

Vol. XV

No. VI

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
March 1920

In a Certain City
by Helen Hoyt
Early Snow—a Nō Play
tr'd by Arthur Waley
Harold Monro, R. Block
Marion Strobel

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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XV



oetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME XV

October - March, 1919 - 20

Edited by
Harriet Monroe



543 CASS STREET
CHICAGO

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Harriet Monroe

Erratum:

Pages 202 and 203 are transposed, and should be read in reverse order. Libraries, and other subscribers who have their numbers bound, are hereby notified that a new section of pages, correcting this error, will be mailed postpaid on application to the editor. And in all bound volumes furnished by POETRY it will be corrected.

(ICU)

Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

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Two annual prizes will be awarded next November for good work of the current year. To the donors of these prizes, as well as to the above list of guarantors, the editor wishes to express the appreciation of the staff and the poets:

To Mr. S. O. Levinson, for the Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, to be awarded for the seventh time; and to the anonymous guarantor who will present, for the sixth time, a prize of one hundred dollars.

We feel that these prizes are a most valuable service to the art.

In the death of Mrs. H. M. Wilmarth, August 28th, 1919, POETRY and its editors lost one of the earliest and most loyal friends of the magazine, and the arts and civic enterprises of Chicago one of their ablest and most generous supporters.

A guarantor of POETRY who was also a distinguished connoisseur of the other arts, was Mr. Charles S. Freer, of Detroit, who, dying last September, enriched the people of the United States with his priceless collection of oriental and occidental masterpieces, to be housed in the gallery now building in Washington.

We deeply regret to record also the death on February third, at his winter home in California, of Mr. E. P. Ripley, for many years president of the Santa Fe Railroad, who has supported POETRY generously from the beginning.

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POETRY
A MAGAZINE OF VERSE
VOLUME XV

You have got all the other magazines imitating your experiments. I never miss reading POETRY. It is amazing how you keep up its interest.

H. L. Mencken

Vol. XV

No. VI

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POETRY asks its friends to become Supporting Subscribers by paying ten dollars a year to its Fund. The art of poetry requires, if it is to advance, not only special sympathy from a discriminating public, but also endowment similar to that readily granted to the other arts. All who believe in the general purpose and policy of this magazine, and recognize the need and value of such an organ of the art, are invited to assist thus in maintaining it.

 **Poetry**
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XV
No. VI

MARCH, 1920

IN A CERTAIN CITY

CHICAGO

SMOKE and tawny air;
Bricks blurred with black,
Softened with dusk,
Edges clouded with smoke—
Great human thing, beautiful with ugliness,
Gripping our hearts because you are big and clumsy and
kind,
Going with dream-misted eyes:
Tenderly you take our love, with welcome,
Coarse and strong and friendly.

[291]

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ENCOUNTER

I held a violet in my hand
In the midst of the city,
And could not understand
My own pity.
Now was face to face
Littleness with the immensity of towers:
Strength was looking at grace;
The city sighing for lost woodland hours.

AUTOMOBILES ON SUNDAY

Down the blue road into the sun
The great cars run;
Down the road's curve
They swerve,
And their glasses shine white
In the sudden light
As they turn;
And the brasses of their lamps and rods burn.

With an inner turning,
An inner sound of turning and churning,
With a whirl and a purr purr,
With a great hum,
They come;
And they shake their shadows at their side,
Their shadows square and wide

Slipping over the road,
Now hastening, now slowed,
Hanging to their wheels half askew,
Purple and black on the road's oiled blue.

Some with the soft swish of a lady's train
Pass quietly, with sleek disdain;
Enameled, glistening and neat,
Moving by on dainty feet;
Every whirling wheel
Steadfast and genteel.

Now a broad bulging lounging fellow
Painted bright in black and yellow,
Wobbling under his merry weight;
And now one comes with terrible lumbering gait;
And one rushes by
Straight as a bird through the sky
In the sun.

Shining progression,
Ceaseless procession, procession
Splendor goes striding by,
Beauty goes sliding by,
In the sun, in the sun.

BY THE LAKE

Wash from me all my weariness, waters;
Wash from me all my thoughts and purposes;

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Wash from me all my desires and dreams and hopes,
And drown them in your old monotony!

Oh, take me from myself and let me lose myself!
Let this incessant churning against the rocks—
This clumping, clumping, clumping of the water—
Wash over my brain and wash my brain away!

Till I am left at last empty of all that I was,
All that I knew or was or wished to be:
Left empty and content and uncontending;
Languorous, and numbed and lulled asleep.

NIGHT

The room seems hushed and apart,
A piece out of the night.
Something stirs in my heart
That never comes in the light:

Thought of the earth, of how old
And how large it lies in the dark
And through the darkness is rolled—
Vastness, empty, stark,

Terrible and unreal,
Wide about where I lie.
Is this how children feel
When the dark makes them cry?

THE STONE-AGE SEA

Never has ship sailed on that sea
Nor ray of tower shone on it;
Motionless, without desire or memory,
Like a great languorous sea of stone it lies.
And as these ledges of rock on which they sit—
So stony, so unseeing—are the eyes
Of this strange folk who from the naked shore
Look ever beyond them to the aged face
Of the waters. One with the hoar
Mighty boulders they seem, one with the deep:
These the first beings of the first rude race
Of time. Their hearts are still locked asleep,
So lately from the gray marble were they torn:
And all the multitudes of the world are yet unborn.

WHEN WE ARE ASLEEP

When we are asleep, at rest and asleep,
Where do our thoughts and wishes keep?
Where is memory's dreaming bed,
And where does love lay down her head,
And hope, and happiness, and sorrow?
Where do they go until tomorrow?
Do they sleep, do they rest?

Crowding knowledge, close compressed
In the many-folded brain,

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

What ghostly bound, what exquisite chain,
Holds you and binds you in till day—
Binds you fast, lest you drift away?

CREATOR

I remember well a certain poem,
The glory as it was born:
After long travail the glory
As I carved into their places
Those little last words that made it done.

I waved the writing over my head like a flag.
I read it and read it again, chanting;
Walking under trees, chanting it to the sky.

The sound it made in my ears was beautiful,
And it made delicious smooth movements in my mouth,
Made my feet dance.

I cried aloud in delight;
I said: "It is good,
It is very good."
The joy beat in my side fast;
Beat in my throat.
There were tears in my throat
So that I could hardly behold where I walked,
So that I seemed taller than the trees,
My head was so proud.

HEADSTONE

Know by these lines that she whose bones rest here
Was once a poet. To her were very dear
All lovely words and syllables, and with delight
She wove them into songs. Oh, many a night
She lay with waking eyes, dreaming them in the dark
Of her high city room, or in the dim park
Danced them beside the lake, hearing the waves beat;
Hearing far off the noise of the city, the loud street.
But now she lies in this place where the quiet dead have
home,
Where rhythms of wave and words and dancing never come.

THERE WAS A TIME

There was a time destruction hovered its wings over my
head;
Poverty walked at my back,
At the one side of me loneliness, at the other side longing.
But never have my feet gone so eagerly in the ways of my
life as in those days;
And the memories of those days are pleasant to me.

Helen Hoyt

INTROSPECTION

That house across the road is full of ghosts.
The windows, all inquisitive, look inward.
All are shut.
I've never seen a body in the house.
Have you? Have you?
Yet feet go sounding in the corridors,
And up and down, and up and down the stairs,
All day, all night, all day.

When will the show begin?
When will the host be in?
What is the preparation for?
When will he open the bolted door?
When will the minutes move smoothly along in their hours?
Time, answer!

(Can you see a feverish face
Pressing at the window-pane?)

