French-Canadian Folk-songs
Tr’d by Edward Sapir
Thomas Moult, David Morton
Raymond Holden
Poems by a Child
by Hilda Conkling
Splendidly edited. Invaluable to those who would keep in touch with modern poetry. "Point of departure from conservatism may be dated from the establishment of Poetry" (Braithwaite).

From Classified List of Contemporary Poets compiled for libraries by Anne Morris Boyd, A. B., B. L. S.

**Vol. XVI**

**POETRY for JULY, 1920**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French-Canadian Folk-songs</th>
<th>Edward Sapir</th>
<th>175</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Prince of Orange—The King of Spain's Daughter and the Diver—White as the Snow—The Dumb Shepherdess</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Children</td>
<td>Albert Edmund Trombly</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here for a Time</td>
<td>Thomas Moult</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mountain Woman</td>
<td>DuBose Heyward</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Summer Poems</td>
<td>Leonora Speyer</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Squall—The Locust—Crickets at Dawn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Peas</td>
<td>Margaret McKenny</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envyings I-III—A Heat Wave</td>
<td>Katherine Wisner McCluskey</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Sonnets</td>
<td>David Morton</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer—Symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night on the River</td>
<td>E. Merrill Root</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugaring</td>
<td>Raymond Holden</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poems by a Child</td>
<td>Hilda Conkling</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon in October—Wishes—My Mind and I—Lilacs—Orchid Lady—To a Black Pansy—Bare Butter-nut Tree—Leaves—River—The Cellar—Japanese Picture—To a Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Chubb on the Platform</td>
<td>H. M.</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note on French-Canadian Folk-songs</td>
<td>Edward Sapir</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reviews:**

- A Book for Literary Philosophers | R. A. | 213
- A New Light on Lancelot | Babette Deutsch | 217
- Comedy over Tragedy | A. K. | 219
- Two Child-poets | H. M. | 222

**Correspondence:**

- Words from a Departing Poet | Maxwell Bodenheim | 227
- Mr. Johns Rises to Protest | Orrick Johns | 230
- A Keats Memorial | | 231
- Poetry Society Prizes | | 232
- Notes and Books Received | | 233, 234

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THE folk-songs fluttered down from upper meadows in the past;
They settled on a little field
And wove them tiny roots.
I heard them as I passed along,
I heard them sing a tiny song:

"We are weaving tiny roots
In the strange today;
We are little flowers to wait
By the highway.

"We are not kin of the rose,
The tulip of flame;
Nearer to violet
Our little name."
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

"Whoso cares may turn
From the highway—
We shall weave him a tiny wreath
For the strange today."

E. S.

THE PRINCE OF ORANGE

'Tis the prince of Orange blood,
Eh la!
'Tis the prince of Orange blood
Arose at the sun's flood,
Madondaine!
Arose at the sun's flood,
Madondé!

Then called to his page and said,
Eh la!
Then called to his page and said,
"Have they bridled my donkey red?
Madondaine!
Have they bridled my donkey red?
Madondé!"

"Yes, my prince, 'tis true,
Eh la!
Yes, my prince, 'tis true,
He is bridled and saddled for you,
Madondaine!

[176]
He is bridled and saddled for you,  
*Madondé!*"  
To the bridle he put his hand,  
_Eh la!_  
To the bridle he put his hand,  
And foot in the stirrup to stand,  
*Madondaine!_  
And foot in the stirrup to stand,  
*Madondé!_  
Rode away on Sunday,  
_Eh la!_  
Rode away on Sunday,  
Was wounded sore on Monday,  
*Madondaine!_  
Was wounded sore on Monday,  
*Madondé!_  
Received by grievous chance,  
_Eh la!_  
Received by grievous chance  
Three blows from an English lance,  
*Madondaine!_  
Three blows from an English lance,  
*Madondé!_  
In his leg the one of them sank,  
_Eh la!_  
[177]
In his leg the one of them sank,
The other blows in his flank,
    Madondaine!
The other blows in his flank,
    Madondé!

Off, while he's yet alive,
    Eh la!
Off, while he's yet alive,
And bring a priest for to shrive,
    Madondaine!
And bring a priest for to shrive,
    Madondé!

"What need have I of a priest?
    Eh la!
What need have I of a priest?
I have never sinned in the least,
    Madondaine!
I have never sinned in the least,
    Madondé!

"The girls I have never kissed,
    Eh la!
The girls I have never kissed,
Unless themselves insist,
    Madondaine!
Unless themselves insist,
    Madondé!

[178]
"Only a little brunette,
Eh la!
Only a little brunette,
And well I've paid my debt,
Madondaine!
And well I've paid my debt,
Madondé!

"Five hundred farthings paid,
Eh la!
Five hundred farthings paid,
And all for a little maid,
Madondaine!
And all for a little maid,
Madondé!"

THE KING OF SPAIN'S DAUGHTER AND THE DIVER

The king of Spain his daughter,
Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!
Will have a trade be taught her,
Sail, O mariner!
Will have a trade be taught her,
Sail, O mariner!

And she's to beat the wash,
Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!
To beat and scald and splash,
Sail, O mariner!

[179]
She's given a beater for smashing,
   *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*
And a fine bench for the washing,
   *Sail, O mariner!*

At the first good rapping she—
   *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*
Her gold ring drops in the sea,
   *Sail, O mariner!*

She fell to earth in a heap,
   *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*
And set herself to weep,
   *Sail, O mariner!*

Is passing now right here,
   *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*
Her gentle cavalier,
   *Sail, O mariner!*

"And what would you give to me,
   *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*
If I looked for it out in the sea?"
   *Sail, O mariner!*

"A sweet little kiss," said she,
   *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*
"Or two, if you wish, or three."
   *Sail, O mariner!*

[180]
Undresses him eagerly,  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*  
And dives down into the sea,  
  *Sail, O mariner!*

With his first dive and tumble,  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*  
The sea is all in a jumble,  
  *Sail, O mariner!*

With his second dive as he sank,  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*  
The ring went clink and clank,  
  *Sail, O mariner!*

With his third dive down,  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*  
He stays in the sea to drown,  
  *Sail, O mariner!*

Standing the window by  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*  
His mother does naught but cry,  
  *Sail, O mariner!*

"Is there any maid so renowned,  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*  
My son must needs be drowned?  
  *Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*

[181]
POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

My son must needs be drowned?"
*Sail, O mariner—oh, sail!*

**WHITE AS THE SNOW**

On a lovely bed of roses a lovely maiden sleeping,
White as the snow, beautiful as day.
They are three knights that come to her their love to say.

'Tis the youngest that alights and takes her white hand.
"Princess, come with me—on the back of my steed away!
To Paris we shall go, in a mansion we shall stay."

As soon as they were come, the hostess turns to her:
"Oh tell me, lovely maid, give me the truth to hear—
Is it willing you have come and have you shed no tear?"

And maiden to the hostess: "Innocent am I;
From my father's castle away king's folk have ravished me,
They've carried me to horse to this beautiful hostelry."

She'd finished with her plaint, returned the man-at-arms:
"Eat and drink, my sweet, with a goodly appetite—
'Tis with a man-at-arms you'll pass a pleasant night."

They are seated at the feast, then dead the maiden falls.
"Ring—oh, ring the bells, let drum a dirge for her!
My mistress she is dead, had come to her fifteenth year."
“Where shall we bury her, this beautiful princess?”—
“In the garden of her father, under an apple tree.
With God in paradise we pray her spirit be.”

Three days she buried lay, her father is passing by.
“Open, open the grave, my father, and rescue me.
I’ve played the dead three days for the sake of purity.”

**THE DUMB SHEPHERDESS**

Hark ye to the complaint,
Grown and little,
Of a dumb shepherdess
Who in her fields
Did guard her little sheep
   Along the mead!
’Twas Jesus, out of goodness,
   Made her speak.

