Poems on a French Soldier’s Letters from the Front by Wallace Stevens
Poems of Peace and War by Haniel Long, Viola Paradise and others
A Dog Poem by Orrick Johns

543 Cass Street, Chicago
$2.00 per Year Single Numbers 20¢
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

POETRY for MAY, 1918

“Lettres d’un Soldat” I-IX .......................... Wallace Stevens 59
Weather Whims ........................................ Viola I. Paradise 66
Thoughts—Early Spring Night—Midnight Rain—Wind and Moonlight—Death
The Minstrel—Flood ..................................... Ida Judith Johnson 70
Northern Lights—The Sowing                  J. Van Alstyne Weaver, Jr. 72
We Who Have Lost ...................................... Howard Unger 73
Claude Debussy ........................................ Agnes Lee 74
In a Gale—Conscience .................................. Cecily Fryer 75
Pomegranates ............................................. Dean B. Lyman, Jr. 76
Love Lasts Like a Lily ................................. Flora Shufelt Rivola 77
Kinship ..................................................... Solomon J. D. Fendell
Voyage ..................................................... Hortense Flexner 79
Bess .......................................................... Orrick Johns 80
The Pageant .............................................. Thomas Wood Stevens 82
On the Road .............................................. Haniel Long 83
Song of Young Burbage—The Herd Boy—Shoes—The Cuban in the States—Madness—Dead Men Tell No Tales—A Book on Economics—The Cause of This I Know Not—Song—Star-dust—The Terror—Seege
Mr. Bourne on Traps ..................................... H. M. 90
“Our Contributors” ...................................... A. C. H. 94
Reviews:
Thomas Hardy's Poetry .............................. John Gould Fletcher 96
The Late Edward Thomas ............................. A. C. H. 102
Ralph Hodgson Again ................................. A. C. H. 105
Irish Earth ............................................... A. C. H. 107
The Muse of Compliment ............................ H. M. 109
Correspondence:
“Hard” and “Soft” ...................................... John Gould Fletcher 111
As He Sees It ........................................... Emanuel Carnevali 113
Notes and Books Received ............................ 115

Manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope.
Inclusive yearly subscription rates: In the United States, Mexico, Cuba and American possessions, $2.00 net; in Canada, $2.15 net; in all other countries in the Postal Union, $2.25 net. Entered as second-class matter at Post-office, Chicago.

Published monthly at 543 Cass St., Chicago

Copyright 1918, by Harriet Monroe. All rights reserved.
"LETTRES D'UN SOLDAT"

COMPATRE avec ses frères, à sa place, à son rang, avec des yeux dessillés, sans espoir de la gloire et de profit, et simplement parce que telle est la loi, voilà le commandement que donne le dieu au guerrier Arjuna, quand celui-ci doute s'il doit se détourner de l'absolu pour le cauchemar humain de la bataille... Simplement qu'Arjuna bande son arc avec les autres Kshettryas! (Préface d'André Chevrillon.)

I

Jamais la majesté de la nuit ne m'apporta autant de consolation qu'en cette accumulation d'épreuves. Vénus, étincelante, m'est une amie. (27 septembre)

The spirit wakes in the night wind—is naked.
What is it that hides in the night wind
Near by it?
POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Is it, once more, the mysterious beauté,
Like a woman inhibiting passion
In solace?—

The multiform beauty, sinking in night wind,
Quick to be gone, yet never
Quite going!

She will leap back from the swift constellations,
As they enter the place of their western
Seclusion.

II

*Ce qu'il faut, c'est reconnaître l'amour et la beauté triomphante de toute violence.*

(22 octobre)

ANECDOTAL REVERY

The streets contain a crowd
Of blind men tapping their way
By inches—
This man to complain to the grocer
Of yesterday's cheese,
This man to visit a woman,
This man to take the air.
Am I to pick my way
Through these crickets?—
I, that have a head
In the bag
Slung over my shoulder!
I have secrets

[60]
Wallace Stevens

That prick
Like a heart full of pins.
Permit me, gentlemen,
I have killed the mayor
And am escaping from you.
Get out of the way!
(The blind men strike him down with their sticks.)

III
Jusqu'à présent j'ai possédé une sagesse de renoncement,
mais maintenant je veux une sagesse qui accepte tout, en
s'orientant vers l'action future.  (31 octobre)

MORALE

And so France feels. A menace that impends,
Too long, is like a bayonet that bends.

IV
Si tu voyais la sécurité des petits animaux des bois—souris,
mulots! L'autre jour, dans notre abri de feuillage, je sui-
vais les évolutions de ces petits bêtes. Elles étaient jolies
comme une estampe japonaise, avec l'intérieur de leurs
oreilles rose comme un coquillage.  (7 novembre)

COMME DIEU DISPENSE DE GRACES

Here I keep thinking of the Primitives—
The sensitive and conscientious schemes
Of mountain pallors ebbing into air;

And I remember sharp Japonica—
The driving rain, the willows in the rain,
The birds that wait out rain in willow trees.

Although life seems a goblin mummer,
These images return and are increased,
As for a child in an oblivion:

Even by mice—these scamper and are still.
They cock small ears, more glistening and pale
Than fragile volutes in a rose sea-shell.

J'ai la ferme espérance; mais surtout j'ai confiance en la justice éternelle, quelque surprise qu'elle cause à l'humaine idée que nous en avons. (26 novembre)

The palais de justice of chambermaids
Tops the horizon with its colonnades.

If it were lost in Uebermenschlichkeit,
Perhaps our wretched state would soon come right.

For somehow the brave dicta of its kings
Make more awry our faulty human things.
There is another mother whom I love,
O chère maman, another, who, in turn,
Is mother to the two of us, and more,
In whose hard service both of us endure
Our petty portion in the sacrifice.
Not France! France also serves the invincible eye,
That, from her helmet terrible and bright,
Commands the armies; the relentless arm,
Devising proud, majestic issuance.
Wait now; have no rememberings of hope,
Poor penury. There will be voluble hymns
Come swelling, when, regardless of my end,
The mightier mother raises up her cry:
And little will or wish, that day, for tears.

VII

La seule sanction pour moi est ma conscience. Il faut
nous confier à une justice impersonnelle, indépendante de tout
facteur humain; et à une destinée utile et harmonieuse
malgré toute horreur de forme.           (15 janvier)
NEGATION

Hi! The creator too is blind,
Struggling toward his harmonious whole,
Rejecting intermediate parts—
Horrors and falsities and wrongs;
Incapable master of all force,
Too vague idealist, overwhelmed
By an afflatus that persists.
For this, then, we endure brief lives,
The evanescent symmetries
From that meticulous potter's thumb.

VIII

Hier soir, rentrant dans ma grange, ivresse, rixes, cris, chants, et hurlements. Voilà la vie! (4 février)

John Smith and his son John Smith,
And his son's son John, and-a-one
And-a-two and-a-three
And-a-rum-tum-tum, and-a
Lean John, and his son, lean John,
And his lean son's John, and-a-one
And-a-two and-a-three
And-a-drum-rum-rum, and-a
Rich John, and his son, rich John,
And his rich son's John, and-a-one
And-a-two and-a-three
And-a-pom-pom-pom, and-a
Wise John, and his son, wise John,
   And his wise son’s John, and-a-one
   And-a-two and-a-three
And-a-fee and-a-fee and-a-fee
   And-a-fee-fo-fum—
Voilà la vie, la vie, la vie,
   And-a-rummy-tummy-tum
   And-a-rummy-tummy-tum.

IX

La mort du soldat est près des choses naturelles. (5 mars)

Life contracts and death is expected,
As in a season of autumn.
The soldier falls.