The air must be hot: how hot inside.
If only somebody could go
And snap the windows open wide,
And keep them so!

All the back rooms are very large, and there
(So it is said)
They sit before their open books and stare.
Or one will rise and sadly shake his head,

Another will comb out her languid hair;
While some will move untiringly about
Through all the rooms, for ever in and out,
Or up and down the stair;

Or gaze into the desolate back-garden
And talk about the rain,
Then drift back from the window to the table,
Folding long hands, to sit and think again.

They can never meet like homely people
Round a fireside
After daily work
Always busy with procrastination,
Backward and forward they move in the house,
Full of their questions
No one can answer.
Nothing will happen Nothing will happen

CITY STORM

The heavy sounds are over-sweet
That droop above the hooded street,
At any moment ripe to fall and lie;
And when that wind will swagger up the town
They'll bend a moment, then will fly
All clattering down.

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Troops come and go of urchin breeze;
They flick your face or smack the trees,
Then round the corner spin and leap
With whistling cries,
Rake their rubbish in a heap
And throw it in your eyes.

(Much preparation of the earth and air
Is needed everywhere
Before that first large drop of rain can fall.)

Smells of the sea, or inland grass,
Come staring through the town and pass.
Brilliant old Memories drive in state
Along the way, but cannot wait;
And many a large unusual bird
Hovers across the sky half-heard.

But listen. It is He—

At last he comes:

Gigantic tyrant panting through the street,
Slamming the windows of our little homes,
Banging the doors, knocking the chimneys down.
Oh, his loud tramp: how scornfully he can meet
Great citizens, and lash them with his sleet!
Everything will be altered in our town.

He'll wipe the film of habit clean away.
While he remains,

Harold Monro

His cloak is over everything we do,
And the whole town complains.

A sombre scroll;
An inner room.
A crystal bowl:
Waters of gloom.
Oh, the darkened house—
Into silence creep.
The world is cold;
The people weep.

Harold Monro

MARCH

Such mournful twilights, beaded with the rain;
Blurred sunsets and the wild wet dawns;
A pale moon rocked in a tempestuous sky.
Gray hours like driven ghosts drift by
To a gray doom. And over all I hear
God's age-old laughter down the wind.

Ruth Loomis Skeen

AFTER RACHMANINOFF

Like rain, that silvers out of a silent sky—

“So hard,” you said.

And I sent back my heart in a vain try

To hold below your voice

Some remnant memory of strange songs he played.

(These moments never quite return—

Not through all the years I'll count and spend,

Or light tapers to old gods and watch them burn.)

“Like granite feet”—

You laughed, and then came back,

“Both light and strong,

A tracery of rock on rock.”

The moment opened wide and let me in.

I looked behind

As a man who plays with sin,

Knowing what it was I sought—

The “variation” he could never play,

That from his fingered keys would always stray

Uncaught.

“You seemed held deep

In thought.”

I lied to that—confession's cheap,

A lie's a compliment—

And found myself wondering where to heap

New devotions that would keep
Your eyes in mine
In this strange experiment.

We were in a net
Of other people's words:
They crossed us there like swords.
At last I tipped my hat
And felt your tension drop—
Hearts stop perhaps
Like that.

No doubt you will forget
The evening when we remet:
For you a door had edged and closed
Upon a stranger awkwardly disposed
When I went out.

For me the days will live it through each time
In a kind of troubled rhyme—
When concert whispers rise and fall,
And other Russian preludes run
Up chromatic scales and down.
Repelled by chatter, and in vain,
I'll watch the faces for a sign;
As when I held out hands and cried,
And of all the souls that faced my way
Only yours replied.

Ralph Block

SEA-EDGE SONGS

THE ENCHANTED TOAD

Three times you had neared, I unaware—
My body warm in the sand and bare,
Three times you had hopped your silent track
To the arch of shadow under my back.
And each time, when I had felt you cool
And turned on you and, like a fool,
Prodded your exit from my place,
Sorrow deepened in your face.
You were loth to leave me, though I threw
Handfuls of sand to quicken you.
You would look as you went and blink your eyes
And puff your pale throat with surprise.
Three times you had tried, like someone daft
Till I thought, too late, that evil craft
Had altered, into what you were,
Some old Chinese philosopher;
Had wanted you dank and thwarted you dumb,
And that, given just three times to come
And beg a poet to set you free,
You had put all your faith in me.

THE SAND-PIPER

Along the sea-edge, like a gnome
Or rolling pebble in the foam,

As though he timed the ocean's throbbing,
Runs a piper, bobbing, bobbing.

How he stiffens, how he wilts,
Like a little boy on stilts!
Creatures burrow, insects hide,
When they see the piper glide.

You would think him out of joint,
Till his bill begins to point.
You would doubt if he could fly,
Till his straightness arrows by.

You would take him for a clown,
Till he peeps and flutters down,
Vigilant among the grasses,
Where a fledgling bobs and passes.

GRASS-TOPS

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer.

And what is so nameless as beauty?—
Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnamings forever,
Content, though it go, that it came.

Witter Bynner

IMAGES VAINES

Des visages sur moi se penchent,
Dans la solitude ou tintent les lointains.
Des douceurs de mains blanches
Se posent sur mes mains.

Neige du Souvenir, rosée des sens,
Brume filigranée où murmurent les formes,
Apaisement bleu où s'endorment
Les désirs renaissants,
Entrevus en un soir de bonheur impossible.

Des visages parfois se penchent
Sur mes mains blanches.
Des mains parfois effleurent mon visage.
Toute une foule est dans ma vie,
Comme un mirage.

Je ne sais que cela:
Des visages dont j'ai recueilli la tendresse—
Je ne sais quand, en quel endroit,
Ni pourquoi—
Se penchent sur mon visage;

Et la caresse dont je meurs—
Mes yeux libres de pleurs,
Mon corps blessé comme une cible—
C'est le vain frôlement des regards impossibles.

Jean Catel

THE MOTHER

I

Now I am like the earth—
I can give food;
And you, my little one, look to me only.
We are so little separate, you and I—
Still your growth comes of me,
And my strength makes you strong.
Now I am like the earth—
I can give birth to flowers, and nourish them.

II

Happy the house
That goes a-tiptoe when the evening comes,
And says, "Hush, hush—
He sleeps!"
Happy the house that may not lie too long
Of mornings;
Little cries of hunger or of laughter
Wakening it,
Imperious fingers pushing up its eyes.
That house is living,
There is moving in it
The green sap of the world.

Nancy Campbell

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SEA-GULLS

On Leaving Eggemoggin

Sea-gulls I saw lifting the dawn with rosy feet,
Bearing the sunlight on their wings,
Dripping the dusk from burnished plumes;
And I thought
It would be joy to be a sea-gull
At dusk, at dawn of day,
And through long sunlit hours.

Sea-gulls I saw carrying the night upon their backs,
Wide tail spread crescent for the moon and stars—
The moon a glowing jelly fish,
The stars foam-flecks of light;
And I thought
It would be joy to be a sea-gull!

How I would dart with them,
Strike storm with coral spur,
Rip whirling spray of angry tides,
Snatch mangled, light-shot offal of the sea—
Torn, tossed and moving terribly;
And stare for stare answer those myriad eyes
That float and sway, stab, sting and die away!

How I would peer from wide, cold eyes of fire—
At dusk, at dawn,
And through the long daylight—

Jeannette Marks

Into those coiling depths of sea;
Then split the sun, the moon, the stars,
With laughter, laughter, laughter
For the sea's mad power!

