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Poetry A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
August 1920
New Mexico Folk-poems

Cowboy Songs
by N. Howard Thorp
Western Poems
by Phil Le Noir
New Mexico Folk-songs
by Alice Corbin

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COWBOY SONGS

SKY-HIGH

THE scream of the outlaw split the air
As we tied him hard and fast
To the snubbing post in the horse corral;
For his turn had come at last

To learn the feel of spurs of steel
As they graze along each side.
En Bugger pulled up his chaps a hole,
For he was the next to ride.

We knew he'd strike, we knew he'd bite,
We knew he'd kick and rear;
So we grabbed his ears en held his head
Till Bugger got up near.
POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

He stepped into the saddle
   En hollered, "Let 'im go!"
We jerked the blinder from his eyes,
   Then stopped to watch the show.

You've all heard of pitchin' horses
   From Steamboat down the line:
Old Barometer, en Step Fast
   En a mare they called Divine;

Old Prickly Pear, en Pizen,
   Lop Ears, en Stingaree—
They all wuz Shetland ponies
   'Side this horse from Santa Fe.

We asked Red in tones solicitous
   If he had made his will—
Had he any girl in Texas
   Who really loved him still?

Was there any parting message
   That he would like to send
To some one in his old, old home
   Who still might be his friend?

Who was his pet undertaker?
   What parson should we get?
Would he have flowers on his coffin?
   I can hear old Bugger yet:

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"Mosey, you four-flush punchers,
Don't weep no tears for me!—
I'm a ridin' kid from Texas,
From the old 3 Bar C!

"Go up, you old Cloud-getter,
I can see the Pearly Gate,
We're a-doin' the Grand Ascension—
Loopin' the loops, as sure as fate;

"If I'm a judge of horses,
You're not one, two, three,
With the gentle stock we used to ride
At the old 3 - C!"

He whipped old Sky-high till he quit,
He rowelled him up and down.
Old Sky-high had a plenty—
He could hardly turn around.

En we heard old Bugger hummin'
Es he turned the outlaw free,
"I'm a ridin' kid from Texas,
From the old 3 - C!"

OLD HANK

Driftin' along the rim-rock, old Camp-robber and I,
Out on a scoutin' trip, circlin' the flat land dry,
Cuttin' the sign of the cattle, watchin' which way they drift,
Pullin' 'em out of the bog holes, givin' the weak ones a lift,
Throwin' 'em back on the home range, each day in a different place,
In slickers en leggins of leather, through sand-storms that blister your face. . . .

Boss in the ranch house rides easy—his days of worry are gone,
For he made his pile in the old trail days, the days of the old long-horn.
Yep, I'm only a worn-out old puncher—though the boss thinks a heap of me!
For I was with him on the Pecos, in the Raid of Seventy-three! . . .

Then he married, en got him religion, en tells you how you mustn't do wrong;
How a brand is the cow-man's protection—then he'll deal you a gospel song!

But I'll tell you Old Hank was the slickest that ever laid line on a steer,
Or burnt over a brand with a runnin'-iron, or worked on an old cow's ear!
'Course, friends, all this talk's confidential—I wouldn't want Old Hank to see
That I haven't changed my damned religion, since the Trail Herd of Seventy-three!

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Daddy come from Brownsville,
   En Maw from San Antone;
We come here in a wagon
   That ud rock en squeak en groan.

We brought our stock er horses,
   The boys come on afore,
En Dad was playin' all the way
   Old Turkey in the Straw!

There's me en Sister Annie,
   En Tom, en Si, en Budd—
We all was raised with cattle,
   So I guess it's in our blood.

En I shore love the dances—
   Folks say I take after Maw—
When Dad takes down his fiddle
   En plays Turkey in the Straw!

We ain't jest much on stylish,
   But we got a good home ranch;
En the little old horse-pasture
   Runs clear down to the branch.