He does not become a three-days’ personage,
Imposing his separation,
Calling for pomp.

Death is absolute and without memorial,
As in a season of autumn,
When the wind stops.

When the wind stops and, over the heavens,
The clouds go, nevertheless,
In their direction.

Wallace Stevens

[65]
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

WEATHER WHIMS

THOUGHTS

Quicksilver thoughts
Flirt with me these spring days;
Flit through my head,
Slip through my fingers;
Teasing, vanish
Before I have touched them.

But if I were a poet
I'd know a trick to catch them!
I'd catch them with a spirit noose... . .

And then I'd let the wild things go.

EARLY SPRING NIGHT

The cool spring night smells good,
Smells of the brown earth
And the strong little seeds
Pushing up through the brown earth.

My soul swells with thoughts
Impalpable,
Melancholy, exalted,
Blurring me.

The soft scarce-stirring wind moves through my hair.

[66]
Perhaps they are not thoughts,
Those impalpable things which stir my soul.
Perhaps they are my senses
Pushing up like the strong little seeds
Through the brown earth.

MIDNIGHT RAIN

The lightning pricks my heavy eyes awake.
My body, thunderstung
Out of its sluggish sleep,
Resents this midnight waking.

But soon
The long soft sibilant rain
Brings to the night a deep new rest.

The storm recedes,
And on the far warm low voluptuous thunder
I am rolled back to sleep.

WIND AND MOONLIGHT

The Wind's a brute, a monster,
Shrieking and yelling about my house;
Tearing at the walls with frantic iron claws.
Striking with frenzied panicked paws
At my windows.
I'm glad it has no mind
As it freaks about my room
Rattling every loose thing.
And I'm glad I'm in bed,
Safe from its maniac mood.

Now it sucks my curtains out of the window
And beats them against the side of the house
And tears them.

I must get up and rescue the curtains.

At the window—incredible!—
The full moon,
Large,
In a naked sky,
Looks down serenely on the anguished trees—
The stiff creaking branches, the scurrying leaves,
Helpless, undignified, in frightened flight.
That monstrous moon,
That great, strong, big full moon
Who sways a million tides with a little gesture—
That powerful, insolent moon—
Looks down, and tolerates the wind!
Bald sluggard moon!—lets the mad wind rage,
Countenances it!
Sheds shameless light on all its obscene passions!

God, I could hate the moon for this!
Is there no limit to indecency?
DEATH

To ache with unrest,
Stale-hearted, bored,
Oppressed by life, by the futile motions of people—
Their footless eagerness, their strife,
And their pale conversations—
This mood of death.

But that other thing called death,
Which crumbles us up into good rich soil,
And sprouts grass over the place
Or weeds—
What kind adjustment
That trues one nicely to the universe,
And bestows the good gift: the immortal insignificance
Of a leaf, or a grass blade,
Or one of the small stars!

Viola I. Paradise
"Woe . . . . . !"
My Lord Wind sings.
His voice is a harp, a harp of a thousand strings;
His voice is a harp, and he rides on swift and terrible wings.

"Woe . . . . . !"
My Lord Wind shrills;
And the pine-trees mutter threats to their parent hills,
The ragged scrub-oaks writhe and clash at fierce demoniac wills.

"Woe . . . . . !"
My Lord Wind rails;
And the young oak bends to the hiss of his stinging flails,
While the old oak breaks and the cowering pine-tree wails.

"Woe . . . . . !"
My Lord Wind grieves;
And a plaintive echo stirs through the fallen leaves,
Like a child-lorn mother's breast the grassy hill-side heaves.

"Woe . . . . . !"
My Lord Wind cries,
And the word is a mad crescendo of sobs and sighs.
Then out in the far somewhere the voice of my Lord Wind dies.
FLOOD

Steeds —
Giant stallions that froth and champ,
Yellow plunging racers
Leaping full at the barrier,
Leaping full at the barrier!
The thick masonry trembles, crumbles;
They surmount it —
They rush on.
While the village sleeps,
Down the night-wind
Comes the thunder of their hoofs.

O charging steeds,
Soon, satiated,
You will be led back to your stalls;
Your frenzy past,
Your tawny manes smoothly shining.
Soon you will be led back,
Fed fat on human desolation,
Fed fat and tame.

Ida Judith Johnson
NORTHERN LIGHTS

The moon has gone to her bed tonight,
And all over the sky
She has hung out her garments of light
To dry.

I think I saw her, at the day's break,
A morning or so ago,
Washing them, down by the end of the lake,
Bending quite low,
So tired she was, and pale.

And now each shimmering veil—
Sea-greens and sapphires
Jeweled with orange fires—
Floats from the star she has pinned it to.

THE SOWING

Spring—Fort Sheridan

Placid breezes sauntering
Over a lake of glass,
Kissing the pouting elm-buds,
Patting the new grass;
Turquoise overhead,
Swimming May skies—
(“Trench-knives are top-hole
For gouging out their eyes!”)
Great bees, clover-laden,
Solemnly drone past;
All the fresh world shouts
Of spring come at last.
Bobolinks, meadowlarks
Bursting with May—
("If you can't pull the bayonet out,
Shoot the body away!")

WE WHO HAVE LOST

They were pursuing us along the road.
My arm was gone, and I was weak from loss of blood.
Presently a steel splinter ripped my belly;
I fell into the slimy ditch, and struggled, struggled!

Soon an officer beneath me spoke, through half a mouth:
"Be quiet, little brother, and I will show you how to lie at ease."

Now we are at rest.
The heavy tread of the victors shakes the earth;
The loose dirt falls from the side of the ditch,
Little by little.

Howard Unger
Claude Debussy

Man's music changes
With the changing of his hours,
Though birds trill the same songs
They trilled on Petra's towers.

Always
From olden hallways
He led to beauty's ample rooms—
Out to her rain-drenched garden's frond,
Out to her suns . . . beyond . . . beyond.
Ah! did we call his art a whim,
Before we woke to him?

High above war
His music, rising past the stars,
Is heard at heaven's door.
Heaven opens to the soul of song,
And unto art that never ends
The soul of song ascends.

Agnes Lee
IN A GALE

If he I love were on the sea,
My God, how I would pray to Thee!

And now I know that I should pray,
With urgent tears, to Thee on high,
That Thou would'st call Thy storm away
Lest other women's loved ones die;

And on my knees should supplicate
With all the strength that in me lies:
(For other women watch and wait
With anguish written in their eyes.)

Lord, show them pity evermore!
But I can neither weep nor pray,
For oh, my dear is safe ashore,
And I go singing all the day.

CONSCIENCE

Underneath the night sky, and out upon the heath,
It makes a man feel lonesome, and scared at a breath.
Maybe, in the open you're nearer up to God,

But set my feet in well worn paths that other feet have trod!

Underneath the night sky the ghosts begin to creep—
Ghosts that cry of evil things long laid to sleep,
Little ghosts that whisper of a cold eternity.

Oh, give me friends and fireside to warm my soul and me!

Cecily Fryer
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

POMEGRANATES

Crimson as ever skin pomegranate wore,
When timid love first entered in, Eleanore,
Were those soft, blushing cheeks of thine that flush no more—
Alas!—since they no more are mine, Eleanore.

White as the gleaming seeds within the cloven core
Were thy soft hands, so fair to win, Eleanore,
Which now withhold their benison and blessing, nor
Reach out in love to anyone, Eleanore.

Gold as the gold upon the stem, or louis d'or—
Thy locks were like the glint of them, Eleanore.

Sharper and sweeter were the lips I hungered for
Than is the juicy fruit that drips, Eleanore.