One day the holy Maid
   To her appeared.
“Good day, sweet shepherdess,
   Big Isabeau!
And would you give to me
   One of the lambs?”

“Ah, no indeed!” she said,
   “They are not mine.
To father, to my mother,  
I'll speak of it;  
To father, to my mother,  
I'll tell of it."

She came back to her home  
Straightaway.  
"My father, there's a lady  
In my flock.  
O God! she asks of me  
One of the lambs."

Her father, mother too,  
They were amazed  
To hear the speechless maiden  
Speaking thus.  
To God they made a prayer,  
Giving thanks.

"Go tell her, shepherdess,  
In thy flock,  
That they are at her pleasure,  
Big and little,  
That all are for her pleasing,  
Even the best."

The shepherdess was dead  
Before three days.
A letter she was holding
In her hand,
Writ by the sovereign master,
Mighty God.

Her father, mother too,
They could not read.
It had to be the bishop
Came to them
To speak to the dumb maid,
Big Isabeau.

"Open, shepherdess,
Open thy hand,
For the sake of the sovereign master,
Mighty God!"
And well he read the letter
And understood:

"Whoever sings on Friday
This complaint,
Is freed of sinful taint,
Gains Paradise."

*Translated by Edward Sapir*
THE THREE CHILDREN

From the Old French

Once there were three small children
Who went into the fields to glean.
They came at night to a butcher's house:
"Butcher, have you beds for us?"
"Come, little children, come in, come in;
Assuredly there's room within."

Hardly had they passed the wall
Than the butcher killed them all.
He cut them up and put each bit
Like pork into the salting-pit.

Seven years later Saint Nicholas
He happened in that place to pass,
Betook himself to the butchery:
"Butcher, have you a bed for me?"

"Come in, come in, Saint Nicholas;
There's room, there is no lack of space."
Hardly had he entered there
Than he asked for his supper.

"Is it a piece of ham you would?"
"I don't want any, it isn't good."
"Would you like a piece of veal?"
"I don't want any, it doesn't look well."

[186]
"I'd like to have some little meat
That's seven years in the salting-pit."
When the butcher heard this said
He bolted from his door and fled.

"Butcher, butcher, don't run away—
God will forgive you if you pray."
Saint Nicholas did three fingers rub
On the edge of the salting-tub.

The first child said, "I slept very well!"
"And so did I!" the second tells.
The third child spoke up in this wise,
"I thought I was in Paradise!"

Translated by Albert Edmund Trombly
HERE FOR A TIME

With the lone hills of sheep,
Stone-scarred and gray,
And the lone bleat;
With the brown old sleeping meres that meet
The storm's sweep,
The sun's sway
And the stars, and all the seasons, with unaltering face;
With the moor-mists swifting
As they have swifted
Down the slow dayfall since the ancient days;
With the sound of the last curlew drifting
As it has drifted
To the nestward beat
Of tired innumerable wings:

With these most solitary things,
These pitilessly aloof
In their harsh loneliness,
These pitifully weak
Against the stress
Of the eternal rebuff,
Here, for a little span
On their illimitable bleak,
Abides the warm memory
Of man.
Here, for a time, a breath of time, he brings
Faiths groping past the hills, and visionings;
Faiths and visionings great and sure
As the calm of the moor.
With feeble scratchings has he made his mark
On the hill's steep;
For a day and a dark
They endure,
By a dark they outlast his laughter and tears,
His song.
The feeble scratchings he has traced along
By the hill's feet
Fainter as they uplight to the farmost crest
And the cloud-veils,
Outliving by a dark
The faiths and fears
Of his breast,
And the visionings—
By these he has made his mark.

With the lone hills of sheep
Overspreading his eyes, and on his ears
The lone bleat,
He sinks into sleep.
Deep
As the deep of dales
Is his sleep;
More deep
Than the brown old sleep of meres that meet
The storm's sweep,
The sun's sway,
And the stars, and all the seasons, with unaltering face.

He dreams: in his dream he passes not away.
He endures even as they
These most solitary things,
These pitilessly aloof
In their harsh loneliness,
These pitifully weak
Against the stress
Of the eternal rebuff:
The lone hills, stone-scarred and gray,
The storm's sweep,
The stars, and the sun's sway;
The moor-mists swifting
As they have swifted
Down the slow dayfall since the ancient days;
The sound of the last curlew drifting
As it has drifted
To the nestward beat of tired innumerable wings.

Thomas Moult
THE MOUNTAIN WOMAN

Among the sullen peaks she stood at bay
And paid life's hard account from her small store.
Knowing the code of mountain wives, she bore
The burden of the days without a sigh;
And, sharp against the somber winter sky,
I saw her drive her steers afield each day.

Hers was the hand that sunk the furrows deep
Across the rocky, grudging southern slope.
At first youth left her face, and later hope;
Yet through each mocking spring and barren fall,
She reared her lusty brood, and gave them all
That gladder wives and mothers love to keep.

And when the sheriff shot her eldest son
Beside his still, so well she knew her part,
She gave no healing tears to ease her heart;
But took the blow upstanding, with her eyes
As drear and bitter as the winter skies.
Seeing her then, I thought that she had won.

But yesterday her man returned too soon
And found her tending, with a reverent touch,
One scarlet bloom; and, having drunk too much,
He snatched its flame and quenched it in the dirt.
Then, like a creature with a mortal hurt,
She fell, and wept away the afternoon.

DuBose Heyward

[191]
THREE SUMMER POEMS

THE SQUALL

It swoops gray-winged across the obliterated hills,
And the startled lake seems to run before it:
From the wood comes a clamor of leaves,
Tugging at the twigs,
Pouring from the branches,
And suddenly the birds are silent.

Thunder crumples the sky,
Lightning tears at it.

And now the rain—
The rain, thudding, implacable;
The wind, revelling in the confusion of great pines!

And a silver sifting of light,
A coolness:
A sense of summer anger passing,
Of summer gentleness creeping nearer—
Penitent, tearful,
Forgiven.

THE LOCUST

Your hot voice sizzles from some cool tree near-by:
You seem to burn your way through the air
Like a small, pointed flame of sound,
Sharpened on the ecstatic edge of sun-beams!
CRICKETS AT DAWN

All night the crickets chirp,
Like little stars of twinkling sound
In the dark silence.

They sparkle through the summer stillness
With a crisp rhythm;
They lift the shadows on their tiny voices.

But at the shining note of birds that wake,
Flashing from tree to tree till all the wood is lit—
O golden coloratura of dawn!—
The cricket-stars fade softly,
One by one.

SWEETPEAS

All flowers in my garden
Are free
Except the wayward sweetpeas;
And they,
Out of love and gratitude,
Have forged tiny green chains,
And chained themselves
To my lattice
And to my heart.

[193]
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

ENVYINGS

I

When I am warmly bathed,
And rubbed a rosy-red,
Cold-creamed to sleek and sweet,
Brushed, braided, gone to bed;
With soft sheets, cool,
And soft warm wool,
Gentle and kind like fur,
I wish that I could purr!
It seems a gracious thing to do—
Expressive, exquisite "Thank you"—
Thrilling the body through and through!

II

As one grows old,
And understands much folly,
Especially the joke of being wise;
And all things are revealed
In humorous melancholy,
To seeing and discerning eyes:
There is desire to flap the wings
And toot
A cynical and mocking, bleak
"Hoot! Hoot!"

[194]
I wish that I could murmur in my throat
With a rich, gurgling, deep-contented note,
   Like the pigeon-coo!
That yodling, colorful tune,
Of burnished tone, warmer than words can say,
   Might tell the way
   I feel when loved by you!

A HEAT WAVE

All day a great sun stared,
   Obsessed with heat and light!
Thought panted for shelter
   On to the dark of night;
But when the sun went down,
   Soaked in the lukewarm sea,
I turned and saw a white-hot moon,
   Pallid, peering at me!—
And my soul cried aloud,
   Mad for some privacy!