En we're all plumb contented
   Since Dad put hinges on the door,
En with his old brown fiddle
   Plays Turkey in the Straw!
I got er pair er shop-made boots
    That Dad had made fer me,
Er pair er silver-mounted spurs
    Es pretty es can be.

We ride ter all the dances,
    En when I get on the floor
I'm sure to hear Dad playin'
    Old Turkey in the Straw!

I've got a young cow-puncher roped,
    I've got 'im on my string;
En everything is lovely—
    We'll be married in the spring;

Es we ain't much on religion
    We'll be married by the law,
En I kin hear Dad playin'
    Old Turkey in the Straw!

PECOS TOM

Where the old Fort Sumner Barracks look down on the
Pecos wide,
In a dug-out near the crossin' we was a-sittin' side by side.
Old Pecos Tom, the cow-man, en your humble servant me,
Was a-swappin' cow-camp stories in the fall of Eighty-
three,
When my gaze it sorter fastened on a gun slung on his side, 
Worth some fifteen thousand dollars—say, maybe you think I’ve lied?
But the handle was plumb covered with diamonds of all size,
En she’d glitter, en she’d glisten, es she hung down from his side.
You could have bought his whole darned outfit fer a yearlin’ steer or two;
Hat, boots, overalls, en chaps—there was nothin’ that was new.
Lived down in a dug-out, on jus’ sour-dough bread en beef,
En was just about es happy es a Choctaw Indian chief.
Figured he had ten thousand cattle en the whole wide range was his,
En if he wanted a good six-shooter it was no one else’s biz.
So when he shipped a train er steers to Chicago late one fall,
En was strollin’ on up State Street, he thought he’d make a call
On the biggest jewelry outfit, that kept gaudy things to wear.
But when he asked for a six-shooter the Jew clerk began to stare:
“Yes, we’ve got one that was ordered for a bloomin’ English lord,
But I reckon from your outfit it’s a gun you can’t afford.
"It will cost you fifteen thousand." Says Old Tom, "Just give her here, You counter-jumpin' goniff!" En he grabbed him by the ear, En he peeled off fifteen thousand to the Hebrew standing there, Sayin', "Don't judge western cow-men by the outfits that they wear!"

"'LIGHT, STRANGER, 'LIGHT"

For this is the law of the western range When a stranger hails in sight— "Just tie up your hoss in the old corral, En 'light, stranger, 'light!"
'Tis a land of hospitable people, You're welcome in daytime or night; Always one more chair at the table, So it's "'Light, stranger, 'light!"

We don't ask no inquisitive questions, If your people are native or white. At our ranch you will find you are welcome, So it's "'Light, stranger, 'light!"

You may be an outlaw, or preacher, Got into some place kinda tight— Someday you'll return the favor, So it's "'Light, stranger, 'light!"
We are just plain cow-folks in Texas,
   But you'll find we are all about right,
You may stay for a year and be welcome,
   So it's 'Light, stranger, 'light!'

WOMEN OUTLAWS

There's a touch of human pathos,
   A glamour of the West,
Round the names of women outlaws
   Who have now gone to their rest:
Broncho Sue, Belle Star, and Shudders,
   Pike Kate, and Altar Doane,
Calamity Jane, Sister Cummings,
   And the Rose of Cimmaron.

You've all oft heard the saying,
   "I'd go to Hell for you!"
About these women outlaws
   That saying was too true.

Each left her home and dear one
   For the man she loved the best;
Close by his side on many a wild ride
   Through the mountains of the West.

They've played their parts in western drama,
   On the great un-screened western stage,

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Where the mountains were their platform,
    Their stage-setting rocks and sage.

Hunted by many a posse,
    Always on the run,
Every man’s hand against them,
    They fought, and often won.

With a price upon each head,
    They’d have to fight and stand;
And die as game as any man,
    With a gun in either hand.

My hat off to you, women outlaws,
    For you did what you thought best;
And the same wild blood that coursed your veins
    Has settled up the West.

Whether right or wrong, your spirit
    Knew not the word of fear—
And ’tis the dauntless courage of your kind
    That bred the pioneer!