Scarlet and rich, red as a rose, forevermore
I think of lips . . . another knows, Eleanore?

Ah, no! I'll not think that of thee. I set more store
Upon an unchanged memory, Eleanore.

Ripe was the scarlet fruit that fell. The branch that bore
Must wait for winter snows. Ah, well, Eleanore,

Perhaps the spring will come again, but nevermore
The branch will bear what blossomed then, Eleanore.

[76]
That first, full love that ripened red, although we pour
Upon it all the tears we shed, Eleanore,
Will never grow again. Alas! All that is o'er,
With only grief that it should pass, Eleanore.

Crimson as ever fruit that grew and branches bore
Will be the love (not like we knew), Eleanore,
Which spring will yet bring forth for me; but that's no score
Whenceon my heart can happy be, Eleanore.

Fair was the fruit I gathered first: now, as before,
That seems the best—and worst, Eleanore!

Dean B. Lyman, Jr.

LOVE LASTS LIKE A LILY

Love lasts like a lily,
Tender on Time's trail;
Breathing burning beauty,
Fragrant, fine, and frail.

Solomon J. D. Fendell
KINSHIP

I sit in the shade of a tree and sing
Unto this wee, mysterious thing
Upon my breast—my own, and yet
How could I more than I beget?
At the feather-touch of searching lips.
Of tiny, groping finger-tips,
I know the surge of something more,
Deeper within than lived before;
As though, when this was come to birth,
A largess, more of heaven than earth,
Enriched my spirit, making me
A part of all Infinity.

I am akin to this old tree,
Yet of a richer destiny:
Its shining leaves sing in the sun
As I unto my little one;
We share creation’s leap and thrill,
Yet hold I something stranger still.
What is this flaming tenderness?
What summons me to this caress?
O Power that gave, make my love strong!
The sleeper stirs; again my song
Stills him to dreaming—dreams of what?—
Things I knew once and have forgot?

Akin to all these growing things
Flora Shufelt Rivola

My eager spirit sunward springs;
And deep I sink my roots, and deeper,
With each soft breath of the wee sleeper!

Flora Shufelt Rivola

VOYAGE

Out of the night I hear a voice,
    Out of the sea a cry.
The swift, white arms of the reaching waves
    Toss as we pass them by;
The foam hands grasp in the emptiness,
    And sink in the black to die.

I lean to the night, I lean to the sea,
    To the round on round of blue,
Where the barren stretch of the moon-laced waves
    Divides the world in two;
There is no comfort in the dark,
    I may not come to you.

Hortense Flexne.
The collie girl had the sense bred out of her,
   But she had head and nose and points enough
To make her a queen, a fine queen with a ruff
Of satin and gold, you’d say, instead of fur.

She didn’t deserve, no doubt, the hate she got—
   She was so shy she’d keep for whole days hid.
Folks wanted a dog to do better than she did,
And thought it stubborn ungrateful, like as not.

Dede Graf, the new man, set himself to feed
   And win her, and thought he’d keep her in the shed;
“Shebody’s skeert her,” he’d say and wag his head.
He’d no more luck than others had, had Dede.

Until the poor, lonesome, howling girl got big,
   And no doubt dreamful of her pups to come.
One night she crept up shivering and dumb,
And he saw her crouching underneath the rig.

Lord, when he’d touched her once she was like a child!
   She’d cry and laugh together for the fun
Of feeling his hand on her, and then she’d run
Like a curled streak of gold, that made him wild!

Before the pups came he had her at his call,
   And other folk grew soft to her a bit.
She was a beauty, that was all of it,
And Dede was envied while the dogs were small.
She weaned them, and two died and the rest were given;
And Bess got offish as she was before.
Deed lured and wheedled and shook his fist and swore—
His talk was somewhat strong when he was driven.

It went on that way for three years about.
She'd come to him and be a little saint,
Having her young; and then the crazy taint
Would get her when the young ones were turned out.

Dede was a Job for patience, and no less,
When she'd go shy again. He'd curse her leather,
Then at the sight of her like a tawny feather
Off in the field, he'd whine, "Hyuh, Bess!—come, Bess!"

He must have got to know her . . . When she died—
The fellow was five-foot-ten and like an ox;
Fearful to see too; pitted by smallpox—
Well, he broke up for days that time, and cried.
THE PAGEANT

Green the buds of Easter,
   Warm the winds of May;
Autumn like a feaster
   In merry disarray.
But Winter follows, tracks him down,
Winter in his ermine gown.

Youth in scarlet stockings,
   Garlands for a crown,
Making mouths and mockings
   After Age in brown.
But velvet never stood the rain,
And long's the road to the Keep o' Spain.

Love in silken weather
   Never yet was slain;
But love must take to leather,
   Hie him off again.
For Love must hang, the sheriff saith,
The grizzled, watchful sheriff Death.

Morning, night and morrow,
   On through life and time—
For all the cares we borrow,
   For all the songs we rhyme:
Love and Youth will roister so,
And Age is patient, Death is slow.

Thomas Wood Stevens
SONG OF YOUNG BURBAGE

The goat that rubbed my knees last night
   And left his ancient smell
Maddened my heart that I was what
   A hornèd goat could tell.

For if his favor singled me
   Out of the passing crowd,
I know I'm not too well disguised
   Nor yet too worldly proud.

Most difficult it is today
   Beneath a coat and vest:
I fear my old identity
   May fade with all the rest.

But I'll go back to hill and sky
   And hold a colloquy:
I need those ancient presences
   Whose tumult still is—me!

THE HERD BOY

The night I brought the cows home
   Blue mist was in the air,
And in my heart was heaven
   And on my lips a prayer.

[83]
I raised my arms above me,  
I stretched them wide apart,  
And all the world was pressing  
In beauty on my heart.

The lane led by a river  
Along an ancient wood,  
And ancient thoughts came softly  
As with the leaves they should.

I hung the cows with garlands,  
And proud they walked before;  
While mother-naked after  
A laurel branch I bore.

SHOES

I cannot put the old shoes on,  
They're too far gone for wear—  
And yet I cannot quite assume  
My newly purchased pair.

The difficulty is extreme.  
Since shoes are such a trial,  
I guess that I'd go happier  
Barefoot for a while.
The North is beautiful, and I
Would like it—but for me
How bud the lips of woman by
The soft Habana sea!

And how can one who long has known
The fragrance of this rose
Keep from his frozen lips a moan
Against the northern snows?

I shiver at the closing white—
But on the sunburnt South
I lie in an eternal night
Of sighing mouth on mouth.

MADNESS

The night came softly to the sea;
And they, the seven stars, to me.
The sea, the seven stars, and I
Gave an involuntary cry.

It echoed in the hills, and went
The ways of old bewilderment.
And I alone the reason knew,
And I had told it then to you,

But stars are strange, the sea is deep,
And you were lovely in your sleep.
DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

They say that dead men tell no tales!

Except of barges with red sails
And sailors mad for nightingales;

Except of jongleurs stretched at ease
Beside old highways through the trees;

Except of dying moons that break
The hearts of lads who lie awake;

Except of fortresses in shade,
And heroes crumbled and betrayed.

But dead men tell no tales, they say!

Except old tales that burn away
The stifling tapestries of day:

Old tales of life, of love and hate,
Of time and space, and will, and fate.

A BOOK ON ECONOMICS

Between long rows of figures lurk
Pictures of little boys at work.

And how poor women fade away
Page after page the margins say.

[86]
And in a note once in a while
I see death freeze a baby's smile.

THE CAUSE OF THIS I KNOW NOT

The cause of this I know not,
Whither they went, nor why;
But I still remember the laughter
And the bright eyes flashing by—
The day the girls were kissing
The boys who had to die.

