

> Sitting on a stone a shepherd,
> Stone and shepherd sleeping,
> Under the high blue Attic sky;
> Along the green monotony
> Grey sheep creeping, creeping.

Tennyson is said to have once rapped out that "any goose could hiss." One might remind Mr. Turner of this remark, since we have here six sibilants in two lines of verse. As for the rest of the poem, it may be stated in a sentence. The sleepy shepherd hears a humming; it proves to be a German aeroplane, which drops a bomb on the aforesaid sleepy shepherd. Behold the dénouement:

> Sitting on a stone no shepherd,
> Stone and shepherd sleeping,
> But across the hill and valley
> Grey sheep creeping, creeping. . . .

I have wasted so much space on Mr. Turner, because it seems to me that he is the absolute epitome of what these Georgians stand for—what they like and are not ashamed to like. Here we have bad rhymes, bad syntax, jingly metre, and subject-matter which is simply nothing but the apotheosis of picture post-card prettiness. The force of Georgianism could no further go. For myself I prefer, either as

music or as verse, Edward Lear's "The owl and the pussy-cat put to sea in a beautiful pea-green boat," or "Far and few, far and few, are the isles where the jumblies live," to all these Popocatapetls and Yucatans and other Georgian "magics."

Having got past Mr. Turner, it is with no shock of surprise that we find Mr. Stephens, who is old enough to know better, writing thus, having been infected apparently with the selfsame creeping paralysis of brain:

> I flit and twit
> In the sun for a bit
> When the light so bright is shining, O:
> Or sit and fit
> My plumes or knit
> Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining, O . . .

And so on through five or six pages of sweet simplicity degenerating into childishness.

Mr. Rosenberg, a newcomer who has done better work, contributes a single brief poem containing this unhappy mixture:

> While the new lips my spirit would kiss
> Were not red lips of flesh
> But the huge kiss of power. . . .

—three lines perhaps in their own way the worst ever written.

By the time we arrive at Mr. Hodgson suspicion grows to weary certainty—we know what these Georgian poets are aiming at. But it is not poetry, unless you accept nothing as poetry but the artificially naive, the jejune, the banal, the vaporous, the jingling. If all the poems in

the book are not in this manner, those which follow it yet represent the proclaimed and perferred type, the Georgian type *in excelsis*. Well, let us admit that it is an interesting type in itself, but let us not call it poetry: "fogged verse" will do, or "verse for tired minds," or "sentimentico-hysterialism."

Any exceptions? A few. Mr. J. C. Squire has in *The Lily of Malud* produced a poem. It has a subject and a certain impressiveness of effect. Mr. Monro caresses adroitly minor themes. Mr. Davies does not abuse his space, or his adjectives. And there is a certain grim honesty about the war work of three young men—Robert Nichols, Robert Graves, and Siegfried Sassoon—which leads one perhaps to hope that after the war even the Georgians may show more tolerance for the modern world as it is, and less delight in affectations and redundancies.

As for the rest of the volume, I, for one, frankly cannot see that any great harm would have been done had the printers mixed up the pages and given Mr. Freeman's poems, say, to Mr. Gibson or Mr. Gibson's to Mr. Freeman; or even Mr. de la Mare's to Mr. Masefield and *vice versa,* since neither of these two appears here with his most personal and distinctive work. The one thing certain about these Georgian poets is that they are true to type. There are no startling radicals, no intoxicating freaks, in this society; careful inbreeding has eliminated such a possibility. From W. J. Turner at the beginning, to Maurice Baring, who at the close trots out, into a modern

soldier's elegy, all the old properties and paraphernalia—Lucifer, King Arthur, words like "nursling" and "crysolite"—from the first page to the last we move in a world of unrealities, of abstractions, of exhausted platitudes. For those who prefer monotony to energy, who breathe best in the pumped-out space under a bell-glass, I can recommend no better book than the third *Georgian Poetry.*

John Gould Fletcher

MORE ANTHOLOGIES, CHIEFLY TOPOGRAPHICAL

The Chicago Anthology: A Collection of Verse from the Work of Chicago Poets. Selected and arranged by Charles G. Blanden and Minna Mathison. Roadside Press.