OLD PAINT

Every time I see an old paint horse, I think of you,
    Old Paint horse of mine that used to be.
Old pal o’ mine that was, the best horse of all, because—
    That’s why, old horse, at last I set you free!
I've bought 'em by the thousand, I've owned 'em everywhere—

There's one stands out among 'em all alone.

Paint-marked everywhere, tail a little short of hair,

Old horse, you never failed to bring me home!

'Member when they stole you from Pass City,

En locked you up inside the Juarez jail?—

Said that you had eaten up an entire crop of wheat,

En I had to rustle round en get your bail?

En I got you cross the river en matched you in a race,

En we bet the last red dollar we could scrape?—

En how you bit old Rocking Chair, the horse you run against,

En made him turn his head en lose the race?

We was both young en foolish in them green days long ago—

I don't believe in telling stories out of school!

'Member when we roped the pianner en jerked her out the door?

Hush up! Old Paint, you're talkin' like a fool!

Well, old horse, you're buried, en your troubles they are done;

But I often sit en think of what we did,

En recall the many scrapes we had, en used to think it fun,

Es we rode along the Rio Grande . . . .

Good bye, old Kid!

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WHAT'S BECOME OF THE PUNCHERS

What's become of the punchers
We rode with long ago?
The hundreds and hundreds of cowboys
We all of us used to know?

Sure, some were killed by lightning,
Some when the cattle run;
Others were killed by horses
And some with the old six-gun;

Those that worked on the round-up,
Those of the branding-pen,
Those who went out on the long trail drive
And never returned again.

We know of some who have prospered,
We hear of some who are broke,
My old pardner made millions in Tampa,
While I've got my saddle in soak!

Sleeping and working together,
Eating old "Cussie's" good chuck,
Riding in all kinds of weather,
Playing in all kinds of luck;

Bragging about our top-hosses,
Each puncher ready to bet

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His horse could outrun the boss's,
Or any old hoss you could get!

Scott lies in Tularosa,
    Elmer Price lies near Santa Fe,
While Randolph sits here by the fire-side
    With a "flat-face" on his knee.

'Gene Rhodes is among the high-brows,
    A-writin' up the West;
But I know a lot of doin's
    That he never has confessed!

He used to ride 'em keerless
    In the good old days
When we both worked together
    In the San Andrays!

Building big loops we called "blockers,"
    Spinning the rope in the air;
Never a cent in our pockets,
    But what did a cow-puncher care?

I'm tired of riding this trail, boys,
    Dead tired of riding alone—
B'lieve I'll head old Button for Texas,
    Towards my old Palo Pinto home!
WESTERN POEMS

DOWN ON THE OL’ BAR-G

The boss he took a trip to France—

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

He left his gal to run the ranch,

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

She wouldn’t let us chew nor cuss,
Had to keep slicked up like a city bus,
So round-up time was u-nan-i-muss

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

Our round-up cook, he soon got th’u,

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

Found his clay pipe right in the stew,

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

But when we let that feller go

We married grief an’ we married woe,
For the gal opined she’d bake the dough,

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

Wisht you’d seen her openin’ meal

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

We all blinked twict—seemed plumb unreal,

\textit{Down on the ol’ Bar-G.}

We had figs an’ fudge an whipped-up pru’in,
An’ angel cake all dipped in goo-in,

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“My Gawd!” said Tex, “my stomick’s ruint”—
*Down on the ol’ Bar-G.*

We quit that job an’ cook-ladee
*Down on the ol’ Bar-G.*
An’ pulled our freight for the lone prair-ee,
*Down on the ol’ Bar-G.*
For out on the range we could chew an’ cuss
An’ git real mean an’ bois-ter-uss,
Whar apron-strings they couldn’t rope us
*Down on the ol’ Bar-G.*

**OL’ DYNAMITE**

The outlaw stands with blindfold eyes,
   His feet set wide apart;
His coal-black hide gleams in the sun—
   Thar’s killin’ in his heart.