Katherine Wisner McCluskey
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

TWO SONNETS

SUMMER

From what lost centuries that were sweet before,
Comes this long wave of Summer, bursting white
In shivered apple-blossoms on the shore
That is our homeland for a day and night!
A wide, hushed spirit floats above the foam,
A sweetness that was ancient flower and face,
When wine-red poppies stained the walls of Rome,
And daisies starred those summer fields of Thrace.

Something survives and haunts the leafy shade,
Some fragrance that was petals once, and lips,
And whispered, brief avowals that they made—
Borne hither, now, in vague, invisible ships;
Whose weightless cargoes, poured upon the air,
Are flowers forgot, and faces that were fair.

SYMBOLS

Beautiful words, like butterflies, blow by,
With what swift colors on their fragile wings!—
Some that are less articulate than a sigh,
Some that were names of ancient, lovely things.
What delicate careerings of escape,
When they would pass beyond the baffled reach,
To leave a haunting shadow and a shape,
Eluding still the careful traps of speech.

[196]
And I who watch and listen, lie in wait,
Seeing the cloudy cavalcades blow past,
Happy if some bright vagrant, soon or late,
May venture near the snares of sound, at last—
Most fortunate captor if, from time to time,
One may be taken, trembling, in a rhyme.

NIGHT ON THE RIVER

This is our world: a dark stream murmuring;
Sly hordes of shadows out of every brake;
Sky-fallen gold-fish stars that float or shake
In mirrored nets these wizard maples fling;
My oars, that dip like some light swallow's wing;
Fire-flies, like sparks that the wind fans awake;
And moments like the bubbles that we make,
Like the frail foam that marks our voyaging!

Love, let us drift—what matter when or where?
Are not the stars, the dusk, the whispering stream,
Far whippoorwills, our boat, and we, a dream
In some mad mind? And do not all streams bear
Themselves and all they hold to one vast sea—
The waste wan waters of Eternity?

E. Merrill Root
A man may think wild things under the moon—
In March when there is a tapping in the pails
Hung breast-high on the maples. Though you sink
To boot-tops only in the uncrusted snow,
And feel last autumn's leaves a short foot down,
There will be one among the men you meet
To say the snow lies six feet level there.
"Not here!" you say; and he says, "In the woods"—
Implying woods that he knows where to find.
Well, such a moon may be miraculous,
And if it has the power to make one man
Believe a common February snow
The great storm-wonder he would talk about
For years if once he saw it, there may be
In the same shimmering sickle over the hill
Vision of other things for other men.

The moon again!
Playing tonight with vapors that go up
And out into the silver. The brown sap works
Its foamy bulk over the great log fire.
Colors of flame light up a man, who kneels
With sticks upon his arm, and in his face
A grimace of resistance to the glow.
All that is burning is not under here
Boiling the early sap—I wonder why.
It is as calm as a dream of paradise
Out there among the trees, where runnels make
The only music heard above the sway
Of branches fingering the leaning moon.
And yet a man must go, when the sap has thickened,
Up and away to sleep a tired sleep,
And dream of dripping from a rotting roof
Back into sap that once was rid of him.
I wonder why, I wonder why, I wonder . . .

Close the iron doors and let the fire die,
And the faint night-wind blow through the broken walls.
The sugar thickens, and the moon is gone,
And frost threads up the singing rivulets.
I am going up the mountain toward the stars,
But I should like to lie near earth tonight—
Earth that has borne the furious grip of winter
And given a kind of birth to beauty at last.
Look!—the old breath thrills through her once again
And there will be passion soon, shaking her veins
And driving her spirit upward till the buds
Burst overhead, and swallows find the eaves
Of the sugar-house untroubled by the talk
Of men gone off with teams to mend the roads.
I think I shall throw myself down here in the snow
So to be very near her when she stirs.
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

POEMS BY A CHILD

I know how poems come;
They have wings.
When you are not thinking of it
I suddenly say,
"Mother, a poem!"
Somehow I hear it
Rustling.

Poems come like boats
With sails for wings;
Crossing the sky swiftly,
They slip under tall bridges
Of cloud.

MOON IN OCTOBER

The moon is at her crystal window
Spinning and weaving . . . .
The moon looks out of her window of crystal.
She has no lights excepting stars
That hang on threads unknown
From her sky-ceiling, her walls.
Their twinkling is like the twittering of many birds
In the early morning.
The moon sits by her crystal window;
She sings to herself and spins . . . .
Spins the pale blue silken thread
That holds earth dangling
Over deep light . . . .

(Now this is what the moon sings:)

Spin, spinning wheel,
Day and night too!
I keep it going all the time
To weave my robe of dew.
I make it from the fields of blue
And the robin’s breast;
The sun gives me rays
From the yellow west.
It shall be touched with evening

[200]
And with mellowy dew,
And send a separate shining
Down the sky to you,
My woven gown of sun-rays,
My silken gown of blue.

WISHES

I want three things;
They are wishes
Bright and happy.
You cannot know my dreams,
The wishes that stay in my heart . . . .
I want three things
Unknown to any one!

Tell me—oh, tell me
What are the wishes
In your heart?

I cannot tell you;
It is a secret thing.

MY MIND AND I

We are friends,
My mind and I . . . .
Yet sometimes we cannot understand each other,
As though a cloud had gone over the sun,
Or the pool all blind with trees
Had forgotten the sky.

LILACS

After lilacs come out,
The air loves to flow about them
The way water in wood-streams
Flows and loves and wanders.
I think the wind has a sadness
Lifting other leaves, other sprays . . . .
I think the wind is a little selfish
About lilacs when they flower.
ORCHID LADY

Tan and green orchid,
Are you a little lady
Holding up your skirts
Above wet grass?
Do you wear a feather
Where that white is showing?
Is there any color
Shut inside your heart?
I could be an orchid,
I could be a lady,
I could wear a feather,
I could step like you;
There is just the difference
Of your way of bowing,
And your tilted bonnet
And your satin shoe!

TO A BLACK PANSY

Little Prince,
Why do you stray about
Like a firefly who has lost his lantern?
Why do you sob,
Small gypsy in the dark?
Do you think maybe the world
Will end tonight?

BARE BUTTER-NUT TREE

A tree stands old and worn;
The North has blown away its leaves.
When I see it that way
I wish Spring would return . . . . .
How can I wait so long?

O butter-nut tree,
Why didn’t God give you speech,
And you without your green leaves?
Why can’t you sing small songs
Against the wind
For comfort?
LEAVES

In my apple-orchard,
In the oldest tree,
Fall has hidden gold leaves.
I looked into the hollow
And saw no apples,
Only leaves with frost on them
Like marble tilings,
Like jeweled tables . . .
Yet there was no gold . . . . no marble . . . .
Only leaves covered with frost
That sparkled the way my thought told me.

RIVER

Something wanders among the mountains,
Something ripples along forget-me-not fields,
Something cries when birds go south,
Something curves its golden sand-bar
Like the handle of a purple sword.
If I speak strangely
Do not wonder:
Something is looking for a castle
Made of seaweed, shells and coral,
Where the sea curls
Under the sunrise.

THE CELLAR

I love my queer cellar with its dusty smell,
Its misty smell like smoke-fringes
From clouds blowing past;
With its shelves of jam and goodies,
With its boxes . . . . barrels . . . .
Woodpiles here and there.
There is a passageway
To an unknown room
Where bins hold carrots and things.
There are glass doors that bang,
And cobweb windows.
I love the quietness of my cellar

[203]
Thinking in the dark.
My cellar has apples in its breath,
Potatoes even,
That smell of earth.