Sunflowers: A Book of Kansas Poems. Selected by Willard Wattles. A. C. McClurg & Co.

The Book of New York Verse, edited by Hamilton Fish Armstrong. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Chicago Anthology is as inclusive as a city directory; in fact, it constitutes a poetic directory of Chicago, with one or two rather important exceptions (who may not have been at home when the census-taker called), the most notable exception being Edgar Lee Masters. The book covers a period of twenty-five years or more, and about one hundred and twenty-five poets are represented, many of them no longer living, and many of them no longer living in Chicago—for instance, Mr. Brand Whitlock. It is

difficult to say what constitutes a Chicago poet; if a brief residence in the city makes Yone Noguchi one, why not Vachel Lindsay, who studied two or three years at the Art Institute and who visits us often?

The percentage of ore in the volume is not high; and this is a pity, since we gain from it nothing of that larger mood which has given Chicago its present distinction as a poetic centre. This could only have been given through the representation at greater length of the major Chicago poets and the omission of all the minors (among whom I should have been happy to be one, since the editors chose, without consultation, positively the worst poem I ever wrote, and one which I should only too willingly have abandoned on a less public doorstep). Unfortunately the major poets, when in at all, have been represented by their least significant poems.

Mr. Llewellyn Jones, in his introduction, explains—or, it would almost seem, apologizes for—the conservative principle of selection, drawing rather too sharply the distinction between "modernist" and conservative poetry. Poetry is poetry, and there is less difference than one imagines between what is called conservative and what is called radical poetry—when it is good. Radical poetry of today is the conservative poetry of tomorrow. The real distinction to be made is between, not the poets, but the critics; and here one must distinguish not only between conservative and radical, but between genuine conservatism and old-fogeyism.

The question is not as to whether the editors of this book have printed the old and ignored the "new"; they have omitted too much that is vital, too much of what has given Chicago its present reputation for creative vitality, which is after all the only excuse for a book of this sort.

Mr. Jones develops a novel theory, an almost Freudian theory, of how Chicago inspires some of her non-realistic, idealistic poets—through antithesis. If one writes about lilies and roses, it is in order to forget the stockyards. But every or any poet has a right to his ivory tower; he does not have to prove his right to it—we do not deny it to him. All we ask is that the tower be ivory—not celluloid. On the other hand a man is not a "modern" simply because he writes about the external details of his environment; nor must a man, to be a Chicago poet, write about Chicago. The omission from this book, however, of Carl Sandburg's *Chicago,* intrinsically powerful as it is, gives us a clue to the inhibitions of the editors.

. . . . . .

The topographical scheme for an anthology, unless the area covered be fairly wide and possessed of an ancient culture, is not entirely satisfactory. Kansas, for instance, does not "stack up" very well against Massachusetts. Illinois would fare better, though it is only in the present generation that the Middle West may be said to have become vocal. Perhaps in another generation or two, the Far West—not the coast line but the intervening plains, plateaus and mountains—will have found a voice to carry beyond

the Mississippi; something more indigenous, that is, than the expression of the transplanted easterner. The best known Kansas poet is, of course, Walt Mason, whose precedence as the innovator of polyphonic prose has not had the full recognition it deserves. Kansas also claims Harry Kemp and William Allen White; and even John G. Whittier and Vachel Lindsay are in this collection because they have paid poetic tribue to Kansas. *A. C. H.*

The bulky New York volume seems to contain every poem ever written on a New York subject, from Walt Whitman's *Manhattan* to Ezra Rand's *N. Y.*, and from H. C. Bunner's *The Ball, 1789,* to Franklin P. Adams' *The Flat-hunter's Way.* Our great American metropolis is not unstoried and unsung. *H. M.*

Christ in the Poetry of Today: an Anthology. Edited by Martha Foote Crow. The Woman's Press.