I search in vain for the reason—
What does a poet know?—
Only that youth is lovely,
Only that youth must go;
And hearts are made to be broken,
And love is always woe.

SONG

Poppies paramour the girls,
Lilies put the boys to bed—
Death not other is than this
After everything is said.

They are safe, and shall not fade,
After everything is done,
Past the solace of the shade
Or the rescue of the sun.
STAR-DUST

Where past Time the roads go far
Littered with dust of sun and star,
With sundered string and arrow sped
The angels of the Lord lie dead.

There lads of the impassioned races
Reflect the night skies in their faces;
Boys' eyes, boys' thoughts and bodies bright
Are changing to eternal light.

THE TERROR

From Asiago to Cambrai,
From Vilna to the Aisne,
Each night the ghosts of soldiers say,
"Don't let us die in vain."

That they should come so far is strange,
Since death lays men so still,
But who can say where dead men range,
Or how they have their will?

So through the night their tramp I hear,
Briton and Frank and Russ;
And through the night the thing they fear
They whisper deep in us.
How shall we find a way to heal
The terror of the slain,
To seek them out, and make them feel
They have not died in vain?

SEEGER

The shapes of waking moments wearied him;
Heroic beauty stirred him as he slept;
And so he lived his youth, and so he crept
Back to old shadows beautiful and dim.
But at the call to arms his eyes were grim—
Dreams must be saved! So he, the dream-adept,
Seeing young Death afar where horror swept,
Leapt with a lover's trembling in each limb.
He sought her out he knew to be his maiden,
And cried to her he flamed for as his bride;
The thundering guns were viols for his suit,
And iron shards his couch. The day was laden
With scent of deadly blossoms, and he died.
And now, wrapt with his maiden, he is mute.

Haniel Long
MR. BOURNE ON TRAPS

MR. RANDOLPH BOURNE, in a recent issue of The Dial, utters a solemn warning about Traps for the Unwary. At first, in passing, he shows the unwary artist the open and obvious traps set by such intemperates as the "philistine" W. C. Brownell and Stuart P. Sherman on one side of the road, and the "blustering" H. L. Mencken on the other. Both extremes, he says, are products of the smothering "genteel tradition," for both represent a "moralism imperfectly transcended." By a process of cancellation, he gently persuades them "to kill each other off."

Their traps, being quite conspicuous with teeth and springs on edge, have ceased, he thinks, to be a menace—even the halt and the blind can avoid them. The real danger is a less evident trap in the dusty middle of the road, a trap set once more, but more beguilingly, by that same "genteel tradition":

Let us look for the enemy of the literary artist in America today not among the philistines or the puritans, among the animal-obsessed novelists or the dainty professors who make Mr. Mencken profane. . . . For the deadly virus of gentility is carried along by an up-to-date cultivated public—small perhaps, but growing—who are all the more dangerous because they are so hospitable. The would-be literary artist needs to be protected not so much from his enemies as from his friends. Puritan and professor may agree in their disgust at the creative imagination at work in America, but it is not their hostility which keeps it from being freer and more expressive. The confusing force is rather an undiscriminating approval on the part of a public who want the new without the unsettling. The current popularity of verse, the vogue of the little theatres and the little
Mr. Bourne on Traps

magazines, reveal a public that is almost pathetically receptive to anything which has the flavor or the pretension of literary art. The striving literary artist is faced by no stony and uncomprehending world. Almost anyone can win recognition and admiration. But where is the criticism that will discriminate between what is fresh, sincere, and creative and what is merely stagy and blatantly rebellious?

There we have it—the "literary artist in America" can escape traps only by putting himself under guidance—the wary guidance of the sound and superior critic: "A new criticism has to be created," etc.

Far be it from us to deny the value of sound criticism. Mr. Bourne, though somewhat over-weighted with glittering generalities, is strictly in order in keeping a watchful eye out for traps, and Miss Lowell's book on *Tendencies*, which he praises, is valuable, whether we agree with her conclusions or not, as an effort to clear the road and set American poetry in its proper array. The only trouble with Mr. Bourne is a natural over-emphasis of the critic's importance. The critic is important, perhaps over-important, to the public—Mr. Bourne's pathetically hospitable or pathetically contemptuous public which likes to be told what it should think; but he is not very important to the artist, that "desperate spiritual outlaw with the lust to create" whom Mr. Bourne almost intemperately longs for, with—to use his own phrase—"a sort of joyful perversity."

To the artist, I repeat, the critic is not very important, especially the professional critic who would soundly and sanely guide him past all manner of traps. What is important to the artist is his chance to be seen or heard, his chance

[91]
of a frugal living while he is doing his work, his chance of admission to the society of his peers, whoever these may prove to be among the dead or living. These three things the artist must have if he is not to starve physically, mentally or spiritually; and the most well-meaning and highly intellectualized criticism, though proceeding from the Delphic seat of the oracle, cannot give him one of them.

With all due deference to Mr. Bourne, are not "the little theaters and the little magazines," which he so gently deprecates, doing more to supply the essential needs of the poet and the playwright than any amount of "the new criticism" could? We have heard, during the last five years, a chorus of voices uttering criticism new and old, trained voices with every right to competence; but we have yet to hear that any of this clamor has either influenced, or especially served or hindered, any poet or playwright in doing his work. The "little theaters and little magazines," on the contrary, have greatly served him by presenting his art to his world, as they have—quite incidentally—greatly served the critic by enabling him to function. Through these exhibition places the literary artist has been enabled to try out his experiments—the only process whereby he can learn. They have done a little also—a very little, alas!—to help him earn his living. And they have done a good deal to introduce him to his contemporary peers, and to help him place himself among them and get from them that random violence of praise or blame which inspires him more than the most reasoned criticism of self-elected minds.
There is much truth in what Mr. Bourne says of the danger for the artist which lurks in pink-tea adulation and "the impeccable social tone" of certain quasi-literary groups. No one can deny that our good-natured American hospitality sets "an insidious trap—the terrible glamor of social patronage which so easily blunts idealism in the young prophet." Perhaps, however, it is a weak grade of idealism that is so easily blunted, and the true prophet will survive tea and toast as of yore he survived cakes and ale, or sesame seed and Falernian.

In Mr. Bourne's terrors there may be just a hint of that ancient, deep-seated prejudice in favor of penury for a poet. With a few exceptions, the precedents would seem to be against its being an advantage. Few of the great poets of all nations had the bad luck to starve, and most of them endured without quailing "the terrible glamor of social patronage" from kings and courts, millionaires and great ladies. In fact, it is doubtful if the modern American poet or artist runs any more danger from intemperate social influences than Chaucer did, or Holbein, Shakespeare or Sophocles, Phidias or Li Po or Leonardo da Vinci.

Mr. Bourne ends his article with a definition of the kind of man who is to give us "a literary art which will combine a classical and puritan tradition with the most modern ideas." Maybe his rather formidable array of qualities hits off the prodigy—I wouldn't venture to say, because a five-years' intimacy with poets makes me hesitate to affirm or deny anything about them. But I feel quite sure that the
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

prodigy, once achieved, will not worry his mind about getting "intelligent, pertinent, absolutely contemporaneous criticism which shall be both severe and encouraging." That, in spite of Mr. Bourne, is not "the problem of the literary artist," nor will his problem be solved "when the artist himself has turned critic and set to work to discover and interpret in others the motives and values and efforts he feels in himself." He will have more important things than this to do. His problem will be, as it always has been, to get himself expressed in his art, and to get his art before his public. And the only aid which he will recognize is that which forwards these ends. H. M.