ROSY MILLER

I do not ever remember having seen Rosy Miller—
I never met her,
Yet lose her I never can.
It was the speech of a friend that made her live for me—
Rosy Miller, who gave and gave;
Who, a child still, had learned the whole meaning of life,
Who asked nothing,
Who never held a hand out mendicant to others.

One night at dusk she came down a hill with me—
That was three years ago, that hour at dusk,
And now they say she is dead.
But that is a mistake:
Even for me who never knew her she still lives.

Jeannette Marks

THE DISH-WASHER

Above the foam curled a light plume of steam—
An airy blue embodiment of dream,
That drew the tribute of her eager gaze
As though it were a genie from a vase.

Her hands worked on with even rise and fall,
But she was not aware of them at all.
A breeze came in, a stranger to the town,
And set her tumblers bobbing up and down,
And making tinkly music, frail and sweet,
Like fairy bells you startle with your feet
In woodland grass. Then happily her soul
Awoke to sunlight nesting in a bowl:
A little crystal boat it seemed to be
Upon the life and lustre of the sea.

O SINGER! O DANCER!

So wonderful your fancies seem to me
And rare the revelations that you bring,
I find my hands extended wistfully
To stroke them as I would a skylark's wing!

And then I dread the more my dim retreat
Where glories turn to tatters one by one.
Oh, take me where you dance with joyous feet
Along the silver highway of the sun!

Amanda Hall

PREMONITION

There's the crystal shiver of an icicle
Falling from a bank where the runnels are deep
That the last snow cut in the red-brown bank
Where the melting frost-rills creep.

The pine tree branches are bending low
With a wet, white weight; and a woodpecker drums
On a locust tree that will blossom white
When the call for honey comes.

The elm tree is gray with a purple shade,
And the sky seems to hang too low;
But I've seen a light that the willows made,
Yellow against the snow.

The edge of the wind is dull and wet;
The thin ice over the stream looks black;
And I know that power to power is set,
And winter is turning back.

Louise Driscoll

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PERENNIALS

ANTICIPATION

I see myself meeting you.
I will wear the blue dress—
It is unobtrusive, you cannot dislike it;
And the hat with the flowers—
You once said you liked flowers on a hat.
I have bought new gloves
And pretty shoes that hurt.
Unconsciously I will get to your office,
I will walk up behind you—
Do you know you are getting quite gray?
I say your name quietly;
You swing around in your chair.
While you shake my hand
I feel myself in your arms:
I do not hear your polite, cordial voice say,
"This is indeed a pleasure."

SPRING DAY

I felt a fool
When you caught me smiling at myself
In the oval mirror;
But later in the day
A six-legged bug,
Taking ten minutes to climb across

The muscles of my arm,
Convinced me of my greatness.

ENNUI

If I suck the flame into my mouth,
Will it warm the places
You have left so bare?
I lean over the fire,
Flutter my fingers—
Dare my fingers down toward a spark.
I am cold—and tired:
Push me a little . . . Yes?

LET ME PLAY NET

Let me play net and smash it at his feet,
And laugh to see his racket hit the ground!
Or cut it lightly so it spins
Back toward me,
While his body, like a gargoyle leaning out,
Sprawls toward the net
And hits the mesh!
Or serve, and skim the net to his left side,
And as he pops a backhand futilely
Stroke it again to his left side,
And watch him try to take it on his forehand—
And go down!

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THE LAST RITUAL

Let us forget awhile—or may
We not drift into yesterday
And play?—

Forget for a moment years
Crowded with shuddering fears,
With tears?

Lift high your hands again, and try
To be a thrush, to touch the sky,
To fly.

Dance down a sunbeam ray, bright
Like the day tossed from the night
To light.

Laugh to the flowers, that you
Colored the sunshine anew
With dew.

Whisper to me youth was so—
You too remember and know—
Then go.

HANDS

Hands on the keys I saw—only hands;
And yet her whole life passed before me there,

Passed as she played the lilting, joyous waltz.
Hands—hypocrites—that belied the happy notes they struck;
Tapering fingers of nerves, weighted with glittering ware;
Tired hands, where veins throbbled in the hope they might
 keep still;
Beautiful, yet too white, wavering wearily on,
Playing the song of life when the dirge of death had begun.

TWO SONNETS

I

Will you not stay away?—and let me be
Alone with you? Or must you always throw
The present with its infidelity
In front of my too weary eyes, and so
Smear with facts the frail pastel that I
Have made of all our past, in which I live
With you again, again the world defy
And all the cynics who could not forgive
A happiness they could not understand?
O love, a bridge stencilled with lies I cross
To yesterday; I find our promised land
Again, and you. I do not feel a loss:
If you but stay away, my You will be
Clearer than any actuality.

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II

How can I offer you the dull, frayed song
Of love I know? Each word would stumble on
A memory; and I should see a long
Blurred line of faces grimacing upon
A musty curtain of the past Ah, no
Let me be silent Words would only sound
A monotone: a toxic, cloying flow
Of echoes would sift through, and eddy round
My voice, and all the rapture that I feel
Would turn into a harlequin and steal
Away beneath the vivid, measured hum
Of mockery. Ah, dearest, may there come
An ecstasy of stillness in each day,
That you may sense the thoughts I dare not say!

Marion Strobel

EARLY SNOW

A Nō Play

Evening Mist, a servant girl.

A lady, the Abbot's daughter.

Two noble ladies.

The soul of the bird Hatsuyuki ("Early Snow").

Chorus.

Scene, the Great Temple at Izumo.

Servant. I am a servant at the Nyoroku Shrine in the Great Temple of Izumo. My name is Evening Mist. You must know that the Lord Abbot has a daughter, a beautiful lady and gentle as can be. And she keeps a tame bird that was given her a year ago, and because it was a lovely white bird, she called it Hatsuyuki, Early Snow; and she loves it dearly.

I have not seen the bird to-day. I think I will go to the bird-cage and have a look at it. [*She goes to the cage.*] Mercy on us, the bird is not there! Whatever shall I say to my lady? But I shall have to tell her. I think I'll tell her now. Madam, madam, your dear Snow-bird is not here!

Lady. What is that you say? Early Snow is not there? It cannot be true. [*She goes to the cage.*] It is true. Early Snow has gone! How can that be? How can it be that my pretty one that was so tame should vanish and leave no trace?

Oh, bitterness of snows

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That melt and disappear!
Now do I understand
The meaning of a midnight dream
That lately broke my rest.
A harbinger it was
Of Hatsuyuki's fate. [*She bursts into tears.*]

Chorus:

Though for such tears and sighs
There be no cause,
Yet came her grief so suddenly,
Her heart's fire is ablaze;
And all the while
Never a moment are her long sleeves dry.
They say that written letters first were traced
By feet of birds in sand.
Yet Hatsuyuki leaves no testament. [*They mourn.*]

Chorus [*"Kuse" chant, irregular verse accompanied by dancing*]:

How sad to call to mind
When first it left the breeding-cage,
So fair of form
And colored white as snow.
We called it Hatsuyuki, Year's First Snow.
And where our mistress walked
It followed like the shadow at her side.
But now—alas!—it is a bird of parting,
Though not in Love's dark lane.

Lady. There's no help now. [*She weeps bitterly.*]

Chorus:

Still there is one way left. Stop weeping, lady,
And turn your heart to him who vowed to hear.
The Lord Amida, if a prayer be said—
Who knows but he can bring
Even a bird's soul into Paradise
And set it on the Lotus Pedestal?

Lady. Evening Mist, are you not sad that Hatsuyuki has gone? But we must not cry any more. Let us call together the noble ladies of this place and for seven days sit with them praying behind barred doors. Go now and do my bidding.