A puncher squats upon his heels,
   His saddle at his side;
He’s sizin’ up Ol’ Dynamite,
   That he is booked to ride.

The cowboy rises, lifts his saddle—
   A little tune he’s hummin’;
Walks cat-like all around the hoss—
   “Hold him, boys, I’m comin’!”
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Now up above the outlaw's back
He lifts the load o' leather;
Then care-ful-lee he lets it down,
Like the droppin' of a feather.

Ol' Dynamite he stands stock-still,
Plumb like a gentled pony.
A leap, a yell! an' Buck's all set—
"On with the cer-e-mo-nee!"

The snubbers rip the blindfold off,
The punchers yip and yell.
Ol' Dynamite gives one grand snort,
Then starts his little Hell.

He plunges forward on his feet,
His hind heels in the air.
Then up an' down he bucks an' backs
Like a loco rockin' chair.

But now he stops—he spins around—
He bawls, he bites, he kicks!
He rares straight up into the air,
Then down on two steel sticks.

But look! "My Gawd!" the crowd screams out,
"He's boltin' for the stand!"
Then just as quick he jerks up short—
Thar's Buck a-stickin' grand.
Buck leaps to earth, lifts his hat,
   Bows to the whirl of cheers—
Then turning slides his saddle off,
   An’ quickly disappears.

THE PUNCHER POET

Jest onct I was a temperamental, sentimental poet—
Grew a man like Colonel Cody’s for to show it.
   I’d write poems in my dreams
And I’d sing ’em to the teams.
   Yup!
A sentimental, ornamental poet.

Wrote a poem onct about ol’ Bloody Bill,
Told about the many humans he had killed,
   Took him through his entire life,
   Showed his love an’ showed his strife.
Then I hung up like a lunger on a hill.

I was near the happy ending of my tale,
Had ol’ Billy ketched an’ in the county jail—
   When the words plum petered out,
   Wouldn’t flow, wouldn’t spout.
Then I roared an’ hit the temperamental trail.

I went to pawin’ an’ a clawin’ for them words,
Skeered the wife an’ sent her roostin’ with the birds.
   But they wouldn’t come alive
Though I raved till half-past five;
Then I quit the house an' joined the loco herd.

Now I only hear one temperamental call—
It's the rumble of the cattle's organ-bawl.
    As fur the little tale
    Bloody Bill is still in jail—
Which was a damn good place to leave him after all.

    Phil LeNoir
RIDER OF SUN FIRE

Fly, rider of sun fire,
Bronzed wind of the plain!
Unbitted your wiry
Hackamore rein—
It is free as rough locks
Of a mustang’s mane,
While you whirl and untwirl
And whirl once again,
With flashes of war-whoops
And rattle of chain.

You wind the wide circles
The reata sings—
Curves of snake-twisted quirts
That the mad wind swings!—
Swift as cloud-flying dust
That hisses and stings,
Wild as crack of romal
Or bull-whip that rings!
Hi! Broncho-buster, cow-puncher,
Chaps . . . sombrero . . . and wings!

Lucy Eddy
THE BALLAD OF MACARIO ROMERO

Said Macario Romero to the Captain Villaplata:
Please give me permission to go to see mi chata.

Said the Captain Villaplata: Macario, what is this?
You will give your life away for a foolish woman’s kiss!

Said Macario Romero, in his stirrups rising free:
Why, they are all good friends of mine; what could they do to me?

Said the Captain Villaplata: Against my will you go;
’Twill be unhealthy for you, as you too soon will know.

Said Macario Romero, as he faced the other way:
I go to see mi chata, no man can make me stay.

Said Rosita to her papa: It’s Macario I see.
Said Papa: How do you know it?—By his horse I know it’s he!

Said the papa of Rosita: Now what joke shall we play?
Let us give a dance to fool him and take his gun away.

When Macario arrived there, they were dancing in the hall;
But Macario was careful and would not get drunk at all.
Said Rosita to Macario: Hurry up, let's play a trick; Saddle up two horses pronto, and for heaven's sake be quick!