JAPANESE PICTURE

Trees on a marble island,
Birds with little brown backs
Is this Paradise?
Mountain of my heart
With pink and purple coloring,
Little houses on the river-bank—
Houses made of maple-sugar,
Distant tree,
Boats with blue sails;
Japanese people in silk
Hidden in the brown-sugar houses;
Yellow sky, pearl-colored ground,
River-ripples like the ripples in silk
Or a windy corn-field;
Hills of pink opal
And dewy seas
Did you answer my question
About Paradise?

TO A MOTHER

To a mother with hazel eyes and brownish hair,
And fingers quick as stars
That twinkle in night-cold air
Hair wound like a web of lacy sea-weed
Blue robes floating like the spring wind
The wind in a shadowy forest.
When the sun shines on the dew
My mother has a heart that loves me
And sings like a music.

Hilda Conkling (nine years old)
COMMENT

DR. CHUBB ON THE PLATFORM

DR. PAUL SHOREY, head professor of Greek at the University of Chicago, doesn't like the new poetry; in fact, he has said so more than once in public places. Wishing to know the worst, I listened, on May 15th, to his lecture on Modern Poetry and the Teaching of English, which was given at Fullerton Hall before an audience of Chicago teachers as one of the series endowed for their benefit by their late fellow-educator, Elizabeth Kirkland. The lecture was not an extempore discourse, but a paper carefully prepared and read; because, as the learned doctor explained, he had "something to say," and wished to take no chances of inexactness in saying it.

I went prepared to take notes—alas, that I didn't requisition a stenographer! Dr. Shorey began with harmless generalities—quoted Poe's Poetic Principle; told us poetry was "a soul-kindling art, not a soul-anodyne"; presented the advantage that classic-poetry associations give to the Taormina view over that of San Francisco, equally beautiful though the latter is; discussed "the illusion and delusion of science," and deplored the general American way of abandoning the arts at maturity with other follies of youth; insisted upon training in reading poetry aloud, in poetic diction, and in mythology, as necessities neglected by modern educators, etc., etc.

At last the lecturer got down to brass tacks—or, as he

[205]
jocularly expressed it, "began to show the cloven hoof"—with some criticism of Whitman, the first offender because he advised American poets to "make no mention or allusion" to or of the past. (Incidentally we were reminded that Whitman was much indebted to Emerson for his *Leaves.* )

And the next minute the athletic classicist was hitting out from the shoulder at the "self-advertising and self-quoting modernists," whose "Germanized attitude of mind" is being "imposed on us all"!

This nefarious "Germanized attitude of mind" seemed to consist in "the doctrine of simplicity preached by the heralds of the new poetry"—a new and luminous interpretation of the Hun's psychology! And "Riley, Oppenheim and Sandburg" were quaintly lassoed together in a series of charges too subtly surprising for my slow pencil and astonished intellect to catch up with.

When I came to again the lecturer was saying: "The new poetry lacks morality, harmony, distinction, and idea of beauty." Students who read it are doomed, as is proved by "the heart-sickening shallowness and vulgarity of soul" shamelessly exhibited in "the poems published in college magazines." "The imitator of Carl Sandburg is blighted forever"—and here there were further remarks about C. S. which my agitated pencil failed to catch. The lecturer continued at some length on the "failure of the moral sense in the new poetry"; indeed, "the new poetry preaches immorality," and he proved it by reading Oppenheim's "only one god—you" poem; which, however, he partly excused as
Dr. Chubb on the Platform

being really a paraphrase of Emerson. (Poor Emerson’s mantle was stretched to cover a multitude of sins!) Giovanitti also was invoked to prove that “this modern Russianized [not Prussian this time!] literature considers man only an animal.”

By this time the phrases of anathema were falling so thick and fast that none but a stenographer could capture them, so I leaned back with the happy thought of borrowing Dr. Shorey’s manuscript in order to avoid inexactness. Miss Lowell was now under arraignment, and, by way of emphasizing her special treachery, the lecturer read an original poem which purported to express James Russell Lowell’s opinion of his recalcitrant cousin.

The peroration, which soon got well under way, was a warning against the crimes and offences of the new poetry, its sins against taste, law, morals, beauty, intelligence, etc.; its wicked digressions from the straight and narrow path of academic tradition. Of all these outrageous derelictions Carl Sandburg was pointed to as the chief exemplar. Having no memory for phrases, I cannot set down the burning words that exploded over his devoted head—a withering blast which would have seared his eye-balls if he had been there to hear.

Throughout the lecture I listened in vain for any discrimination between grades of good or bad in the new poetry; for any recognition of differences in the motives and methods, whether technical or ethical, of the numerous very individual men and women who practice it; for any ac-
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

knowledgment of qualities of possible beauty in any of its experiments in rhythms and other sound values, or of possible dignity and truth in any of its interpretations of life. No, the poets were lashed together with one tarred rope, and lowered, from Ezra Pound to Oppenheim, into the nether abyss.

When I asked to borrow the paper, Dr. Shorey declined, saying that he had no copy and intended to give the lecture elsewhere. As I turned to go, two of the audience were pleading for his Lowell poem, and I heard him call, "Here is Miss Monroe—I challenge her to print it in POETRY!" At once and most eagerly I accepted the challenge, hoping to make it the climax of this article.

But the ladies who heard this challenge and my promise, and our readers as well, are doomed to disappointment; for the next day, instead of the poem, the following letter arrived:

Dear Miss Monroe: On reflection I think it would be a mistake to publish my squib, and so do not send it to you. It was not intended as an argument, and was not so taken by the audience. It merely served as a part of the "comic relief" that is almost indispensable to break the monotony of an hour of lecturing. I cannot of course object if you wish to take my lecture as the text of an editorial. But the lecture was not written for publication in its present form, and I don't think that you ought to use quotation marks unless you are quite sure that you caught my very words. I also hope that you will not attribute to me blank denial of the theory, or entire insensibility to the occasional successes, of the so-called "new poetry." That is not in fact my position. My main protest was against what I believe to be the practical effect of recent over-estimates of it—namely, the destruction of the taste and capacity in young readers and students for the appreciation of the older heritage which I naturally value more. Paul Shorey
If Dr. Shorey's lecture expressed anything other than this "blank denial" and "insensibility," he is at liberty to prove it from his manuscript. Beyond a deprecatory and indefinite phrase or two, I remember no such reservations. And I assure my readers that such quotations as I have used are exact.

The arraignment was perhaps too absurd in its sweeping denunciations to be worthy of notice. Except for the following facts:

First: Dr. Shorey is one of the foremost Greek scholars of our time, and an educator of high distinction and authority.

Second: He was addressing an audience of teachers—a sympathetic audience, apparently, who, receiving his remarks as from Mount Sinai, will be fortified in their opposition to all modern expression in poetry.

Third: The kind of talk, of which this lecture is an extreme and almost ridiculous example, is only too common in our schools and colleges. As The New Republic says:

The truth is, to American professors good literature is literature safely dead, and good taste is protective coloration. . . . . Our schools began timid, they continued timid, and they remain timid.

The fight is against heavy odds and strong intrenchments, but it must be carried on—this fight for the creative imagination of our youth, for the vitality and integrity of the arts in our schools. Dr. Shorey's argument has been met, point by point, in so many of Poetry's editorials that we do not need to discuss it further. But we might, parenthet-
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

ically, ask him two or three questions—for example:

If the new poetry is immoral, what about the morality of the old poetry?—of Greek poetry, for instance?

If Taormina gets an added value because of the rich words of so many poets, how is San Francisco ever to catch up with it unless the poets separate themselves from Taormina and get busy with San Francisco?

Is the virginal freshness of a country not yet written over, or built on or drawn on, a conceivable excellence as a subject for art, a conceivable stimulus to a creative and imaginative mind? Might it not conceivably have a superior value, to such a mind, over the now much-poetized regions which were virginal and uncelebrated to Homer and Aeschylus?