"OUR CONTRIBUTORS"

Have you ever, gentle reader, been asked to squeeze yourself into about three lines of biography? If not, just try it. You will realize then how far from descriptive are the few identifying facts which are all that you can summon to mind in regard to your past history and career, or your present occupation; how little of the color and flavor of your actually rich personality these give. You might just as well write, "I have a birth-mark on my left heel," or send in a Bertillon print of your thumb.

"Will you be kind enough to tell us something about yourself to go into our contributors' column?"

Of course it is only the young, poor or obscure who have such requests forwarded to them. Thomas Hardy or Ella Wheeler Wilcox or Rudyard Kipling would never be asked
to explain themselves, to reduce all their existence to a bare three lines. And then, what three lines shall one choose? How—granted that one is until now unknown—how does one wish to be known?

Suppose the contributor is a professor of English in a middle-western college. What has the perfunctory correcting of themes to do with his life as a poet? Has he published a book of verse? Yes—and hopes that it may be forgotten; at least until he is a very old, old man. Or perhaps he is the sub-editor of a magazine with whose policies he is not altogether in sympathy. Should this connection be advertised, or concealed? How will the admission affect his literary career? How does he wish to go down to posterity?

Ah, what glowing accounts of oneself one could write if one but dared give way to the methods of the press-agent heralding a new author! The kind that appears on the slipcover, so remarkable in itself that one almost forbears reading the work enclosed! (Indeed, it is rumored that nowadays the authors themselves often write these notices; but the youthful contributor is probably ignorant of this fact.)

Editors little know the amount of trepidation, self-analysis, doubt, alternate pride and discouragement, occasioned by the receipt of one of these seemingly innocent requests. I myself had one sent to me the other day, and it took me three days to answer it. And this, after consuming much foolscap and wasting much midnight oil, is what I finally wrote:
"John Smith, contributor of verse and prose to all the leading magazines."

It has a ringing sound, and furnishes a complete alibi.

A. C. H.

REVIEWS

THOMAS HARDY'S POETRY

Moments of Vision, by Thomas Hardy. Macmillan Co.

If one were to pick out at random a hundred readers of English poetry, and ask them the question: "Who is the greatest English poet to-day?" about ninety-eight would instantly reply, "Kipling." The remainder might be indecisive, or might cast their votes for Masefield, or for Yeats, forgetting that the latter is an Irishman. Nobody, probably, would remark, "Thomas Hardy." And yet there is no doubt that Mr. Hardy is the greatest English poet now living. No one among his contemporaries has been able to turn aside from verse-writing for twenty years, and to return to it with the selfsame powerful grip and mastery. No one has been able to construct a poem of the dynamic energy and epic calibre of The Dynasts, but he. No one, finally, but he, is able, at the patriarchal age of seventy-seven, to produce poems marked with the same poignant sincerity of accent that he displayed at thirty.

If we leave Mr. Hardy out of the account, as a poet, the whole picture not only of English literature but of English thought and feeling in the past twenty years is likely to become distorted. For it has been, as he himself might say,
now twenty years since he turned back to his early love, the muse, from the production of novels. And during that long and dreary time, when English imaginative literature seemed crushed and lost, he has been the one figure with strength and dignity, and a new message to speak, a message nevertheless intimately linked with England's past. After the giants of mid-Victorianism—Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne—had written the works by which they are now remembered and had either passed to their reward or lapsed into the condition of echoes, after this period the stage was set for smaller men. Two spirits only remained with vitality and power enough to pronounce a new message. These were Meredith and Hardy. And Meredith, it is increasingly evident, was to Hardy what a sentimental invalid of a woman is to a firm well-knitted man. Meredith softened as he went on, softened and decayed. Thomas Hardy has shown no need either to soften or to harden. He was granite from the beginning.

What then is the reason for Mr. Hardy's unpopularity as a poet? It has been suggested that it is because he uses a language deliberately unpoetical, deliberately gray in tone. But we are all of us weary of the old poetic diction, which is utterly inapplicable to modern conditions and ideas. And that Hardy eschews rhetoric is perhaps the greatest thing to his credit. The secret of the obscure dislike of his work is found in the fact that Hardy is by temperament and mind a fatalist, a determinist, a pessimist. This sort of writer always makes us uncomfortable when he appears amongst
us. We do not mind reading Job or Ecclesiastes because, after all, they lived a long time ago. But when a man of our own day arises and informs us that in his deliberate opinion our present-day world, with all its thought and activities, is just so much dust and ashes, we wish to stone the fellow. We cannot bear to have our illusions about ourselves so ruthlessly destroyed. And yet no one has asked the question, whether Thomas Hardy has not some reason, some tremendous, vital, quite impersonal reason, for his pessimism.

Hardy represents an England which is older than the Saxons, older perhaps than Julius Caesar. He stands for the England that from time immemorial has been an island, separated from the traffic and commerce of a busy world by treacherous seas and climates, and lapped and swathed in endless folds of agrarian conservatism. He hails, as the whole world knows, from Dorset, from that part of England which has been least disturbed by foreign currents, which has never been industrialized, which has preserved most intact the old country life of the past, with all its narrowness and parochialism. He is the one English writer of our day who has never felt the necessity or desirability of emigrating to London. Even the technique of his poetry betrays over and over again the strong atavistic tendency in Hardy's soul. He is obsessed by ballad refrains, by folk songs, psalm-tunes. Nothing is more striking in him than the contrast between the jingling fall of the rhymes and the gloomy, tragic matter they contain. For example, this, taken at random, from his latest volume:
Thomas Hardy’s Poetry

They sing their dearest songs—
He, she, all of them—yea,
Treble and tenor and bass,
And one to play;
With the candles mooning each face . . .
Ah, no; the years O!
How the sick leaves reel down in throngs!

Could anyone write like that, whose brain was not packed with the lilt of half-forgotten ballads?

But the thing that sets apart Hardy from his fellows, is that while most of these still maintain the respectable and preposterous fiction that England is just as much of an island as ever (vide Kipling, for instance, in his later works) Hardy knows better. He knows that since the discovery of steam, the consequent industrialisation, and, to crown all, the adoption by England of free trade, England has effectually ceased to be able to maintain an isolated and independent position in the world, and is now even more dependent on foreign commerce than many nations whose literary and artistic development has been more elastic, more alive to modern currents of thought and feeling, than hers. So Hardy has set himself the task of putting on record the shrivelling, the decay of the old insular England; and in this sense, as I have already said, he is the one great living link between nineteenth- and twentieth-century England. He is also the one English poet who has written soberly and beautifully of Trafalgar and of Waterloo, because he knew at the time, what we now all see to be the truth, that Trafalgar and Waterloo were not going to be repeated, and are as remote in fact from the conceptions of an industrialized democracy as the Pyramids.

[99]
Hence Hardy became inevitably a pessimist and a fatalist. The atavistic current of England’s bucolic existence, which had flowed for so many centuries about his sires, was coming to an end when he happened to be born. Coming to an end, also, was the old childlike faith in a paternal Deity, and in a special protecting Providence of that Deity. Hardy was the first, the very first writer to carry to its logical end the scientific agnosticism which after all was only a somewhat dilettante pose in Matthew Arnold. He says in effect: “Very well, if you say there is no Deity in the personal sense, but only an abstract, impersonal, unknowable, Primal Force or Energy or Will, then what is to hinder this force or will or energy from acting utterly unjustly, brutally, maliciously?” And the answer is, “Nothing.” So Hardy proceeds further, and suspiciously collects all the evidence he can find in favor of such a view, and says: “There you are—draw your own conclusions.” The only question is, does Hardy deliberately and of malice prepense suppress other evidence favorable to the activities of the Unknown Cosmic Force? I do not think so; and even if he does, so grim and fact-facing an attitude is to my mind infinitely finer and stronger than Meredith’s somewhat waterish hope that the world is improving through man’s unaided effort.