[*Evening Mist fetches the noble ladies of the place.*]

Two Noble Ladies [together]:

A solemn mass we sing,
A dirge for the dead;
At this hour of heart-cleansing
We beat on Buddha's gong.

[*They pray.*]

Namu Amida Butsu,
Namu Nyorai.
Praise to Amida Buddha,
Praise to Mida our Saviour!

[*The prayers and gong-beating last for some time and form the central ballet of the play.*]

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[*The bird's soul appears as a white speck in the sky.*]

Chorus:

Look! Look! A cloud in the clear mid-sky!
But it is not a cloud.
With pure white wings beating the air
The Snow-bird comes!
Flying towards our lady,
Lovingly he hovers,
Dances before her.

The Bird's Soul. Drawn by the merit of your prayers
and songs

Chorus:

Straightway he was reborn in Paradise.
By the pond of Eight Virtues he walks abroad:
With the Phoenix and Fugan his playtime passing.
He lodges in the sevenfold summit of the trees of Heaven.
No hurt shall harm him
Forever and ever.

.
Now like the tasselled doves we loose
From battlements on holy days,
A little while he flutters;
Flutters a little while and then is gone
We know not where.

Komparu Zembo Motoyazu (1453-1532)
Translated from the Japanese by Arthur Waley

COMMENT

THOSE WE REFUSE

IF the readers of POETRY could sit beside its editors for even a single month, perusing the letters and manuscripts which come from all over the habitable world, and sharing the talk with the visitors from far and near, no doubt the dramatic little procession would answer some of their doubts and questions. It would show them also how many bitter lessons in humility the editor of a magazine receives, perhaps especially the editor who deals with poets; and how remote his standpoint must be from that Olympian attitude of which he is sometimes accused. POETRY's editors, at least, are saved by severe discipline from any pretense of infallibility; and they regret that their merely personal and individual judgments must be acted on in the minimum of time—far less time than would be required for lengthy and polite correspondence embodying exact criticism.

Often we are asked, "How could you have refused So-and-so's poems!"—and are informed that Professor A., or the illustrious Mr. B., or the super-enlightened Mrs. C., had read them with great admiration, and advised the poet to submit them to us. Now, granting that the admiration and advice were sincere, and not merely an amiable, and quite permissible, "passing-the-buck," in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the friendly admirer himself would refuse the poems on discovering that every week at least fifty manuscripts quite as good pass into this office and out again.

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In other words, he would find that he had not been able to resist the intimate appeal of an isolated manuscript, sent to him with some touching story or some friendly recommendation: he had read the poem with more favor than it deserved, or than he himself would have felt if he had seen it in print.

Indeed it is difficult to resist this intimate appeal. Even the editors, hardened as they are, sometimes "fall for it"—that is doubtless the reason for the inclusion, now and then, of some poem whose softness makes our readers marvel. "In this office you deal with naked souls," said one of our observant visitors; and his remark is more poignantly true of the general ruck of impossibles which flood our mails than it is of even the best poems we receive from trained artists whose business it is to reveal their innermost truth. "The barber's wife of the Middle West" will confide to paper and send on, with a fluttering heart, to POETRY emotional secrets which she would conceal from her best friend, and bury under sands of oblivion from her tonsorial husband; and the half-baked grocer's clerk of Philadelphia, or farmer's son of the Kansas plains, will hopefully string rhymes for the editor which he would not dare expose to the gibes of his base-ball co-teams, or even to the awe of his best girl.

The most comically-pathetically bad verse that we receive belongs to this class of intimate self-revelations; also much of the merely commonplace palaver which is neither comical-pathetic nor anything else. And often its return is as much of a shock to the author as the *Quarterly's* review

was to Keats. Here, for example, is the haughty reaction of one of these self-confident dreamers—one who, like many other would-be poets, seems to think the magazine exists for the purpose of printing her lucubrations:

The editors of POETRY either do not know what real poetry is, or else they have reasons of their own for declining such manuscripts as I have sent them. . . . Pray tell me, where will an unknown poet look for appreciation if not to a journal devoted to poetry?

Such over-confidence in one's own genius, while neither the rule nor the exception among the impossibles, is quite common; and by no means confined to the uneducated. Usually it springs from artistic isolation and secretiveness—lack of will or opportunity to get competent outside criticism. The poet who writes in secret, and broods over his unappreciated manuscripts, almost invariably exaggerates their importance; indeed, seven years' intercourse with poets has led me to the conviction that self-training in solitude is the worst training in the world. "Look into thy heart and write!" is good advice, but not if interpreted to mean, "Look nowhere else!" The poet should know his world; and, so far as his art is concerned, any kind of battering from his world is better than his own self-indulgent brooding. Let him join, or organize, a poetry club in his school, college or neighborhood, where good poetry, old and new, may be read and discussed, and his own verse slashed to pieces. Let him try his poems on editors, and see what happens. If he is a poet, he will get some necessary training; the bigger he is, the more the self within him will harden into shape

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under the discipline. If he is not a poet, he will find it out sooner in the world than in the closet.

A Byronic figure rises before me as I write, a visitor of two or three years ago. A packet containing his diary and poems had arrived through the mail, together with a letter asking the editor to keep the packet for the author, as he would soon be going to the war. A touching faith that the poems were masterpieces was revealed between the lines of the letter, and the editor was permitted—nay, invited—to be the first to read and be convinced.

With a sinking heart I unfolded the poems: a few were enough—they were, beyond all possibility of error, hopelessly, abysmally commonplace. Not wishing to be responsible, against the hazards of life and death, for a packet so precious to its owner and of no possible value to the world; and feeling, moreover, that the young man needed a hint of disillusion, I wrote appreciating his confidence and asking him to call and talk the poems over.

It happened that three poets were present the afternoon he called: Carl Sandburg—mellow, massive and human; a young journalist from Wisconsin, witty, clever and up-to-date; and Max Michelson, always kind, wise and sympathetic. The visitor was presented and invited to join in the touch-and-go talk on poetry and poets. Did he do so?—Not he! He didn't even hear it as he sat in the remotest corner gazing at the ceiling—a darkly melancholy and handsome figure of haughty youth; and not until the others had gone would he come to life.

Those We Refuse

Well, I went through a few poems with him, trying to lead him to some perception of their paleness, and urging him against his intellectual isolation. "But Keats—" he protested, and paused. "Keats was not a solitary," I replied; "he published his first book at twenty-one, and two or three others before he died at twenty-five—and he had excellent friends and critics, Leigh Hunt and Shelley among them."

The young man carried his packet away, silenced but not convinced.

Many tales might be told to illustrate the would-be poetic temperament. Not all such candidates for the laurel are self-deceived! One, for example, wrote, after two or three rejection slips:

If my poems are no good, won't you tell me? It won't take long to say so, will it? I don't want to go on wasting time if I can't turn the trick.

And another, a gray-haired far-western lady with a bunch of newspaper clippings, exclaimed, with keen exactness:

My friends in my town are crazy over my verses, and this editor keeps begging for more of them; but I don't want to make a fool of myself—I feel sure they are just silly little things!

The other side of the picture—the editor's adventures among real poets—would be more difficult to reveal, because well-known personalities are involved whose biographies are not yet for all the world. But it is a thrilling tale, full of rainbow colors and episodes both lyric and dramatic. Perhaps the telling may be a labor of love for the editor's old age!

H. M.

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A POSTSCRIPT TO THE FOREGOING

Periodically, over a span of some six years and a half, I have been—let me say privileged—to read first the unknown and unheralded manuscripts which are submitted to this magazine. It remains to this day an adventure. Out of such virgin soil what strange beauty may at any moment burst forth, what mine of precious metal be uncovered!