If the imitator of Carl Sandburg is "blighted forever," is the imitator of Tennyson, or Theocritus, or Sappho, in any happier case? (But, between you and me, aren't students' imitations, whether of Sandburg, Riley or the Book of Job, mere harmless exercises rather than a blight forever?)

But we weary of Dr. Shorey. The secret is out—he must be that righteous fellow-citizen and guardian of public morals, Elmer Chubb, LL. D., Ph. D., who has been enlightening the world of late through Reedy's Mirror. H. M.

NOTE ON FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK-SONGS

It is doubtful if the old treasury of French folk-lore is anywhere so well preserved as in the Province of Quebec.

[210]
The great currents of modern civilization have, until recent days, left practically unaffected this colony of old France, where the folk still observe customs, use implements, recite tales, and sing songs that take us right back to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Indeed, many of the songs may be shown, by their wide diffusion on the continent of Europe or by internal evidence, to go back to a much greater antiquity than that. Some of them have a definitely mediaeval cast. Mr. C. M. Barbeau, who has gone exhaustively into all aspects of French-Canadian folk research, and has, within the last few years, made himself incomparably its greatest authority, finds that fully ninety-five per-cent of the four thousand songs and song versions that he and his collaborators have gathered are clearly of old-world origin. Relatively little in the way of folk literature originated in Canada.

This vast mass of folk-song material—and it is being constantly added to—has been recorded both in text form and, for the most part, on the phonograph. Many transcriptions have already been made by Mr. Barbeau himself, some of which have appeared, with full texts, in a recent number of the *Journal of American Folk-lore*. More are to follow from time to time.

No one who cares to acquaint himself even superficially with these folk-songs can doubt their historic and aesthetic value. The music, without which they can hardly be adequately understood or appreciated, itself constitutes an illuminating chapter in the European history of the art.
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Modes and rhythms but scantily recognized in the straight highroad of "art" music here flourish luxuriantly. The songs have been collected from all parts of the province—from the remote fisherman of Gaspé, the little farming villages along the St. Lawrence, the French sections of Montreal. They embrace a bewildering variety of metrical forms and of functional types. Some of these types are: drinking songs; lyrical and narrative love songs; "pastoral" songs; the maumariés, of unhappy married couples; the cocus, jocular songs of deceived husbands; round dances and other types of dance songs; satires, not infrequently on religious themes; festival songs; working songs of strongly marked rhythm—fuller's, paddling, marching, and others; little vaudevilles or duets for two singers; ballads; complaintes or complaints, a more solemn or tragic type of ballad, but the term is employed rather loosely; randonnées or rigmaroles; cradle songs; shanty-songs.

Readers of the four folk-songs included in this number of POETRY will probably welcome a few specific indications, which I owe to Mr. Barbeau. The Dumb Shepherdess is a religious complainte, and is known in the lower St. Lawrence region, both north and south shores. The King of Spain's Daughter is a work ballad, especially used as a paddling song, and is based on versions from Temiscouata and Gaspé counties. The Prince of Orange is another paddling song, collected at Tadousac, one of the oldest French settlements in Canada, on the lower St. Lawrence. White as the Snow is a good example of the genuine ballad; it is
one of the best known folk-songs of Quebec, having been recorded in no less than twelve versions. All of these songs have old-country analogues. *White as the Snow* and *The King of Spain's Daughter* have an especially wide diffusion in France. *The Dumb Shepherdess* is probably the oldest of the group; it is not unlikely that the French text, as recorded in Canada, goes back to the fifteenth century. *The Prince of Orange*, of course of much later date, is one of a category of well known French songs that mock the House of Orange.

In the English versions, of which these are a selection, I have adhered as closely to the original rhythms and stanzaic structure as the prosodic differences of the two languages would permit. Pedantic literalness was not always possible, yet there are no serious deviations, least of all from the spirit of the songs as I have conceived it. Not all the originals, it may be noted, make use of strict rhymes; assonances are often used instead. In *The Dumb Shepherdess* I preferred to do without rhyme, aside from the very end of the poem, so fearful was I of spoiling its peculiar charm.

Edward Sapir

REVIEWS

A BOOK FOR LITERARY PHILOSOPHERS

*Quia Pauper Amavi*, by Ezra Pound. The Egoist, London. There is no modern poet more difficult to criticize justly than Ezra Pound. Those who have suffered from his sharp
wit and idiosyncrasies are prejudiced against him; those who have enjoyed the privilege of a real intimacy with him, who know his genuine goodness and profound love of literature, are more than prejudiced in his favor; those who do not know him at all are over-willing to listen to his enemies, to whom, unhappily, he has given only too many opportunities for calumny. He is like a man who goes hunting hedgehogs with bare feet—and finds his prey all prickles; to vary and mix the metaphor, he sits on his little hill in Kensington as if it were Olympus, casting forth winged words which, like boomerangs, are returned unto him an hundred-fold! In the mêlée his work is disloyally attacked, his least errors are exposed with a malignant triumph; his sensiveness, which hides under a cover of bluster, is denounced as conceit; his fineness of perception is misunderstood as triviality. His scholarship, with its rather overwhelming pretention, is suspect; his polemics verge on hysteria. His fault is that he is an anachronism. With the enthusiasm of a Renaissance scholar, one of those whose fine devotion but faulty learning revealed to the fifteenth-century world the civilization of Greece, he lives in an age which looks at literature as a hobby, a freak, a branch of education; but never as a life study, a burning passion. His profound error is to love literature above everything in an age of commerce; to prize his art beyond reputation, friends, money, tranquillity. It is hard to be uncompromising even if one is right; it is doubly hard when one is frequently wrong.

Ezra Pound's poetry is American in that it is versatile,
superficial, generous. It is European in that it is literary, subtle, full of delicate nuances, elliptic. It is more French than English. It is almost a new genre, the poetry of esthetic nuance. His flair for good literature is incredibly keen, considering his philological deficiencies. From his multitudinous and brief admirations he has evolved a poetry of his own, derived in every case from some earlier writer, but so altered, so stamped with his own personality, that he has made it something new. He fails most when he tries to be modern in subject as well as in manner; he is happiest when interpreting his own emotions in the mask of a dead poet.

_Quia Pauper Amavi_ is a book for literary philosophers, for those who appreciate the odor of the past carefully enclosed in new hybrid flowers, for those who are not repelled by involved and unnecessarily crabbed diction, and who will look for what is good in a book, not for what is bad.

_Langue d'Oc_, the first section, is Provençal, gives us the feeling that no other interpreter has ever given, that what was written in Provence was poetry. _Descant on a Theme by Cerclamon_ has some fine lines, particularly those beginning “Good is it to me if she flout” down to “The man whom love had and has ever.”

_Three Cantos_, the third section, which _Poetry_ printed in 1917, is perhaps the most important work in the book, an essay in the manner of _Sordello_. The writing is so elliptic, the thought so carefully hidden, that I cannot imagine what the poem is about, but it has delightful lines:
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Ghosts move about me patched with histories.
See the small cobbles flare with poppy spoil.
Home to sweet rest, and to the waves' deep laughter.

Spirits . . . .
Not dark and shadow-wet ghosts, but ancient living,
Wood-white, smooth as the inner bark, and firm of aspect
. . . . clothed like the poppies, wearing golden greaves,
Light in the air.

Silk tatters still in the frame, Gonzaga's splendor,
Where do we come upon the ancient people?

The goddess . . . .
Light in the foam, breathed on by Zephyrs
And air-tending hours, mirthful, with golden
Girdles and breast-bands, thou with dark eyelids
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida.

Any of those lines would give another man an enviable reputation; because the writer is Ezra Pound they are wilfully ignored. Longer passages of Three Cantos which I find beautiful are the description of Sirmio (Canto I), the lines on Catullus, those on Camoens and the Japanese women (Canto II), the paraphrase of the Renaissance Homer (Canto III), a subject which is thrilling to the lover of old literature.