One who opens this book with misgiving, expecting something in the nature of a tract suitable for Sunday schools, will be agreeably surprised and disappointed. The editor is to be commended for her courage in including poems more radical than one would have expected in a book of this kind, among these Edgar Lee Masters' *The Apology of Demetrius,* Ezra Pound's *The Goodly Fere,* and other poems in which Christ is represented less as a figure-head than as a human being. This is the modern spirit which, as Mrs. Crow says in her introduction, was not so much in evidence twenty or thirty years ago; but, dating from about 1910, the poems dealing with Christ are "often of a

new kind never seen in books of poetry before." Among the good contributions, besides the above, are poems by Lizette Woodworth Reese, Agnes Lee, Carl Sandburg, Harriet Monroe, Barbara Peattie Erskine, Badger Clarke, Florence Kiper Frank and William Vaughn Moody. The book would be improved by a table of contents. Authors and titles are indexed separately, but this is not very practical for general use. *A. C. H.*

CORRESPONDENCE

THE RETORT COURTEOUS

Editors of POETRY: Perhaps if we had been able to express ourselves a little more clearly, we should not have offended the editors of POETRY so deeply, or gotten ourselves stigmatized as "parlor pessimists." The author of *Traps for the Unwary* had no intention of condemning the little theatres and little magazines, which, by providing a medium of publicity and experimentation, have done so much, as H. M. truly said, to stimulate the artistic imagination of the younger writers. And no agency in this work has been more valuable than POETRY. In appealing for more careful and better oriented criticism, he did the new poetry and the little magazines the honor of assuming that they had arrived. He took them for granted, in the belief that they could now be discussed openly without fear of destroying them by a rude touch.

H. M. and A. C. H., more conscious of the stern fighting and risk which have been involved in getting a reception for the new poetry as against the mossbacks and academes, still rush jealously and angrily to the defense of their contributors, at the sign of any fancied slight. It is true that POETRY has not neglected criticism; indeed, it has been quite as much a journal of criticism as a vehicle of publicity. But by criticism we mean discussion of a larger scope. You can discuss poetry and a poetry movement solely as poetry—as a fine art, shut up in its own world, subject to its own rules and values; or you can examine it in relation to the larger movement of ideas and social movements and the peculiar intellectual and spiritual color of the time. To treat poetry entirely in terms of itself is the surest way to drive it into futility and empty verbalism. In the last issue of POETRY Mr. Kreymborg suggests that this is exactly what is likely to happen to the new poetry. It will go to seed unless it is understood as an expression of life, pregnant with possibilities. This is the kind of criticism we were asking for. And Miss Lowell's book seems to us important, not because it gave a little more superfluous advertising to these much-discussed poets, but because it did attempt to place them with reference to the American intellectual soil, and to the changing American attitudes towards beauty and the joy of life. Moreover, she completely abandoned the indiscriminate note of propaganda (which A. C. H. still apparently thinks it is necessary to use even with reference to such uneven poets as Vachel

Lindsay), and handles her six poets unsparingly, separating the false in their work from the true, and placing them in relation to a larger intellectual and artistic whole.

This is what we meant by criticism. Are we to understand that the editors of POETRY resent such an attitude? That they are going to insist on keeping poetry as a rose-garden in which are to be shown the new varieties for mere observation and esoteric enjoyment? Already there is evidence of a kind of developing orthodoxy of the new, that is hurt at this ceaseless sifting of the new poets' work, and the effort to awaken them to a sense of the imaginative possibilities implicit in their verse. There is no way, for instance, of knowing yet where Mr. Lindsay will come out. He still lacks self-knowledge and self-criticism. Side by side with the thrilling *Congo* and *General Booth* there are pages of imitativeness and banality. At times he is a mere verbal experimenter, at others he strikes the pure golden ring. Who, in the little circle of poetry missionaries, points out to him the dangers of mere verbality, and the imperative need of growth?

If criticism confines itself to a purely aesthetic standard, then this verse is certainly doomed. The new poetry is sure enough of its ground; from Cibola, Arizona, to Lewiston, Maine, there is evidence that all who have the capacity of appreciation are acquainted with this literary renaissance. But this public, enthusiastic and hospitable, seems to be still moving hazily in a mist of values and interpretations. For it still gets aesthetic instead of social criticism.