Yet in daily practice much of the steadily increasing mass of manuscript is sorry stuff. Human beings are none too perfect in any function of life, none too perfect as fathers or sons or citizens or poets. And here we search always for the absolute, for the ultimate beauty that shall yet be born. Much of the verse is sorry stuff; and yet—and this strikes me with great force after an absence of two years—it is not so sorry as it was.

The general average of the unsolicited verse that comes to POETRY is markedly better than it was when the magazine was new. There is better understanding of technic, a greater preoccupation with life as it is, and less watered-down Keats and Shelley. We seldom get now the paraphrases of gospel hymns, the sentimental ballads about beautiful young girls dying of who-knows-what obscure malady, the odes to Apollo, and the rhymed oratory that used to fill our mail. Moral exhortation too is less.

By this I do not mean that more great poetry comes to us than formerly. I mean that less flagrantly bad verse reaches us. The mind of the great public, for it is the great public which sends these verses from every corner of

A Postscript to the Foregoing

the world and every stratum of society, has been slowly but surely educated during the last few years to a greater appreciation of the possibilities of poetry as a medium, and to the manner in which this quickening is accomplished. They are learning to discriminate where formerly they only stared, and to experiment discreetly where formerly they scoffed. And we are reaping the benefits of this change of front.

But in a way too our own task becomes more difficult. If a poem is frankly impossible it means little beyond a glance at a stanza or two and the licking of the return envelope. But if it is nearly good enough and yet not quite, as so many poems are today, it means reading and rereading, consultation and heart-searching. And at last often an uncomfortable doubt as to the validity of our ultimate decision.

Yet this is a drawback which we gladly endure. For out of these writers of "almost good" verse will come the great audience for which we are waiting, and out of these foothills of patient students will come perhaps some day the mountain-peak of strength and beauty which is the ultimate hope of our labors.

E. T.

THE AMERICAN IMAGE

There cannot but be interest for us when the new field of American poetry is surveyed by an observer who brings a fresh eye, an enthusiastic and receptive nature, and a literary tradition quite other than our own. Jean Catel is a young French student and poet who, after a year at the

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University of Minnesota, has lately returned home, leaving his recorded impressions behind him in a thesis which won him his degree. Invalided by the war, he was sent to the United States by the French government to aid in that general *rapprochement* so much desired in this cosmopolitan day. His prime object was to "understand better the wonderland which had given birth to Whitman and Poe;" besides, he intended to gather literary documents and, if chance offered, to write something on the modern poetry of America. Not expecting to find "a really representative group of poets," his joy in his discovery of the current movement and its figures was such that he enrolled at Minneapolis to give shape to his impressions. To Whitman and Poe he now added (in a phrase from his own letter) "the boys"—Sandburg, Frost, Masters, Lindsay—and it is upon them that his thesis largely rests.

To the Frenchman, M. Catel reminds us, Roland, the Crusaders, the Revolution, Napoleon, 1870, have been intimate parts of the poetical treasure. What are their equivalents, he asks, in America? "If poetry is nothing but a decoration of our feelings, our fancies, our passing moods"—to quote his preface—"if verse is nothing but a pleasant pattern that can be easily borrowed from an extraneous tradition, there is an American poetry"—as numbers of pretty poems in the magazines and daily press exist to testify. "But if poetry, like every manifestation of art, is the very heart-beat of the race, then we ask again, 'Is there an American poetry?'" It is his pleasant mission to assure us that

the tradition is shaping, and that the poetry has, in fact, come into existence.

There is as the basis of every national art, says this Frenchman, a distinctive imagery. For literature there are general concepts, or images, that form the common heritage of poets or of prose-writers. Certain groups of images unite to make a tradition; they provide a frame through which is viewed the actual world in which the artist happens to live, and form his imaginative consciousness. The object of *The American Image*—so M. Catel entitles his paper—is to catch the hour when the American tradition is in the making, to secure the common ground upon which Poetry is engaged in building “her eternal monuments.”

Though M. Catel is constantly aware of the breadth of the country and of its effect on the shaping of our new art, his consciousness engages itself principally with but three sections: rural New England, Chicago and the Middle-west prairies, and the Indian-Spanish Southwest. From these quarters he draws his “images”: that image which may be an “abstract idea,” as New England Solitude; that which may be a “living reality,” as The Farmer, or a “topographical entity,” such as The Prairie; that of The City, as typified in the uproar, vigor and violence of Chicago, or that yielded by the “Side Scenery” of Arizona and New Mexico, with its wealth of light and color and its immemorial indigenes. Such are the *leit-motifs* of Catel’s American Sonata.

It will be seen readily enough that he does not recognize the entire range of the keyboard, and it becomes plain, on

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inspection, that he does not even strike all the notes within the octaves he has elected to employ. Like every other composer, he limits himself to the notes he needs. He selects his own pitch, chooses his own key, keeps to his own tonality. His object, as a visitor from a land in the enjoyment of a long and rich artistic tradition, is to assure himself—and us—that “the prelude of the great symphony whose starting signal has been given by Whitman” is rising in harmony and order on a basis well secured.

The writer himself may fairly be defended from a charge that his own basis is slight. To his various sectional images he adds a National Image—Lincoln as viewed by Robinson, Markham, Fletcher, Lindsay and others; also the image of the American Crowd, with “a rhythm of its own;” furthermore, the epic image of the Army and the Flag. And, for fuller measure, he considers at length the religious element—religious because it “consciously offers a spiritual aim to the idealism of the nation.” He dwells on the contrasting currents of a new Paganism and an abiding Puritanism, asserting that Lindsay, Masters, Sandburg and Frost present an interesting blending of both: “their pagan sensualism has a spiritual basis and thus tends to religion; their Puritanism applies to life in its physical forms and thus tends to sensualism.” Though the blending is not yet an accomplished fact, “the new beauty is in the making; and it is a comfort and a joy that beautiful things are created in the struggle for beauty in which the great artists of the New World are engaged.”

The American Image

Amid all this concern with Images, the Imagists themselves are naturally remembered. Though "the Imagist movement is international," and though our own members are "'*transfuges*' from the American sensationalism," yet their originality consists in having as a support the background of the American Image. This "casts a genuine light on their creations." The "swift flash" of Amy Lowell, the "bizarre decorations" of Fletcher, the vividness of H. D.'s symbols—all these have come under the spell of the American Image in its complexity and spirit-force; and it is "still more obvious that the symbol images of Carl Sandburg have been shaped and colored by his surroundings."

"In the end," our author concludes, "the great lesson taught by the modern poets of America to the world is one of unconquerable sincerity and direct idealism." And the new poetry appears to him as "an admirable attempt at creating the traditional background that sustains art."

And here the members of our practicing body of poets are left by a sympathetic and understanding visitor. They may now perceive, however unconscious heretofore, or however consciously radical and rebellious, that they are engaged in consolidating the framework of a new American art and even in establishing the tradition that a solid national art requires. Young M. Catel, returned to France, leaves the message behind him, and the present epitomizer of his beliefs and views leaves the fraternity face to face with its responsibilities.

H. B. F.

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REVIEWS

THE FLOATING WORLD

Pictures of the Floating World, by Amy Lowell. Macmillan Co.

Some poets, though as secretive as a huge, sun-browned desert rock, convey mysteriously to the reader an impression of their closeness to earth, the solid integrity of their being. Others, like a lake volatile, brilliant, temperamental, express all moods from gray mist to rainbow sparkles, and leave us wondering. Of this latter category is Miss Lowell. She glitters, splashes, dazzles, assumes veils of mist, reflects stars, gleams black under a midnight sky, or pink with dawn, yet what, after all, do we know of "the real" Amy Lowell? Is there one? We gaze through layer after layer of transparency into problematical depths, but we never see bottom. There is no dimensional quality in her poetry which says: "This is the real essence of me. This is the height of my emotion, this its depth. These are the proportions of my spirit." We are forced to take Miss Lowell as she presents herself in her book, a liquid mirror to beauty.