I shall leave Propertius alone, not because I do not like it but because I want several pages to talk about it. The reader must look upon it not as a translation, but as an inspired paraphrase, a mistranslation of genius, where lines and paragraphs of extraordinary beauty are embedded in others of doubtful value.

R. A.
A NEW LIGHT ON LANCELOT


The chief distinction of Edwin Arlington Robinson, chief, that is, among the many astonishments of his genius, is his mingling of two strains: a Puritan austerity, and a discerning tenderness. He was ever one to see "a light behind the stars," and yet he is too keen a psychologist to measure men's worth by the distances between their intuitions and his own lucid vision.

An avowed traditionalist, it is perhaps natural that at a time when men grope for refuge from a broken world, Robinson should find his in a retreat to the dim Arthurian fields. But it is equally characteristic that his retreat has in it no shadow of surrender. Rather, he recreates the disillusion, the desolation, and the pain of our own period in the tragedy of this half-forgotten legend. _Lancelot_ is finer than _Merlin_ by as much as it is closer to Robinson. For what he has done in this latest work is to dramatize the griefs of Guenevere and of Arthur, of Gawain and of Lancelot, in such a way as to make them our contemporaries, and with such a fervor of insight as to body forth the very breathings and heartbeats, the very fire and dolorous rains of an age wherein men wronged each other and helplessly hurt each other in ways no different from our own. Throughout the poem shines undimmed the light that burned for the poet before he touched the story of the Grail, and therewith the old divining pity.
So one hears Guenevere:

Knowing the world, you know
How surely and indifferently that Light
Shall burn through many a war that is to be,
To which this war were no more than a smear
On circumstance.

And later, Lancelot:

The Vision shattered, a man’s love of living
Becomes at last a trap and a sad habit.

The reiterated chord of bitterness reverberates in the lines:

There was a madness feeding on us all,
As we fed on the world. When the world sees,
The world will have in turn another madness;
And so, as I’ve a glimpse, _ad infinitum._

What strikes one most forcibly perhaps is indeed the
sharpness of the poem’s reality. This is largely due to the
strength of the dialogue. Guenevere was not the first nor
will she be the last woman to cry out:

If I were strong enough to make you vanish,
And have you back again with yesterday!

There is also the eternal magic whereby Robinson’s unique
images gleam out of the sterner structure of the poem, as
saints might gleam out of the simple aspiring architraves of
some noble cathedral. So he speaks of

The failing out of his three visitors
Into the cold and swallowing wall of storm.

So he shows Joyous Gard as “A shaken hive of legend-
heavy wonder.” So Lancelot asks:

Would you cajole
Your reason with a weary picturing
On walls or on vain air of what your fancy,
Like firelight, makes of nothing but itself?
The piercing imagery of the leave-taking is typical as it is arresting:

He crushed her cold white hands and saw them falling
Away from him like flowers into a grave.

It is idle praise to crown a poet with premature immortality. But it is certain that any contemporary would be proud to have made this poem, and it is written that none but Edwin Arlington Robinson could have endued this ancient theme with so passionate a warmth and so kindling a light.

Babette Deutsch

COMEDY OVER TRAGEDY

A Woman of Thirty, by Marjorie Allen Seiffert. Alfred A. Knopf.

Marjorie Allen Seiffert has more than a bowing acquaintance with the comedy spirit, and, if for no other reason, may be safely considered, by the hypothetical third person of criticism, an acquisition to the new poetry. One poises the claim a little apologetically, for one still has to excuse the intrusion, more than once, of comedy into what most of us still consider a solemn, sacrosanct demesne. And yet, a goodly percentage of the better contributions of the men and women who have put America on the art map has come, from the mask of drollery to the full face of laughter, in the shapes and sounds of poems by Messrs. Sandburg, Lindsay, Frost, Pound, Williams, Johns, Eliot and Stevens;
and of Mesdames Moore, D’Orge, Tietjens and Millay: the list is not restricted. Obviously, we think as well as feel, not alone by way of dragging in Horace Walpole’s—“He who feels sees life a tragedy; he who thinks, a comedy”—but because there are inevitable moments when we are complete beings, when comedy acts as an impersonal commentary, aloof and perhaps superior to the intense and personal tragedy of the solitary. Comedy is the touch which leads tragedy into contact with the world, and sets off the personal against the background of the impersonal. And so, Mr. Elijah Hay—Mrs. Seiffert’s contribution to the Spectric Hoax—and The Old Woman, her morality comedy which was awarded a POETRY prize, are refreshing events. By asking for more of these, one doesn’t necessarily ask for less of her efforts in minor keys.

One suspects that effort had to force the production of a considerable number of her more serious poems, while the less serious created themselves. Carrying this hypothesis to the various laboratories of ismism, one postulates further that the serious poems fall under categories and conventions, whether of so-called traditional or so-called modern versification. Many of the “free” poems are an avowal of the poetic gospel according to the denomination of imagism. In such, formalism has been adhered to; form has not evolved. A method which was natural to H. D. becomes a disguise with Mrs. Seiffert. In her imagistic studies, the latter is only an expert craftsman; whereas as Elijah Hay, and in The Old Woman and her Japanese and Italian De-
Comedy over Tragedy

signs, she has discarded tools fashioned by others. She has been compelled to do so, because the moods which actuated these poems were stronger than she. Poetry has been forced on her; she has not sought it. These things wrote her; she didn’t write them. The sensitive eye and ear which she brought to the expression of lyrics in the older or the newer formalism—they are admirable; they are necessary to the service of apprenticeship.

Fortunately, however, for the poet and poetry, mere training is a matter of the past. Fortunately, too, criticism is the most erratic instrument in the cosmos. Having ventured a certain dictum of a negative character, one is caught unawares in an admiration for lines and poems which, as a theorist and a consistent human mechanism, one should not admire. Having accused Mrs. Seiffert of a frequent devotion at the shrine of imagism, having committed oneself to what one swears to as truth-speaking, one is led astray by some of the imagistic poems, and is forced to confess himself a liar and to consign himself, his efforts at criticism, and all critics and criticism to the busiest devil in the Christian curriculum. One knows one shouldn’t like what one has definitely decried, and yet one betrays oneself to ridicule by more than liking some of the imagistic sequences, in which certain adventures are housed in simple, dramatic lyrics of a poignant and musical quality. One refers to A Temple, Portrait of a Lady in Bed, Mountain Trails, White Valley, The Pathway of Black Leaves and Sequence. Comedy over tragedy, form over formalism, individuality over ismism, this
way or that way, truth vendor or prevaricator, one is forced to doff one's conceit to:

Grey grasses drown
In thin brown water
Wound like a chain on the valley's
Sunken breast.

As a theorist one looks askance, but as a person with ambitions as a poet, one blinks with sly envy on:

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

Being as perverse as all other human folk, one yearns for perfection in oneself, to the exclusion, of course, of all other fellow creatures; and in approaching these latter from the negative angle, one hopes that they betray one's own faults, says they do, so states the case as a critic, and then, unconsciously, finding these faults closely related to one's own, admires them, and enters the ideal domain of consistency. One awakes—slaps oneself on the back, shouts gleefully, "Why, Mrs. Seiffert is a poet!" And so she is! A. K.

TWO CHILD POETS

Poems by a Little Girl, by Hilda Conkling. Fred. A. Stokes Co.

It is an extraordinary coincidence that two child-poets of this quality should have been alive on earth at the same
Two Child-poets

moment and should be presented between bookcovers in the same year. One is compelled to review them together, because they offer, with equally amazing expressiveness, such a contrast of temperaments; because one is the normal happy child raised to the $n^{th}$ power of imaginative sensibility, while the other is the super-normal child raised to the $n^{th}$ power of spiritual insight. The younger of the two, Hilda, who is not yet ten years old, may hope to fulfil and complete her genius through all the rich experience of a woman's life. The elder, Katherine, lived too intensely, too sublimely, for mortal flesh to endure the strain; so at fifteen she "slipped away," with "no struggle, no anticipation—just a sudden flitting, like a bird let out of its cage."