Said the papa of Rosita: Macario, my friend, I beg you, do not take her now—you will come to no good end.

Said Macario Romero: I would gladly wait awhile, But if I do not take her now, then all these men will smile!

Said the papa of Rosita: How badly you behave, To go off with an hombre who will fill an early grave!

Said Rosita to her papa: It is not his fault, but mine; 'Tis I who have made love to him; we'll go while there is time.

As they came out to the open stream, in one another lost, When they were least expecting it, the first shot crossed.

Said Macario Romero: Why do they not stand free? I am used to killing birds in flight, not a man I cannot see.

Said Rosita to Macario: Shoot! and let them have their fill! I will watch your back, Macario—oh, shoot at them to kill!

Said Macario Romero: Rosita, soul divine, I wish to die within your arms, come put your breast on mine.

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Said Rosita: O Macario, Macario, my dear!
Only to die within my arms, that I have brought you here! . . . .

Said the little child Rosita: Now you have done your worst!
Now you may kill Rosita, and forever be accurst!

She grabbed Macario's pistol, and as they came in sight:
Now you will see, you cowards, how I shall make you fight!

MADRE MARIA

On the mountain Lucía
Was Madre María,
With book of gold.
Half was she reading,
Half praying and pleading
For sorrow foretold.

Came her son Jésus
To the mountain Lucía:
"What are you doing then,
Madre María?"

"Nor reading nor sleeping,
But dreaming a dream.
On Calvary's hill-top
Three crosses gleam,
Bare in the moonlight;
Your body on one
Nailed feet and hands,
O my dear little son!"

"Be it so, be it so,
O mi Madre María!"

Who says this prayer
Three times a day
Will find Heaven's doors
Opened alway,
And Hell's doors shut
Forever and aye. . . .
Amen, Jesús!

MANZANITA

Little red apple upon the tree,
If you are not in love, fall in love with me.

From me this night you shall not go,
Not till the dawn, when the first cocks crow.

CHULA LA MAÑANA

Pretty is the morning,
Pretty is the day.
When the moon comes up
It is light as day.
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Fortune's wheel keeps turning!

Yes, Fortune has its ups and downs,
    Fortune is a bubble.
It was all for a married woman
    I had my trouble.

Fortune's wheel keeps turning!

It was eight o'clock at the bridge,
    And nine at Jésus María,
But before I could reach her door,
    I was caught by her fat old tía!

Fortune's wheel keeps turning!

EL COYOTITO

When I left Hermosillo
    My tears fell like rain,
But the little red flower
    Consoled my pain.

I am like the coyote
    That rolls them, and goes
Trotting off side-ways,
    And nobody knows.

The green pine has fallen,
    Where the doves used to pair;

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Now the black one may find on returning
Little tow-heads with sandy hair!

The adobe is gone
Where my sword hung suspended;
Why worry—when everything’s
At the last ended?

The adobe is gone
Where my mirror was bright,
And the small cedar tree
Is the rabbit’s tonight.

The cactus is bare
Where the tunas were sweet;
No longer need you be jealous
Of the women I meet.

Friends, if you see her
In the hills up above,
Don’t tell her that I am in prison—
For she is my love.

CHRIST IS BORN IN BETHLEHEM
_A New Mexico Nursery Rhyme_

_Cristo nacio_ is what the rooster said,
And the hen said, _En Belen!_
The goats were so curious that they said

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Vamos a ver—let us go see!
But the wise old sheep said,
No es menester!—there's no need of it!

Cristo nacio
En Belen!
Vamos a ver—
No es menester!

COPLAS

I

Put orange in your wine
    And make it thin and weak;
He who has never known love,
    Of living may not speak.

II

All the buffalo-hunters have gone,
    Every good man passes;
Only the shameless one is left
    Eating corn-meal with molasses.

III

She who marries an old man
    For his money, pays;
The money goes,
    But the old man stays.