However, these *Pictures of the Floating World* contain one section, *Two Speak Together*, which is unquestionably the most emotional and intimate work Miss Lowell has done. They are love poems, arranged according to a scheme of balanced intensities. There seems to be no narrative sequence; though, perplexed and troubled by their poignant beauty, one seeks a plot in the poems. But Miss Lowell is

elusive as ever. She leaves us to our own devices, to make from her group what we will, without a clue to unravel them. One re-reads them in vain, seeking to disentangle the personalities of the "Two" who speak together, resigning himself at last to leave them quite undistinguished. And hence arises a cloudiness which obscures not only their genesis but their appeal. But the genuineness of their emotion is so unmistakable that one is forced to allow the poet to transpose it from one sex to another, from one speaker to another, at her will. Miss Lowell uses an infinite variety of colors, of delicate shapes and contours, of dissolving gestures and light clear sounds as vehicles of emotion. Her nerves quiver to the slightest stimulus, her feeling for light, sound and color is highly sensitive.

The first poem of this group, *Vernal Equinox*, well illustrates this delicacy of perception:

The scent of hyacinths, like a pale mist, lies between me and my
book:
And the South-wind, washing through the room,
Makes the candles quiver.
My nerves sting at a spatter of rain on the shutter,
And I am uneasy with the thrusting of green shoots
Outside in the night.

Why are you not here to overpower me with your tense and urgent
love?

Another one is called *Wheel of the Sun*:

I beg you,
Hide your face from me.
Draw the tissue of your head-gear
Over your eyes.

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For I am blinded by your beauty,
And my heart is strained,
And aches
Before you.

In the street,
You spread a brightness where you walk,
And I see your lifting silks
And rejoice;
But I cannot look at your face.
You melt my strength,
And set my knees to trembling.
Shadow yourself that I may love you,
For now it is too great a pain.

There is a poignancy of imagery in *November*:

The vine-leaves against the brick walls of my house
Are rusty and broken.
Dead leaves gather under the pine-trees,
The brilliant boughs of lilac-bushes
Sweep against the stars.
And I sit under a lamp
Trying to write down the emptiness of my heart.
Even the cat will not stay with me,
But prefers the rain
Under the meager shelter of a cellar window.

First in the book, but second in importance to the group I have just considered, come the *Lacquer Prints*. They are fashioned after Japanese models in a "quasi-oriental idiom," are carefully wrought, highly polished, and sometimes a little hard. Although it is a form of poetry that Miss Lowell does superlatively well, her treatment does not differ very greatly from that of several other poets who "do the *hokku* into English." It is a much over-rated form, fit to be the vehicle of only the tiniest facets of emotion. Its great charm, when well done, is that the economy of its

image releases the imagination of the reader to fill in the picture with something to him significant. It is ruined by too great rigidity, by a too-conventional imagination, or a lifeless subject. Miss Lowell has written some of these tiny poems which carry magic with every word. The hushed waiting, the delicate, silent piling-up of the flowers in *Outside a Gate* enchant the reader:

On the floor of the empty palanquin
The plum-petals constantly increase.

Another lovely one is *Autumn*:

All day I have watched the purple vine-leaves
Fall into the water;
And now in the moonlight they still fall,
But each leaf is fringed with silver.

A beautiful picture of light is in *Nuit Blanche*:

The chirping of crickets in the night
Is intermittent
Like the twinkling of stars.

Miss Lowell is a writer of indefatigable energy. With passionate curiosity she has explored every corner of her own subtle and intricate personality, and from this subjective material and her vivid reactions to beauty she has made her best poems. As an interpreter she is not so successful, for she is essentially an individualist. *Appuldurcombe Park* is perhaps the least effective, the least beautiful poem in the book. The reiteration of the statement, "I am a woman, sick for passion," which begins each of the four long stanzas, is unconvincing and repellent. When women are "sick for passion" we may say it of them, but scarcely

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put the words into their mouths. The psychology of the poem is weak. Miss Lowell is an intellectual, and does not penetrate far into personalities alien to her own. Her greatest achievement is in descriptive poetry, into which she puts that flash of subjective emotion so characteristic of her best work. For instance, *Beech, Pine and Sunlight*:

The sudden April heat
Stretches itself
Under the smooth, leafless branches
Of the beech-tree,
And lies lightly
Upon the great patches
Of purple and white crocus
With their panting, wide-open cups.

A clear wind
Slips through the naked beech boughs,
And their shadows scarcely stir.
But the pine-trees beyond sigh
When it passes over them
And presses back their needles,
And slides gently down their stems.
It is a languor of pale, south-starting sunlight
Come upon a morning unawakened,
And holding her drowsing.

Miss Lowell's poems have not mass, solidity, proportion. They are not architectural. One is not tempted to take them into one's hands and *feel* them, as one might a sculptured object. Yet they are more than decorative. They could not be hung upon the wall like pictures, because, though nine-tenths of the poem may be a picture, one line or a word will be a needle of emotion, a shock of electricity, which makes the thing glow and move. We do not get from Miss Lowell a feeling of intimacy with earth, by which

I mean human life, of close, warm interpretation. She is rather like the lake; brilliant, mirror-like, responsive, contained within shores of an alien substance, an alien element, which it touches, reflects, beats upon, but with which it cannot mingle.

M. A. S.

WALEY'S TRANSLATIONS FROM THE CHINESE

A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems, and More Translations from the Chinese, by Arthur Waley. Alfred A. Knopf.

The increasing influence of Chinese art, and especially of Chinese poetry, makes these labors of Mr. Waley singularly opportune; for, while previous translators—like H. A. Giles, L. Cranmer-Byng and Judith Gautier—have spurred us into the subject, Mr. Waley is at once more exact and, as a rule, more instinctively sympathetic.

The traveller in China encounters with some surprise the wistful, half-pitying humor which pervades Chinese art, and learns before long that it is fundamental in Chinese character. In paintings and carvings, and even in the most dignified sacred architecture and sculpture, one detects almost always a faint, half-pitying smile—that slight flavor of the grotesque through which the oriental acknowledges the strangeness of our fate. One finds this in Sung paintings: the cataract and the mountain are there, simplified almost to a symbol of grandeur; but somewhere in the corner a small twisted and squinting philosopher expresses the little-

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ness of man. Or, if there be lords and ladies in some gorgeous festival, the smile slips through their preoccupation—the artist manages to tell us the unimportance of their important rites. Though the early stone sculpture and bronzes postulate man's divinity without this smiling question (and perhaps the earliest surviving architecture, like the almost inaccessible Sung tombs), yet one detects it in the guardian dragons and animals of all Chinese roofs and portals within the reach of modern travel; even, as a far faint flavor, in the Temple of Heaven itself.

Indeed, this smile at human dignity is so omnipresent in China that after a short sojourn there the traveller returns with a shock of readjustment to the almost invariable seriousness of occidental art. He feels that even the Gothic grotesques must have been an oriental importation.

But Chinese poetry is, on the whole, more serious. Its prevailing note is plaintive and unrebelling sorrow—sorrow over the struggles and vicissitudes of life. Tao Ch'ien expressed it thus fifteen hundred years ago:

You had better go where Fate leads—
Drift on the Stream of Infinite Flux,
Without joy, without fear.
When you must go, then go—
And make as little fuss as you can.