Hardy has been therefore, without consciously desiring it, an iconoclast, and, as with all iconoclasts, one gets the impression, in reading him closely, of a voice crying in the wilderness, of a new John the Baptist proclaiming that the axe is laid at the roots of the trees. I have said that Hardy
is unconsciously an iconoclast. It has been his misfortune to live in an iconoclastic age, and to mourn over the shattered past. His youth he spent in drawing old churches, threatened with restoration. His old age he spends in proclaiming that the faith that reared those churches is shattered beyond hope of a restoration, and that the “ways of God to man” are in fact, unjustifiable. And yet, and yet—he is one who has an eye for the mysteries of nature, and has lived in such close communion with nature, that nature has become to him a living presence, silent indeed, and mysteriously cruel, but even more mysteriously consoling and supporting. Is it then that Hardy is almost ready to say that the forces of nature—the wind, the sea, the earth, the rain, the fire, birth and death—are almost gods, and after all the only gods man needs? He leaves us to draw the inference. At least, he can sing about them, almost light-heartedly, contrasting the beauty and power they give to man, with war’s horror and desolation:

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow, silent walk,
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go on the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by;
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

John Gould Fletcher
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

THE LATE EDWARD THOMAS


Edward Thomas, who published his verse under the pseudonym of Edward Eastaway, was killed at Arras on Easter Monday, 1917. Although the war is barely mentioned in these poems, one is conscious of it perpetually as a part of the background, as we fancy the author was. It is not alone responsible, of course, for the tinge of melancholy or sadness in the poems, which was no doubt temperamental, but it seems to run through the volume like a dark stream, now hidden, now rising to the surface. From the poems one may imagine that this poet's attitude toward the war was fatalistic, that is, that he accepted it, quite apart from all question of the righteousness of the cause, as one accepts Fate in the Greek drama; an attitude which many of emotional temperament, without primary interest in action or politics, must share. The war is there. It can not be escaped. Statistics and world politics mean nothing to poetry, which is, after all, concerned with very small things, with Helen's beauty or the friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, the fate of the individual man. Nature and love and friendship are indeed the soul of poetry, and war's greatest wrong is against these. Therefore the poet marches darkly to his fate. But not before he has seen all things swept away, even love; and though a new birth may come, he will not share in the awakening:

I have come a long way to-day:
On a strange bridge alone,

[102]
Remembering friends, old friends,  
I rest, without a smile or moan,  
As they remember me without smile or moan.

All are behind, the kind  
And the unkind too, no more  
To-night than a dream. The stream  
Runs softly yet drowns the Past,  
The dark-lit stream has drowned the Future and the Past.

No traveller has rest more blest  
Than this brief moment between  
Two lives, when the Night's first lights  
And shades hide what has never been,  
Things goodlier, lovelier, dearer, than will be or have been.

What is it that we find in Edward Thomas's poems— 
the distinctive personal note? To me it seems as if this man looked on fields, roads, and countryside as if to impress them forever on his mind. He seems to give to his landscape that poignancy that a familiar scene has for us when we see it in the light of some strong personal emotion, and to carry this quality of intensified vision about with him, so that every small detail, endowed with the poet's imagination, acquires a life of its own. Thus he makes an old manor farm live in a light of eternity:

The church and yew  
And farmhouse slept in a Sunday silentness.  
The air raised not a straw. The steep farm roof,  
With tiles duskily glowing, entertained  
The mid-day sun; and up and down the roof  
White pigeons nestled. There was no sound but one.  
Three cart-horses were looking over a gate  
Drowsily through their forelocks, swishing their tails  
Against a fly, a solitary fly.

But 'twas not Winter—  
Rather a season of bliss unchangeable

[103]
Awakened from farm and church where it had lain
Safe under tile and thatch for ages since
This England, Old already, was called Merry.

He gives us a sense of contact with nature, vital with experience, and back of it, a continuous searching for reality. I wish I could quote in this connection, The Glory, which could only be quoted entire, and also Melancholy, The Long Small Room, When First, October, Rain, and many other poems that have this special significance.

Mr. Thomas's verse has come under various influences, not the least of which is a sort of Celtic waywardness, with perhaps a tinge of the homely homespun of Robert Frost. In the latter aspect Mr. Thomas, like Mr. Frost, is content to give us little character studies, or vistas, as of a copse or a field, which have a quiet charm in themselves and lead nowhere else. His poems are low-toned and quiet, almost subdued, but in this very quiet is their beauty. It is a twilight country, mellow and rich, but very cool and clear in tone. One feels that the subjective Celtic element is the most instinctive with the poet, the most inherent. Some of the poems are a little obscure at first. Mr. Thomas was at no pains to write for the public; he has been content to record his own experiences as they came to him, and that is why the poems are so richly personal. He has not written with the world looking over his shoulder, and—it may be fancy, but one detects in these poems a certain proud withdrawal from a world that could find nothing better than literary hackwork for a man of his temperament to do. He had written many books, and if, as has been said, it was
Robert Frost who first furnished the impulse that liberated some hidden spring and permitted the man to express himself in verse, then we have every reason to feel indebted to Mr. Frost for the revelation of this sensitive poetic mind. This inter-action of poets one upon another, when it occurs—not in the sense of imitation, but of creative quickening—is a very inspiring thing. One could wish that there might be more of it, and less of poets tearing other poets to pieces in the press for the sake of a very doubtful publicity. It is not, as many seem to think, a mark of final superiority to be able to detect weaknesses in a work of art; it requires a much greater skill and intelligence to recognize the virtues.

Not all of Mr. Thomas's poems are included in this volume. In February, 1917, two months before his death, a group of them was published in Poetry, and one is disappointed to find that neither these nor the poems which appeared in An Annual of New Poetry, 1917, are included here. One hopes that a complete collection may be published later. There is a great deal of modern poetry which one does not care to read a second time; but one who likes these poems will care to read them many times, each time with a new appreciation of their beauty.

A. C. H.

RALPH HODGSON AGAIN

The Last Blackbird, by Ralph Hodgson. Macmillan Co.

Have publishers no literary conscience, or do they lack critical perception, basing all their enterprise on a sort of hit-or-miss calculation of what the market will be? And,
once an author is established, is his subsequent work immune from further critical scrutiny by the publisher?

One is moved to such conjecture in reading this second book by Ralph Hodgson, so noticeably inferior to his first that one can only regard its publication as a mistake. In fact, those critics who recently championed Mr. Hodgson's work against adverse criticism will find little here to sustain their enthusiasm. All the qualities that made for both the success and the weakness of the first book are here in a kind of obscure excess. One concludes therefore that these poems must be earlier in composition; at least it is kinder to believe so. By comparison the first book assumes a perhaps undue importance. Certainly no one questioned Mr. Hodgson's skill—he is quite truly an artificer in rhyme. But this is quite different from being a great artist in rhyme. And one may very properly admire the one without giving it the prestige of the other. Mr. Hodgson has an almost automatic facility, as evident in some of his serious poems as in *Human Ambition and Big Behaviour*, in which he hits off this very facility, or in *My Books*, in which he plays deftly with rhymes. The poems in this second book, however, lack the clarity of those in the first. The longer poems here meander vaguely to a vague conclusion. *The Last Blackbird* is about the last blackbird in the world, and a long conversation with Nature in which that lady promises something like a flood in return for man's disregard and destruction of herself. (This feeling for outraged nature is Mr. Hodgson's most characteristic note.) *St. Athelstan* is
a narrative poem, rather obscure because of the literary language and inversions. In The Last Blackbird, too, we find this outworn poetic phrasing:

My head was tired; I had no mind to think
Of Beauty wronged and none to give redress:
I got me to a place where linnets drink
And lizards go in ferny loveliness.