He who loves and does not give
    To be jealous has no right;
Instead he should be thankful
    That they love him with nothing in sight!

You say that you love me so much—
    Do not lift me so high;
For the topmost leaves on the tree
    Are the first to die.

Damn the black clothes,
    And the scissors and thread!
My sweetheart wears mourning,
    Yet I am not dead!

Night before last at your house
    I knocked three times around.
You are no good for lovers
    Because you sleep too sound.
As I came down from Cundiyo,  
Upon the road to Chimayo  
    I met three women walking;  
Each held a sorrow to her breast,  
And one of them a small cross pressed—  
    Three black-shawled women walking.

"Now why is it that you must go  
Up the long road to Cundiyo?"
    The old one did the talking:  
"I go to bless a dying son."
"And I a sweetheart never won."
    Three women slowly walking.

The third one opened wide her shawl  
And showed a new-born baby small  
    That slept without a sorrow:  
"And I, in haste that we be wed—  
Too late, too late, if he be dead!  
    The Padre comes tomorrow."

As I went up to Cundiyo,  
In the grey dawn from Chimayo,  
    I met three women walking;  
And over paths of sand and rocks  
Were men who carried a long box—  
    Beside three women walking.
PETROLINO'S COMPLAINT

The old ways have changed since you walked here,
But worst of all is the way the people have become.
They have no hearts, and their minds are like putty,
And if you ask for conversation, they might as well be
dumb!

Though I am old, and my sight is not good,
And I don't hear as well—muy verdad—as some,
With my stick I can walk faster than many,
And my mind travels faster than a man's with no tongue!

The young have no thought for their elders,
Their ranches are now no bigger than your thumb,
The young men work in the mines in Colora'o,
Or they sit and warm their stomachs in the sun!

The girls spend their money on big hats and velvet,
But when they would marry, they haven't the sum;
And the old songs and dances are forgotten,
As the Saints will be forgotten—if they go on as they've
begun!

I have gone looking through hillsides and canyons,
Through all the placitas where we used to run;
But the old ways have changed since you walked here,
And a goat is more sociable than a man that is dumb!

Alice Corbin
FOLK poetry in the United States has followed the trail of the pioneer. The first songs sung in this country were of course—to follow first the Anglo-Saxon lineage—the traditional English hymns, ballads, and songs brought from the mother country, and still to be found by devoted students of folk-song in the isolated regions still inhabited by Anglo-Saxon descendants. Following these came the native Yankee ballads, the pure home-spun narratives and songs (the reader is referred to *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*), of which *Yankee Doodle* is perhaps the most popularly known. James Russell Lowell synthesized the Yankee elements of these ballads, and the Yankee character, in *The Biglow Papers*, his surest claim to immortality, and became what we may call the first sophisticated American folk-poet; as Charles Godfrey Leland, with his popular portrayal of the Pennsylvania Dutch in the *Hans Breitmann Ballads* (1868), was the second. Meanwhile the pioneer was moving westward, and in 1871 John Hay published his *Pike County Ballads*, including *Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle*, and other folk-narratives of Indiana and Illinois life. Jim Bludso, it will be remembered, held his burning river steamer against the bank until the last passenger got ashore:

And they all had trust in his cussedness,
   And knowed he would keep his word.

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And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell—
And Bludso's soul went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

The same year saw the publication of the *East and West Poems* by Bret Harte, the first pioneer poet of the Far West, who extended the boundary of our folk-poetry from the Atlantic to the Pacific; precisely as this extension was typified by the meeting of the two engines of the first trans-continental railroad, celebrated in one of the poems in this volume. The types portrayed in Bret Harte's ballads were adventurous fortune-seekers, usually transplanted easterners, who in the ruggedness of pioneer life took on a primitive simplicity and directness in keeping with the primitive experience. But the pioneer wave, having gone as far west as possible in the rush for gold, turned backward to those lands of the South-west, the Rocky Mountain region and the Great Plateau, where cattle became the dominant motive in the quest for fortune; and in the songs of western cowboys we have the next contribution to our native folk-poetry.