The simplicity, the forthright directness and candor of these Chinese poems, has been so much emphasized by various reviewers that we need not dwell upon it. It is indeed a basic influence in modern poetry; for although the Waley translations have just appeared, earlier versions had conveyed

the hint which at once put Victorian expansiveness out of date. Mr. Waley now confirms the message by presenting readings of closer texture, set to freer rhythms, than L. Cranmer-Byng, for example, felt at liberty to use in his *Lute of Jade*, first published at a time when rhymes and iambics were inevitable. Mr. Waley strips his text bare, makes no concessions. Finding it as impossible to suggest the Chinese rhyme-scheme and system of inflections as it would be to classify for us the ideographic calligraphy which adds such a mysterious element to their "poetic complex," he attempts merely textual accuracy, not only of the word but of the feeling and tone, presented in free rhythms which lean strongly on the line as a phrase-unit. If the intricacies of Chinese prosody still elude us, as probably they always must in so different a language, we are brought closer than ever before to the motives of Chinese song, and to the character and every-day lives of the people during those centuries when Europe was in chaos and China was the most civilized country on earth. Indeed, as the Chinese change little, Mr. Waley teaches us more, probably, of life in China today than one could learn from an hundred travellers. And of the Chinese character and temperament, which is, fundamentally, not so far from our own.

In both these books about a fourth of the space is given to that very humane and very modern poet of the eighth and ninth centuries, Po-Chu-i. Here was a man who lived long, and passed cheerfully, be it with a smile or a sigh, through all vicissitudes. Whether poor or prosperous, privy coun-

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cillor at the capital or exile among the illiterate; whether an ardent youth or a serene old man, this poet was one of the company of choice spirits for whom times and tongues are no barrier. Eugene Field would have fraternized with him, or Saint Augustine, or William Marion Reedy, or Will Shakespeare. Though a less bibulous and violent Rabelaisian than his predecessor Li Po, he was not above getting drunk in friendly company:

How great a thing is a single cup of wine,
For it makes us tell the story of our whole lives!

Nor was he proof against the charms of a little dancing-girl whom he took to the mountains to beguile a period of retirement:

Two top-knots not yet plaited into one.
Of thirty years—just beyond half.
You who are really a lady of silks and satins
Are now become my hill and stream companion!
At the spring fountains together we splash and play:
On the lovely trees together we climb and sport.
Her cheeks grow rosy, as she quickens her sleeve-dancing:
Her brows grow sad, as she slows her song's tune.
Don't go singing the song of the Willow Branches,
When there's no one here with a heart for you to break!

But on the whole he was a good subject and good citizen, full of common sense and common sympathy. Though a court functionary, he feels the impotent misery of the charcoal-seller whose load is seized with curses by a public official. Though a scholar, he tells of eating bamboo shoots (a delicious salad, by the way!), or of pruning trees, or of an old "black gauze hat" which he delights to wear. He

sings sweetly and sadly of his tiny daughter living and dead, little Golden Bells; and of playing with his baby boy, A-Ts'ui; and of all human occupations and their futility:

My being busy—that has never changed.
Then, on the shore, building sand-pagodas;
Now, at court, covered with tinkling jade.
This and that—equally childish games;
Things whose substance passes in a moment of time.

In short Po-Chu-i, like Chaucer, was a genial, modest and wise poet, politician and philosopher; a man of the court and of the people, absolutely incapable of losing his head whether Fate frowned or smiled. He is perhaps the closest parallel to Chaucer who may be found in literary history; and in his poems the China of his day lives for us almost as vividly as fourteenth-century England lives in the *Canterbury Tales*.

Almost any of his hundred or more poems might be quoted, but it would be unfair to the reader, who should go to these books and add Po-Chu-i to the number of his friends. One may say *au revoir* to him with two quatrains, both written in the "hermit peace" of his old age. The first is the word of a philosopher:

As contented as me, among a hundred men
Look as you will, you will not find one.
In the affairs of others even fools are wise;
In their own business even sages err.

The second, written on his death-bed, is the wistful sigh of an inveterate lover of life:

The jars in my cellar are plastered deep with mould;
My singer's carpets are half crumbled to dust.

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How can I bear, when the Earth renews her light,
To watch from a pillow the beauty of Spring unfold?

Many other poets are represented in these two volumes—from Ch'u Yuan, of 300 B. C., whose magnificent chant, *Battle*, is one of the sternest war-songs in literature; to Yu Lu, of 1200 A. D., whose brief sketches close the richer periods of Chinese song. Among them are a number of women; for example, Hsi Chun, a princess who was sent to central Asia to be the wife of a decrepit nomad king, and who thus expressed her heart-break:

My people have married me
In a far corner of Earth:
Sent me away to a strange land,
To the king of the Wu-sun.
A tent is my house,
Of felt are my walls;
Raw flesh my food
With mare's milk to drink.
Always thinking of my own country,
My heart sad within.
Would I were a yellow stork
And could fly to my old home!

Acceptance of life, with all it brings, is implicit in all these poems. There may be sorrow, but there is no rebellion; the Chinese spirit accepts both the earth below and the heavens above, presuming not to question or defy. Through this acceptance of his fate the Chinese poet loses drama, no doubt, but gains security—a certain strength of poise which excludes both hope and despair, and makes beauty the only sure refuge.

H. M.

A LOVER OF EARTH

Dust and Light, by John Hall Wheelock. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Through all the conflict of theories and practices during the last seven or eight years, Mr. Wheelock's art has kept in the beaten course. He uses the simple rhymed forms long familiar in English poetry, and his song is of love and death, of the earth and God—themes ancient and inexhaustible. For the two or three war poems, and the few sonnets to Beethoven, Rossetti and others, are negligible.

He is developing, however, a certain philosophy of life which makes his lyricism a bit more austere than that which gave us his youthful love-songs. This book has less of that cloying sweetness which fairly dripped from the two or three earlier volumes. The poems are more discreetly sifted, no doubt; but also their author is no longer satisfied to ring the luscious changes on a single theme. To be sure, there is a group of love songs—*April Twilight*—in this volume, still too sweet, too little varied, though of firmer quality than most of the earlier books; but the best of the book—indeed, much the best work that Mr. Wheelock has done as yet—is the *Glimmering Earth* section, which celebrates a larger love.

Out of the earth the poem grows
Like the lily, or the rose. . . .
Yea, the quiet and cool sod
Bears in her breast the dream of God.

In his rapturous worship of the earth as the source and

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final resolvent of all life, all love, all beauty, this poet attains a lofty and impassioned lyric ecstasy. Our readers felt it, no doubt, in *The Moonlight Sonata*, first published over two years ago; an ode sincerely ecstatic in its expression of that modern spiritualized paganism—union of the human soul with the infinite in the beauty of nature. Perhaps this poem is the most impassioned of all; and the finest, in that it carries its rapture unflagging to a difficult climax—to that suggestion of a union with the earth in death which will slake the poet's "passion for eternity."

The same emotion is more quietly expressed in *Earth*, and we find details of it in the briefer poems—*Golden Noon*, *Dear Earth*, *The Lonely Poet*, and—here are a few quatrains from *Thanks from Earth to Heaven* as delicately and genuinely naïve as a child's grace:

While the great world goes its way
I watch in wonder all the day.
All the night my spirit sings
For the loveliness of things. . . .

For the world enough it were
To have a useful earth and bare,
But for poets it is made
All in loveliness arrayed.

For his eye the little moth
Wears her coat of colored cloth,
And to please his ear the deep
Ocean murmurs in her sleep.