A blackbird sang, so down I fell; meseemed,
Soothed by his note, I closed a drowsy lid;
And I was ventured on a dream—I dreamed
One stood and questioned me how linnets did.

And straight I knew who thus in angel guise
Would have my news—some trick of lip or brow
Guessed me her rank; I said not otherwise
Than ill indeed it went with linnets now.

Would we confine modern architecture to English Gothic? Or if we take exception to contemporary copies of English Gothic, should it be inferred that we therefore have no appreciation of the original?

The shorter poems in this book, as in the first, are the best. Thrown, Hammers, Beauty Sprite and The Rose have the brevity, the directness, the swift vivid touch typical of Mr. Hodgson’s most distinctive work. But one who wishes to know Mr. Hodgson at his best will have to return to the Poems.

A. C. H.

IRISH EARTH

Earth of Cualann, by Joseph Campbell, With Twenty-one Designs by the Author. Maunsel and Co., Ltd., Dublin.

In A Gilly of Christ and The Mountainy Singer, Mr. Campbell contributed some very beautiful lyrics to the Irish
Renaissance, lyrics which seem to me to have more individuality and spontaneity than this group of poems in unrhymed cadence, many of them with a touch of Biblical solemnity and phrasing. Readers of POETRY will recall *The Stranger*, *At Dawn* and *At Samhain*, published in this magazine. In these, as in the other poems in this book, one feels a fine sense of quantitative rhythm, a sure sense of the musical phrase; but the image is seldom inevitable, it remains rather as a sort of suspended simile—the two parts do not quite knit:

*The days of my life*
*Come and go.*

One is a black valley,
Rising to blue goat-parks
On the crowns of distant hills.
I hear the falling of water
And the whisper of ferns' tongues,
And, still more, I hear
The silence.

In the following complete poem, the scene is set, but nothing really happens:

How still the night!
The air, a fragrance fallen from unseen wings;
The pine-trunks, stones of some dark and secret temple;
Venus, a lantern burning without flame.

But my soul is not still.
The wind blows bitterly;
The pines groan on their rock-nourished roots;
The stars are blotted out.

In a word, the poems seem to promise more than is really concealed in their depths. The manner is grave, measured and assured, even solemn; and one is led to expect more
Irish Earth

than one receives. It may be, of course, that I do not possess the key to some secret understanding. At any rate, whether the fault be mine or the poet’s, I remain unsatisfied.

A. C. H.

THE MUSE OF COMPLIMENT


Here is my old friend Frank Dempster Sherman proudly set forth in an édition de luxe. Poet and professor of mathematics, he was as genial as he was versatile, and all who had ever known him grieved when they heard of his death over a year ago. He was only fifty-six years old when the summons came.

He was very modest about his poetry. “I have dollars for Milton or Shelley, but none for Sherman,” he replied to a publisher who had suggested that he pay for printing one of his early books. And once he said to me: “If I keep my hand in, my technique in order, some day I may be lucky enough to write a song that will live. And that’s worth working for all one’s life—one song that will live.” Or, as he rhymed it later, in Desire:

Of all the threads of rhyme
Which I have spun
I shall be glad if Time
Save only one.

And I would have each word
To joy belong—
A lyric like a bird
Whose soul is song.

[109]
Did he attain it? Who attains his desire? His name is not married to a song, like Julia Ward Howe’s to The Battle Hymn of the Republic (which, by the way, is being sung all over the English-speaking world at war, as the long-sought international hymn). And, reading this book, one finds no memorable poem lifting out of the ripple of delicate rhyme. What one does find is fancy and good taste—the extreme of good breeding; and good breeding stifles the impassioned muse.

But the muse of the drawing-room, the muse of satins and chiffons—or be it even prints and twills—thrives upon good breeding, demands fancy and good taste. If there is never a note of passion in this book there is much admirable vers de société, and a few library poems of undeniable charm. In such poems as To a Rose he may have achieved his immortality, along with Locker, Austin Dobson and other masters of compliment:

Go, Rose, and in her golden hair
You shall forget the garden soon;
The sunshine is a captive there
And crowns her with a constant noon.

And when your spicy odor goes,
And fades the beauty of your bloom,
Think what a lovely hand, O Rose,
Shall place your body in a tomb!

H. M.
"HARD" AND "SOFT"

Editor of Poetry: The interesting discussion on *The Hard and the Soft in French Poetry*, which appeared in your February issue, scarcely gets to the root of its subject. In it, as your readers may remember, Mr. Pound declared that "hardness is in poetry nearly always a virtue—I can think of no case where it is not"; and also "softness . . . an opposite quality, which is not always a fault." Then he went on to illustrate this thesis with examples drawn from French and English literature.

The fact is, that there are two kinds of poetical emotion, the musical and the pictorial. These qualities may be perfectly fused in the poet, or one may preponderate over the other. For example, the poet may see his subject as a hard, clear pictorial outline, something to be cut in Parian marble: this is what Gautier did. Or he may see his subject as something containing rich musical possibilities—cunning variations of sound, adroit combinations of vowels and consonants: This is undoubtedly what Poe did, or Coleridge in *Christabel*. The subject of *Christabel*, or of most of Poe's poems, is the veriest nonsense, when coldly analyzed: what makes them poems of an uncommon sort is their power of musical suggestion.

Shakespeare is almost the sole English poet in whom the pictorial and the musical are perfectly blended. Milton, Browning, Blake, tended to the pictorial; that is to say, they
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

became, as Mr. Pound calls it, "hard." This "hardness" is not always, as he says, a virtue; in fact, it may easily defeat its own ends.

There is so little clear-headed thinking about poetry, and the issue is so consistently befogged with critics who have this or that particular hobby to ride, that it is always wise to remind the reader that the substance of poetry is language—human speech, words. Now with words the mind refuses to be arrested at the outer aspect. Not many people in this world can read a page of either poetry or prose without a thought of its meaning. But dozens can admire a picture—by let us say, Sargent—purely because of the technical quality of its surface, of its drawing and paint.

For this reason, good poets who are purely pictorial, that is to say—"hard," are rare; and equally rare the good poets who are purely musical, that is to say—"soft." Most poets achieve a sort of blend of both qualities. But to rank the "hard" poet over the "soft," or vice versa, is an error. Verlaine, whose imagination was purely musical, is as great in his own way as Villon, whose imagination was purely pictorial. I can take pleasure from either.

The thing that counts with a poet is not whether he tries to be "hard" or "soft"; but rather, as Mr. Pound says, whether he has been intent on the quality of the emotion he wants to convey, and whether he has perfectly conveyed that quality.  

John Gould Fletcher
Dear Editor: Did I say I rejected Italian standards of good literature? Here is what I feel sometimes about our own stuff.

Emanuel Carnevali

MODERN POETRY

I
A wondrous voice is urging me within
And thrills me with a pain, alas!...

II
A wondrous voice urges me within
And with a pain thrills me—alas!...

III
A wondrous voice
Urges me within
And thrills me
With pain...

IV
A wondrous
Voice urges
Me within and
Thrills
Me with a
Pain...

V
A voice sings in my throat
And rings like a fever
Through my body
That vibrates with pain.

VI
My throat sings
Like a stiff red silk ribbon.
And my veins shrink
Like teeth
At the sight of a lemon.

VII
The throat shivers
Pain.