Our readers have marvelled at Hilda Conkling every July since 1916, when she made her bow to the world with eight four-and-five-year-old songs, of which the first was:

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

And the present number carries a sheaf of her latest poems, written since her book went through the press—poems more mature but no less sincere and spontaneous, perhaps no less beautiful, than that first shining drop of dew. This yearly appearance in extenso says more for the editor's opinion than any praise of the wonder-child can say today; yet a few words should be said, perhaps, to emphasize phases of the miracle—even though Miss Lowell's admirable preface gives exactly the right emphasis to most of these phases and their implications.

[223]
Mrs. Conkling has been accused of inducing or influencing her daughter's poems as she writes them down. The sufficient answer is their adorable childishness. Who but a child would think

And fireflies are counting the leaves.

Or, of a Little Snail:

He wagged his head this way, that way,
Like a clown in a circus.

And this:

The world turns softly
Not to spill its lakes and rivers.

And this poem, Weather:

Weather is the answer
When I can't go out into flowery places.
Weather is my wonder
About the kind of morning
Hidden behind the hills of sky.

Et cetera—one might quote many more. But the reader should go instead to the book to be convinced that these exhalations of the eternal child-spirit are really, as Miss Lowell says, "the stuff and essence of poetry," done in subtle cadences which are "a delight to those who can hear them."

We may well inquire how far Hilda is typical, how much of the natural poetry of childhood, in her case so happily expressed, is usually lost or destroyed. No nurse-maid would have encouraged a child to "tell" these poems, and few mothers would have been wise enough to refrain from instruction or emendation in writing them down. In other words, few children are permitted to be freely and spontaneously expressive in any of the arts—false education, ridi-
culle, and other impositions of laws and precepts tend to suppress the natural childish impulses toward the creation of beauty. Are there mute inglorious Hildas hidden behind apron-strings and text-books?

Katherine Bull had a more solitary and searching mind. Less observant of the actual than Hilda, she was a rapt diviner of spiritual beauty—she had strength of wing for icy heights. She was not so sure a craftsman as Hilda—her rhythms are less individual, and there are fewer flashing phrases, though now and then a singularly poignant one clutches the heart, as when she says of the song-sparrow:

I heard you, little soul-singer;
In the sweet pause of the rising morning you wounded me to life.

No, the art of these poems may not be always adequate; indeed, sometimes it may fail utterly and give us a homily instead of a poem, as in If You have Saved a Friend's Life: but the amazing thing is that, living so precociously in a white flame of spiritual passion, she should have made art serve her often so well, express so keenly the inexpressible beauty and ardor of her struggle. Sometimes, indeed, the art is almost adequate to carry the revelation—in certain brief poems like Silences, Song Sparrow, A Tiny Red Spider, White Mirrors; and occasionally in a longer one, such as Heat, which burns through a headlong series of exclamatory notes like flames—notes of “white sun-heat,” “black languid heat,” “fever, death,” “glare of great walls,” “the deep city gone mad with a terrible mania”—up to the following climax of rapture:
O wonderful world-heat,
Heat of the universe and all that is
Drawn out from the center of things by Unknown Power,
Whom do I worship but thee?
Where a God, an All, supreme, save thee?
Mad essence of all and source, in the eyes of the world, destroying... and, beyond eyes, creating,
Scorch thou my body—if need be, consume it in flame!
For I will dissolve my identity in pain... world-pain, heat-pain...
And glory in a new creation.

In another hour of mystical exaltation the rapt child achieved this poem, as exalted as a Saint Teresa rhapsody:

I accept you (whoever, whatever you are—it makes no difference).
I go with you on endless journeys,
I pass with you through endless dyings;
I accept you, simply and naturally,
And I believe you utterly.

I cannot lose you (whoever, whatever you are—it makes no difference).
Perhaps you go (we must all go), but inevitably you must return,
And you cannot but stay with me forever.

I do not desire you.
I am not anxious lest you should not come to me:
(And behold! through the ages thou art running—wings spread as eagles,
And, casting away all arms, I have caught thee in eternal embrace!)

I do not fear you,
I am not anxious lest you should come to me:
(And behold! Thou, my deliverer, running with heart outspread,
I know thee—and Thou art my God!)

Perhaps enough has been said and quoted to show the quality of this flaming spirit which burned itself out in a dozen or so brief years of worship; to show also how far

[226]
Two Child-poets

she was able to draw the curtain from before her vision of infinite beauty, and so reveal it to the world. The brief dialogue, *Death*, is a tremendous reach for a child's hand and soul—a veritable cup of trembling uplifted to the Infinite that called her. No wonder that they found when she died, as her mother so exquisitely says, "She was one for whom you could not mourn."

Two children like Hilda and Katherine, singing in the same tongue at the same hour—is there in this miracle a richer promise for the new age than may be read in treaties and decrees? 

H. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

WORDS FROM A DEPARTING POET

To the Editor: The May issue of *Poetry* contained the message of a poet on his way to California. Perhaps *Poetry* may care to follow this message with the more serious words of a poet about to leave for England.

I confess a certain measure of envy for Mr. Kreymborg's tenacious optimism and persistent whimsicalities. Sometimes, if you brightly tell your potential audience how pleasantly accommodating it is, its heart becomes deeply flattered and murmurs: "Listen to this nice chap praising our attention and good-will. It would really be a shame to disappoint him." I do not charge Mr. Kreymborg with having used this trick, but I hope that he did. Otherwise his words become a mere contented effervescence.

[227]
The “poetic boom” in this country has always reminded me of a floridly persuasive circus-barker shouting or crooning to passers-by, but now and then wearily turning his back to look at the empty seats showing through the circus-entrance. Poets lecture to colleges and clubs, publish hosts of books, hold controversies in magazines and newspapers, attend large “poetry banquets,” and are even commented upon by clergymen and village newspapers. But inside of the tent has the nation’s appreciation of poetry increased more than an inch? The layman does not usually know that almost a majority of poets in America must pay the expenses of their books while the publisher merely loans the imprint of his firm. There has also been no noticeable heightening of poetry’s role in American magazines—it still disconsolately squeezes into the tiny space left at the bottom of articles and short stories while long poems are almost always rejected. In addition, American poets praised from Delaware to Santa Barbara still find that their limelight does not blend into the attainment of a morning’s breakfast—their loudly proclaimed books sell to the tune of two or three paltry thousand! Sometimes, in spite of a storm of discriminating praise, they even fail to sell out their first editions.

The well-known painter secures hundreds—often thousands—of dollars for his painting, but the equally recognized poet is lucky if he receives twenty or thirty dollars for his long poem. An age-old injustice? Yes, but one that is still on ill terms with “the great interest in poetry” that one
Words from a Departing Poet

hears forever mentioned in this country. If poetry could be hung on walls and viewed by admiring visitors, or loaned to art-exhibits as paintings are, its benefactors would be more numerous, and a curious American passion for advertised possession would respond. But the poet's small black lines, delivered to anyone over a counter or by the mailman, do not merge into America's love of the large, the concrete, the exclusively owned and the ostentatious. Between blares of announcing trumpets, handfuls of pennies are thrown to this poet and that, and everybody smiles as though a great task had been substantially commenced!

These are only a few of the reasons why Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, John Gould Fletcher, H. D. and others migrated to England. In England, at least, they make few grandiloquent pretences. They do not seek the comforting phantoms of great audiences and huge rewards—they are content to create with inward rather than outward compensations. Radical poets and critics in England know that poetry at its best, outside of the folk-song, will never be appreciated by more than a tiny fraction of the population until the millenium arrives! Carl Sandburg writes sweepingly, vividly, simply and understandingly about the average person and common longings; but how many average inhabitants of this country read him? His book-sales, like those of any other American or English poet, tell an irrefutable story.