And many of the writers disturb us by somehow perversely refusing to broaden their imaginative and intellectual horizons. So much of this new fresh spirit is intellectual rather than poetical that it is time it left the easy medium of free verse for the novel and the story and the essay, such as the Lawrences and Cannans and Beresfords give us in England, to our delight. What are we to think of a modern country of a hundred million people, whose younger literary generation turns out, from one year to another, not a single novel that can be called, without reservation, artistic or true, or that can rank with the imported work of our younger contemporaries? Is not that something to be "pessimistic" about, and to make one feel that here is a task for criticism to do some explaining? Hospitality is no longer enough. This army of talent needs the demand, the spur, the suggestiveness of criticism, of a criticism that aims at carrying the fresh and creative expression of the present towards a greater wisdom and clarity and ardor of life.

Randolph Bourne
Van Wyck Brooks

Note by the Editor: This interesting contribution to the discussion of aesthetic and social criticism in general, and certan special values in particular, is too suggestive for a tail-piece acknowledgment, and will be considered in our next issue.

A CORRECTION

Dear Editor: A. C. H., in the July POETRY, wrote that "Edgar Lee Masters and Robert Frost received in it (POETRY) their first appreciation." If this means appreciation of my poetry, I beg to say that my poetry received appreciation in England, and to an extent in America, before POETRY was founded. If this means appreciation of *Spoon River,* that production was copied, parodied, and commented upon by the press during the summer of 1914. It was quoted in *Current Opinion* for September, 1914; while POETRY'S first notice and quotation of *Spoon River* appeared in its October number, 1914. Since you cannot justly do me the honor to claim a first appreciation of any of my poetry, I submit this correction to be printed, in view also of the fact that A. C. H. has frequently printed the same or similiar claims touching my work.

Edgar Lee Masters

Note by the Editor: A. C. H. wrote loosely—she should have specified *Spoon River.* But POETRY'S editors have been unaware of the fact that, in calling attention to that poem, *Current Opinion* was a month ahead of them. That paper's comments on, and quotations from, the work of living poets have reflected the taste and enthusiasm of its editor, Mr. Edward J. Wheeler, who is, as we all know, president of the Poetry Society of America—a taste possibly too catholic, but as a rule singularly enlightened and progressive.

This department of *Current Opinion* was indeed one of the first gleams on the horizon after a long period of apathetic darkness; perhaps the first authoritative hint offered to the American people that their poets were doing anything worthy of attention and encouragement. And the paper continues its good work without loss of enthusiasm.

BACK TO THE MACHINE-SHOP

Dear POETRY: Some gigantic figure has flung innumerable brick-shaped factories on the outskirts of Jersey City, Newark and Elizabeth, and along the Hackensack river. They are like big black bugs, and crawl into the green fields. Arrogant and determined, they look down on the modest little farm-houses.

I work in one of these four walls alongside of Larsens, Carlsens and Augustsens, all patriotic Americans from Stockholm and the fjords. All around us are little farms; and it is not an unusual sight to see a factory, usually a machine-shop, grow up over-night between rows of corn, or a tall chimney near an acre of beans. And a lot of goats promenade under our windows with big hanging udders.

I am glad I have got back to the machine-shop. Here is where the pulse of our times beats strongest and clearest. This is the place that furnishes an answer to all our questions. All we have, all we create, all we plan, must hereafter have its beginning here.

These queer and noisy places feed us and clothe us and house us, and compel us to think along certain tracks.

The next father of Christ can't be a carpenter—he must come out of the machine-shop. So I would say to all ambitious fathers: "Get into a machine-shop or you are out of the running."

This reminds me of what I wanted to say to the boys from the U. of C. They are lucky to study at a university,

but I hope they will not write anything after leaving it, but get a job in a machine-shop. They must run a lathe or a milling-machine, and watch some Carlsen caress a tool-steel point and call it "a peach."

William Saphier

NOTES

Mr. Vachel Lindsay, of Springfield, Illinois, whose latest book of verse was *The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems* (Macmillan Co.—1916), has been at work, during the past year, chiefly on *The Golden Book of Springfield,* which, as the editor understands it, will be chiefly prose, with poems by way of incidental interludes. China, whose massive weight and persistent strength are expressed in this latest poem, has been a favorite subject of the poet's thought for years—a subject suggested perhaps partly by the long residence in China of his sister Mrs. Wakefield, the wife of the distinguished medical missionary.