Of course this child-like simplicity has its dangers—when it flags it becomes tiresome, and certain poems remind us that Mr. Wheelock has not yet rid his wings of stickiness, that he needs an icy bath or a sense of humor. But he grows

in austerity and discretion, and his lyric rapture becomes more adult and competent. In short, this book strides far ahead of the earlier ones, in spite of a few fine love-songs in them which we are like to remember. H. M.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Snickerty Nick, by Julia Ellsworth Ford; with rhymes by Witter Bynner and illustrations by Arthur Rackham. Moffat Yard & Co.

Singing Games for Children, by Eleanor Farjeon, illustrated by J. Littlejohns. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The Children's Homer, by Padraic Colum, illustrated by Willy Pogany. Macmillan Co.

Christmas is past, but perhaps it is not too late to call our readers' attention to a few children's books of peculiar charm which happen to have reached the editor's eye.

Mrs. Ford's little play is a very human and mischievous mixup of children and a dwarf and giants, effective for dramatic use, one would think; and its picturesqueness is aided by her two capable collaborators.

Singing Games for Children should fill a long-felt want. Wherever a few children are gathered together these adorable little rhyme-accompanied games would be a stimulus toward beautiful and imaginative play.

All who know Mr. Colum's poems and plays will understand that he is the very man to present the Homeric tales to children. Also the pictures—Mr. Pogany's colored modi-

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fications of the Flaxman drawings—are beautiful. The book does not “talk down” to the young mind—it is a poet’s sensitive interpretation.

H. M.

NOTES

Miss Helen Hoyt, of Chicago, is well known to the readers of POETRY, having appeared in it frequently and served for a year or more as associate editor. Last autumn she traveled to “the Coast,” and is now sojourning in Berkeley, where the local poets have given her a very friendly reception. In Berkeley are two poetry clubs: the Halcyon Club at the University of California, founded in honor of Witter Bynner and composed chiefly of undergraduates; and another club, founded by Miss Stella Benson, the young English poet who spent the last year in Berkeley and has now gone to India. In the Berkeley group are three young poets whose work has just been accepted by POETRY—Mr. Clarence Greenwood and the Misses Hildegarde Flanner and Genevieve Taggard.

Mr. Witter Bynner is once more in New York, after his professorial year in Berkeley. He will publish a new book of poems in April.

Mr. Harold Monro, of London, is proprietor of The Poetry Bookshop and editor of the Georgian anthologies and the new magazine, *The Chapbook*. His latest book is *Strange Meetings*.

Nancy Campbell, the wife of the Irish poet Joseph Campbell, is the author of *Agnus Dei* (Maunsel, Dublin).

Mr. Arthur Waley, of London, has recently published the two volumes of translations from the Chinese which are reviewed in this number (American edition by Alfred A. Knopf). A series of them first appeared in POETRY.

Our readers need no introduction to Miss Louise Driscoll, of Catskill, N. Y.

Of the poets appearing for the first time:

Miss Jeannette Marks is in the English department of Mount Holyoke College at South Hadley, Mass.

M. Jean Catel, of Paris, is the young French poet referred to in Mr. Fuller’s editorial, who has recently studied for a year in the University of Minnesota.

Mr. Ralph Block is a New York journalist, born in Iowa in 1889. Miss Amanda B. Hall, of Norwich, Conn., has published stories in various magazines.

Miss Marion Strobel is a young Chicago poet who has appeared in *Others*. Miss Ruth Loomis Skeen lives in Arizona.

Libraries, and other subscribers who have their copies of *POETRY* bound, are hereby informed that a new section, correcting the unfortunate transposition of pages 202 and 203 in the January number, will be supplied on application to this office.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:

A Woman of Thirty, by Marjorie Allen Seiffert. Alfred A. Knopf.
Bereavement and Consolation—A Little Book of Poems for Memorial Days, by Helen Ekin Starrett. Privately printed, Portland, Ore.
Collected Poems—1881-1919, by Robert Underwood Johnson. Yale Univ. Press.

Poems, by Gladys Cromwell. Macmillan Co.

The Coat Without a Seam and Other Poems, by Helen Gray Cone. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Monographs, by William Frederick Allen. Four Seas Co.

The Queen of China and Other Poems, by Edward Shanks. Alfred A. Knopf.

The Golden Whales of California, by Vachel Lindsay, Macmillan Co.

Hail, Man! by Angela Morgan. John Lane Co.

There and Here, by Allen Tucker. Duffield & Co.

Collected Poems, by John Black. Knickerbocker Press, N. Y.

Songs in Cities and Gardens, by Helen Granville Barker. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Pilgrimage, by Yone Noguchi. Valley Press, Kamakura, Japan. Elkin Mathews, London.

Images (new ed. with additions), by Richard Aldington. The Egoist, Ltd., London.

Dust and Light, by John Hall Wheelock. Charles Scribner's Sons.

When We Were Little—Children's Rhymes of Oyster Bay, by Mary Fanny Youngs. E. P. Dutton & Co.

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- Life's Minstrel—A Book of Verse*, by Daniel Henderson. E. P. Dutton & Co.
- Blossoms and Dead Leaves*, by Al. Trude, Jr. Privately pr'd, Rochester, N. Y.
- A Shropshire Lad*, by A. R. Housman. (International Pocket Library.) Four Seas Co.
- Gitanjali*, by Rabindranath Tagore. (I. P. L.) Four Seas Co.
- Sunday Goin' Sal*, by Mary B. Collins. Privately pr'd, Col. Springs.
- The Might of Manhattan and Other Poems*, by Joseph D. McManus. Chas. Francis Press, N. Y.
- Arizona and Other Poems*, by Elise Pumpelly Cabot. E. P. Dutton & Co.
- Songs of Adoration*, by Gustav Davidson. The Madrigal, N. Y.
- Camelot*, by Benj. Gilbert Brooks. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.
- Poems*, by Ruby Clarke McIntyre. Fleming H. Revell Co., Chicago.
- Rhyme Sheets: Second Series, I to X*. Poetry Bookshop, London.
- Echoes from Life*, by Annie Wier Young. Privately pr'd, Beacon, N. Y.
- Complaintes: Poèmes suivis de Noël—Mystère des ans de l'épreuve*, by Charles de Saint-Cyr. La Renaissance du Livre, Paris.
- Scattered Leaves from My Diary: 1915-1919 (Second edition enlarged)*, by Edward C. Wentworth. Privately pr'd, Chicago.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

- Greek Songs in the Manner of Anacreon*, translated by Richard Aldington. The Egoist Ltd., London.
- The Poems of Anyte of Tegea*, trans. by Richard Aldington, and *Poems and Fragments of Sappho*, trans. by Edward Storer. Egoist Ltd., London.
- Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp*, collected by John A. Lomax. Macmillan Co.
- Russian Lyrical Poetry: an Anthology of the Best Nineteenth-Century Lyrics*, selected by A. E. Tebbutt. Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., London.
- Humble Voyagers—Verses issued by the Reeling and Writhing Club of Bryn Mawr College*, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
- Yanks: A. E. F. Verse, originally published in "Stars and Stripes."* G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Georgian Poetry 1913-1919*, edited by E. M. Poetry Bookshop.

(Many of the above entries should have been listed in previous numbers, but were delayed owing to lack of room.)

FOR WHITMAN LOVERS—

WALT WHITMAN— THE MAN AND HIS WORK *by Leon Bazalgette*

Whitman, like Poe, found a most appreciative audience in France. Among the men of letters who introduced him, not only to France but to all Europe, Leon Bazalgette stands at the head. To him, as to Anne Gilchrist, the poet spoke "in ultimate accents," and his book is the product of keen scholarship, artistic sympathy, and an almost apostolic fervor. Net, \$3.50.

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