Maxwell Bodenheim
Dear Miss Monroe: The charge of imitation is much easier to make than to refute, and perhaps an attempt at refutation is not only useless, but may indicate guilt itself. I take the chance and make the attempt with reference to Marion Strobel's otherwise appreciative and generous review of Black Branches. She says of one section in the book, Hedone, that the pieces are imitative of T. S. Eliot.

The facts about Hedone are these:

I. They were written before I saw a rhymed quatrain by T. S. Eliot. I have been familiar with his work for years, but not with his rhymed quatrains until recently.

II. The first that I ever saw were published, I believe, a little over a year ago in the Little Review. But at that time I was just finishing the series called Hedone, which had been in course of composition for six months.

The whole subject may be "nothing to write home about," as the sales-girl said, but a charge of conscious imitation is no joke—it rankles most intolerably in the mind of the pure and innocent object; and as the charge has twice appeared in print, I hereby have my say about it for once. If the reader will but consider for a moment, he will see, of course, that the spirit and purpose sustained throughout in my Hedone series could not possibly be the result of imitation. That sort of thing might occur in the case of a few lines, or a single idea, but so distinct an experiment would have to spring from its own root and energy.

Orrick Johns

[230]
A KEATS MEMORIAL

The following letter from a representative committee in England is forwarded to POETRY by Miss Amy Lowell, who urges upon American lovers of Keats liberal support of a project which should appeal to all who speak the English language:

On the eve of the centenary of the death of Keats, the house near Hampstead Heath, in which he resided during the most active portion of his literary career, is about to be thrown into the property market as an "eligible building site," and a representative committee has been formed with the object of saving this great literary shrine from destruction, and of securing it for the benefit of the public in perpetuity.

The house, now called Lawn Bank but originally known as Wentworth Place, situate in Keats Grove, Hampstead, is that to which the poet came in December, 1818, and which was his home during the remainder of his life in England. Within its walls, or under the shelter of the venerable trees which still grace its extensive old-world garden, much of his finest work was produced.

An exclusive right to purchase the property has been established for a short period to afford an opportunity of procuring the necessary funds. It is estimated that for the acquisition of the freehold, for restoration and repairs, for adaptation as a Keats Memorial House, and for permanent maintenance, a sum not less than ten thousand pounds will be required.

At the Hempstead Public Library is deposited the important Dilke collection of Keats relics. It is confidently anticipated that these will be available for the Memorial House, and that valuable additions will be made from time to time.

A prominent Chicago poet heads the western list of contributors with a check for ten dollars. We feel that poets will be especially interested, and that many of our other subscribers will wish to contribute, according to their means, to this permanent memorial of a great poet whose fame
reached out to the four corners of the earth from that little house in Hampstead.

Checks may be sent to POETRY, or to Miss Amy Lowell, Brookline, Mass.

POETRY SOCIETY PRIZES

The P. S. A. sends us the following notices:

The prize of $500 for the best volume of poems written by an American citizen, which the Poetry Society of America has for the past two seasons given through Columbia University, will this year be awarded directly by the Society. As the prize is not competitive but in the nature of an award [for the best book of verse published in the United States in 1919], books need not be entered for it as in the ordinary prize competition. The judges for the present season are Edwin Arlington Robinson, Prof. John Livingston Lowes of Harvard University, author of Convention and Revolt in Poetry, and Alice Corbin Henderson, Associate Editor of POETRY.

The Poetry Society of America offers the William Lindsey Prize of $500 for the best unproduced and unpublished full-length poetic play written by an American citizen. By "full length" is meant a play that will occupy an evening. No restrictions are placed upon the number of acts or scenes, or on the nature of the subject matter. The judges of the contest will be George Arliss, Professor George Pierce Baker of Harvard, Clayton Hamilton, Jessie B. Rittenhouse and Stuart Walker. Manuscripts should be sent by registered mail, the author's registry receipt to be considered sufficient acknowledgment. They must be submitted in typewritten form, fastened along the left edge of the page in one volume, and signed with a pen name. An enclosed sealed envelope should be inscribed with the title of the play and the pen name, and contain a card with the correct name and address of the author, as well as the title of the play. This sealed envelope should also contain one self-addressed bearing the full amount of return postage, including registry. The contest closes July 1st, 1921, and the successful play will be announced at the October meeting of the Poetry Society. Manuscripts should be addressed to The Drama Committee of the Poetry Society of America, care of Stuart Walker, Chairman, Carnegie Hall, New York.
NOTES

Mr. Edward Sapir, a graduate of Columbia, where he specialized in linguistics and ethnology, now lives in Ottawa as an official of the Geological Survey of Canada. His first book of verse, *Dreams and Gibes*, was published in 1917 by the Poet-lore Co. His article (page 210) sufficiently presents the sources of the folk-poems which he has translated.

Mr. David Morton, of Morristown, N. J., will soon issue his first book of verse, *Ships in Harbor and Other Poems*, which received last March one of the three Lyric Society prizes of $500.

Mr. Raymond P. Holden, of New York and Franconia, N. H., will soon publish his first book of verse.


Since 1916 Hilda's poems have appeared every July in *Poetry's* annual sheaf of *Poems by Children*; last year's sheaf, as well as this, presenting hers exclusively. As she will be ten years old next October, her present appearance will be her last in our children's section if we adhere to the rule of offering only the songs of children under ten. These poems have all been said to her mother since her book was prepared for the press.

The other poets of this month are new to our readers:

Mr. Thomas Moult, of London, an English poet who is represented in the latest *Georgian Poetry* anthology, is editor of the small monthly, *Voices*, now in its second year—a special magazine devoted to the arts, and published by Chapman & Hall.

Mr. DuBose Heyward is a young poet who has contributed to various magazines. He writes: "I was born in Charleston, S. C., and could never be happy anywhere else except Paris."

Mr. Albert Edmund Trombly, of Austin, Texas, has contributed to various magazines. Also Mr. Edward Merrill Root, a young New England poet, graduate of Amherst. Also Mrs. Katherine Wisner McCluskey, of Iron Springs, Arizona.

Leonora Speyer (Mrs. Edgar Speyer) is a violinist and poet of American birth who, after her marriage, lived some years in England, but now resides in New York. She has contributed to various magazines. Miss Margaret McKenny is a young poet of Olympia, Wash.

The editors give notice to their contributors that manuscripts sent during the summer months will be subject to long delay.

[233]
BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:
Poems by a Little Girl, by Hilda Conkling. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
The Bomber Gypsy and Other Poems, by A. P. Herbert. Alfred A. Knopf.
Sonnets from a Prison Camp, by Archibald Allan Bowman. John Lane Co.
Questionings, by Alberta Johnston Denis. Privately printed, Los Angeles.
Broken Lights, by Glenn Hughes. Privately printed, Univ. of Washington.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:
Kossovo Heroic Songs of the Serbs, translated by Helen Rootham. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Early Persian Poetry from the Beginnings down to the Time of Firdausi, by A. V. Williams Jackson. Macmillan Co.
Discovered by POETRY, which has published some of her best poems,

HILDA CONKLING

is now proclaimed a real poet throughout the country

POEMS BY A LITTLE GIRL

is just published and contains, in addition to the verse published in POETRY, a large number of new poems.

Miss Harriet Monroe says of this verse by eight-year-old Hilda, "The poems give us, with delicate precision, the mind—indeed, the very living spirit—of an imaginative child; one so highly endowed that she is able to speak for all children."

Miss Amy Lowell says, "I wish to state emphatically that it is poetry, the stuff and essence of poetry, which this book contains. I know of no other instance in which such really beautiful poetry has been written by a child."

Miss Lowell so fully expresses our enthusiasm for Hilda's verse that we have reproduced most of her Preface to the volume in a pamphlet which we shall gladly send to those interested.

The book sells for $1.50

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

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