Miss Zoë Akins, of St. Louis, whom our readers will remember, is the author of *Interpretations* (Mitchell Kennerley), and of various plays in verse and prose which have been successfully produced by the Washington Square Players and other companies. Since Mark Twain wrote his prose epic *Life on the Mississippi,* the "Great River" has been too much neglected by the poets of the Middle West, and it is appropriate that its beauty and grandeur should appeal to the imagination of a poet whose life has been spent in the great city which rises at the confluence of the two great streams that flow together to the Gulf.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert (Mrs. Otto S.), of Moline, Illinois, is also familiar to our readers. Her present poems celebrate the beauty of Glacier Park. Mrs. Seiffert, under the pseudonym of Elijah Hay, was one of the three poets represented in the *Spectrist Number* of *Others,* the other two being her friend Witter Bynner and her Davenport neighbor Arthur Davison Ficke.

Jean Starr Untermeyer (Mrs. Louis U.), of New York, and Antoinette de Coursey Patterson (Mrs. T. de Hoge P.), of Philadelphia, have also appeared before in POETRY. Also Mr. and Mrs. William Zorach, of New York, of whom the former is better known, perhaps as a painter than a poet.

Of the poets represented in this number for the first time:

Mr. Robert Gilbert Welsh, a New York journalist, is the author of several plays and poems which have appeared in Scribner's, Harper's, the Forum and other magazines. Miss Olive Runner lives in Austin, Minn.; Janet Norris Bangs (Mrs. E. H. B.) in Chicago; Mary Willis Shuey (Mrs. Arthur F. S.) in Tampa, Florida; Pauline B. Barrington (Mrs. Charles B., Jr.) in Santa Barbara, Cal.; and Miss Nancy Byrd Turner is on the staff of the *Youth's Companion* in Boston.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

Chimes and Humoresques, by Ernest M. Hunt. Privately printed, New York.

Horizons at Dawn and at Dusk, by Colin Tolly. Hodder & Stoughton, London, and Geo. H. Doran Co., New York.

Jevons Block, by Kate Buss. Four Seas Co.

TRANSLATION:

Messines and Other Poems, by Emile Cammaerts. Translations by Tita Brand-Cammaerts. John Lane Co.

PLAY:

The Lost Pleiad—a Fantasy, by Jane Dransfield. James T. White & Co., N. Y.

PROSE:

The Art of Amy Lowell—a Critical Appreciation, by W. Bryher. Eyre & Spottiswoode, London.

Visits to Walt Whitman, by J. Johnston, M. D., and J. W. Wallace. Egmont H. Arens.

POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XII

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XII
April - September, 1918

Edited by
Harriet Monroe

543 CASS STREET
CHICAGO

Errata:

Page 11, line 3 from foot of page:
Delete *blue.*

Page 25, line 3 of stanza 3 should read:
With which to measure out the earth.

Page 117—heading:
For *XI* read *XII.*

Page 169, line 8:
For *Others* read *Other.*

Page 194, last 3 lines should read:
I have untangled you from the seaweed of forgotten things,
But I think—
I think I shall toss you back into the sea.

Page 278, line 7 from foot of page:
Insert *you* before *watch.*

Page 286, signature:
For *H. S. M.* read *H. M.*

Ralph Fletcher Seymour
Fine Arts Bldg., Chicago

Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

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TO HAVE GREAT POETS
THERE MUST BE GREAT AUDIENCES TOO
Whitman

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Also, a few lovers of the art who prefer to remain anonymous.

Others besides these guarantors who testify to their appreciation of the magazine by generous gifts are:

Mr. Edward L. Ryerson
Miss Amy Lowell
Mrs. F. C. Letts
Mr. Ernest A. Hamill
Mrs. Byron L. Smith

It is with deep sorrow that the editor records the death last May of Bertha Honoré Palmer (Mrs. Potter Palmer). Mrs. Palmer was one of POETRY's earliest and most loyal guarantors, and always an enthusiastic subscriber to all artistic and philanthropic enterprises in Chicago, where she has long been, as everyone knows, a leader of the city's civic and social life.

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To have great poets
there must be great audiences too.
—Whitman