[113]
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Only . . .
Well . . .

VIII

Throat, this I know,
And pain.
Well, I'm sure
About the pain—
The throat and the pain,
Which all rhymes with rain;
But if it's a free verse
It doesn't count.

IX

Throat,
You don't know anything about it.
Pain,
Because I have looked at my throat,
Perhaps my eyes stopped
At the chest—
Chest
Upon
The belly
Belly
Upon
The legs . . .
Sing a minuet, a minuet, in be sharp—
Be sharp, how can I?
The feet are under the legs and
The corns . . .
Throat?
It's an old platitude, an old commonplace.
You can't force an artist, what do you think?
Modern
Modernity,
Modernism . . .
I am above my throat,
I have a right to forget . . .

X

Nobody home
The poet has left for the asylum.
NOTES

Mr. Wallace Stevens, of Hartford, Conn., needs no further introduction to readers of POETRY, to which he first contributed in our War Number of Nov., 1914. He now returns to the subject of the war, his motive being furnished by that remarkable little book, *Lettres d’un Soldat*, published in Paris by the Librairie Chapelot two years or more ago. The name of its author, the young soldier-architect to whom six months at the front brought extraordinary spiritual exaltation, is still withheld by his family because of the possibility of his being a prisoner in Germany. The letters were written to his mother from August, 1914, to April, 1915, from which date he has been among the missing. Mr. Stevens’ mood is less acquiescent than that of the young Frenchman, but not less profoundly felt.

Other poets who are familiar to our readers are Agnes Lee (Mrs. Otto Freer), of Chicago, whose latest book is *The Sharing* (Sherman, French & Co.); Mr. Orrick Johns, of St. Louis, whose *Asphalt* was published last year by Alfred A. Knopf; Mr. Thomas Wood Stevens, author of numerous plays and pageants, who is now dramatic director of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; and Miss Viola I. Paradise, of Chicago, an employee of the government in the Children’s Bureau, who has published little.

An unusual number of poets, none of whom has published a volume as yet, appear in POETRY for the first time. Of these:

Mr. Haniel Long, born in Rangoon, Burmah, in 1888, is now Professor of English in the School of Fine Arts of Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.

Miss Hortense Flexner, a journalist of Louisville, Ky., is the author of several short plays, one of which, *Voices*, was printed in the *Seven Arts Magazine* and given by the Portmanteau Theatre Company.

Flora Shufelt Rivola (Mrs. Charles E.) has lived since infancy near Yankton, S. D. She has contributed to *The Masses* and other magazines.

Mr. John V. A. Weaver, Jr., a young Chicago journalist, is now in military training at Camp Zachary Taylor, Ky.

Mr. Dean B. Lyman, Jr., born in 1896 at New Haven, Conn., is now a student at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.

Miss Ida Judith Johnson, a Missourian, teaches Latin and history at the Cape Girardeau high school.

Mr. Solomon J. D. Fendell, of Brooklyn, was born in London in 1895, came to America ten years later, and has recently graduated from Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.
Mr. Howard Unger, of St. Louis, writes, "Put me down as an emigrant from Russia."
Miss Cecily Fryer is an English poet resident in Woodbridge, Suffolk.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:
Toward the Gulf, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan Co.
Ardours and Endurances, also A Faun's Holiday and Poems and Phantasies, by Robert Nichols. Frederick A. Stokes Co. .
Seven Sonnets and Other Poems, by J. Carey Thomas II. Gorham Press.
Twenty-One, by Mulford Doughty. Gorham Press.
A Cabinet of Jade, by David O'Neil. Four Seas Co.
The Day and Other Poems, by Henry Chappell. John Lane Co.
Hay Harvest and Other Poems, by Lucy Buxton. John Lane Co.
Mid-American Chants, by Sherwood Anderson. John Lane Co.

ANTHOLOGY:
SPECIAL OFFER TO SUBSCRIBERS

POETRY IS NOW $2.00 A YEAR

But for an Even THREE DOLLARS

sent for a new subscription or a renewal, you may have

POETRY for one year (price $2.00), and
THE NEW POETRY — AN ANTHOLOGY

(Macmillan Co.—$1.75 postpaid), a representative collection of contemporary verse edited by the editors of this magazine.

It is difficult to overestimate the need for just such a book, that puts in handy form the characteristic part of the modern expression in poetry, giving a juster impression of its value than can be gained from much desultory reading in the publications of the day. It is a book that will give great enjoyment, and bears strong witness that we are in the midst of a revival of poetry.—New York Times.

A university professor of English, one of many whose classes use The New Poetry as a textbook, writes:

“It is quite the thing I have been looking for this many a day.”


You will get the book postpaid and a year’s subscription to the magazine.

Send your order at once to

POETRY - - 543 Cass St., Chicago
Horlick's Malted Milk
The Original
TAKE A PACKAGE HOME FOR CONVENIENT USE
Serve in place of tea or coffee, as a quick luncheon and hot at bed time to induce refreshing sleep
SEND TO YOUR SOLDIER BOY
in Lunch Tablet form. Sustains, relieves fatigue. In ration tins and flasks, 15c to 30c. (35c by mail.)
Horlick's Malted Milk Co., Racine, Wis.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912.
Of Poetry, published monthly at Chicago, Ill., for April 1, 1918.
State of Illinois, County of Cook. Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Harriet Monroe, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the editor of Poetry, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:
That the name and address of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager is Harriet Monroe, 543 Cass street.
That there are no bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders.
That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities that as so stated by her.
HARRIET MONROE (Owner)
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of March, 1918.
Blanche Calkins,
(My commission expires July 29, 1920.)
BOUND VOLUMES of POETRY

Complete volumes of POETRY bound in buckram with Index and Title Page

Vol. I—October, 1912 (Reprint) March, 1913 .... $2.75
All Other Volumes, II-XI, each ..................... 1.75

The bound volumes of POETRY make a well-nigh complete collection of the best verse written in English since October, 1912. No library should be without them.

Subscribers may have their copies of POETRY bound at a cost of $1.25 a volume.

POETRY - - 543 CASS STREET
CHICAGO

GREAT WAR BALLADS
By BROOKES MORE
Readers of the future (as well as of today) will understand the Great War not only from perusal of histories, but also from Ballads—having an historical basis—and inspired by the War.

A collection of the most interesting, beautiful, and pathetic ballads.
True to life and full of action.
$1.50 NET

THRASH-LICK PUB. CO., Fort Smith, Ark., U. S. A.
THE EGOIST

This journal is NOT a chatty literary review; its mission is NOT to divert and amuse; it is NOT written for tired and depressed people. Its aim is rather to secure a fit audience, and to render available to that audience contemporary literary work bearing the stamp of originality and permanence; to present in the making those contemporary literary efforts which ultimately will constitute 20th century literature.

The philosophical articles which THE EGOIST publishes, by presenting the subject matter of metaphysics in a form which admits of logical treatment, are promising a new era for philosophy. The power of its fictional work is investing that commonest but laxest form—the novel as written in English, with a new destiny and meaning. In poetry, its pages are open to experiments which are transforming the whole conception of poetic form, while among its writers appear leaders in pioneering methods radically affecting the allied arts.

Obviously a journal of interest to virile readers only. Such should write, enclosing subscription, to

THE EGOIST
PUBLISHED MONTHLY
Price, fifteen cents a number. Yearly subscription, one dollar sixty cents.
To have great poets there must be great audience too.

—Whitman

Harriet Monroe
Editor

Alice Corbin Henderson
Associate Editor

Henry B. Fuller
Edith Wyatt

H. C. Chatfield-Taylor
Advisory Committee

Ezra Pound
Foreign Correspondent