Some of these were examples of what we may call the instinctive, unconscious strain of naive folk-song; and some of the more sophisticated type, as shown in the later development of cowboy songs by men like Charles Badger Clark, Henry Herbert Knibbs, and others. Meanwhile, the more domesticated Middle West was celebrated in the folk-songs of James Whitcomb Riley, whose claim upon the affections of such a large body of readers is due to the
pure folk-quality of his ballads. Eugene Field, too, is another poet of the Middle West whose songs of childhood have a genuine folk-spirit.

Such, broadly speaking, and with unavoidable omissions, is the course of our native folk-poetry of Anglo-Saxon stock, of purely native origin and owing little or nothing to an inherited literary tradition.

When we approach the South, we must recognize a strain which is not of Anglo-Saxon origin, either racially or traditionally, and yet must be regarded as purely native; for the Negro influence in the Negro dialect poems of Thomas Nelson Page or Joel Chandler Harris is not an alien influence. The Negro spirituals and plantation songs, constituting a large body of indigenous folk-song, are certainly not African. They are written in English, and they are saturated with the soil of this continent; and with our religion, which the American Negro has made his own, adding to it his own intensity, his own imaginative fervor and richness of concrete imagery.

As the Negro has absorbed us, so we have absorbed him. His songs, of which he borrowed the inspiration from us, now belong to us quite as much as to him; perhaps more, since the Negro is losing his native strain of song as rapidly as the white man is taking it up. We may therefore claim the Negro songs and spirituals as a part of our store of native folk-song, just as we claim the poems in Negro dialect by Thomas Nelson Page or Joel Chandler Harris, who picked up the thread where the primitive Negro poet

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dropped it; to be followed by the Negro poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who, it is significant to note, adopted the manner of these poets in writing songs of his race. The latest American poet to develop an inspiration furnished by Negro influence is, of course, Vachel Lindsay, who has improvised upon Negro themes precisely as the sophisticated musician improvises upon folk-melodies. The argument that the Negro element is not a native folk-influence in his work is of course untenable, and the genuine folk-quality in his Negro poems is indisputable.

We have another body of indigenous folk-poetry in the United States which is not of racially Anglo-Saxon or European stock, but which is unquestionably native. This is the primitive poetry of the American Indian. This has not become so domesticated in our blood as has the Negro folk-song. In fact, only recently has the beauty of this poetry begun to be recognized, through linguists who have given us literal renditions of Indian songs with a simplicity as direct as that of Mr. Arthur Waley’s translations from the Chinese and Japanese; or through the translations, or original songs based upon Indian themes, by poets who have been influenced by direct contact with Indian life. Although the American poet and the Indian poet belong to races and civilizations as distinctly different as the Occident and the Orient—which according to Kipling never meet, but according to actual experience are constantly meeting—the Indian influence on the American poet is native and of the soil.

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Whenever two civilizations or races impinge upon one another, whatever is absorbed from either by the other ceases to be alien. At least the alien element ceases to be alien precisely in proportion as it is assimilated and re-created. As Ernest Fenollosa has pointed out, it has never been sufficiently realized how much the alien is at the root of the national. We may therefore, while recognizing the distinctly racial roots, justly claim, as belonging to our body of native folk-poetry, not only the Indian originals, but also the work of such poets as Constance Lindsay Skinner, Mary Austin, Lew Sarett and others, in whom the Indian influence is derived from direct contact with Indian life rather than from a literary tradition or source. (Incidentally it is amusing to reflect how much our proverbial conception of the Indian is based upon the literary and romantically fictive character created by Longfellow and James Fenimore Cooper.) Finally, we may say that an arbitrary pedagogical barrier, placed about Indian motives and labelled as "alien," will not avail. Contact itself will break down such arbitrary barriers; and where the barriers have been broken down, the Indian influence ceases to be alien and becomes a part of our native folk inheritance.

This article is necessarily a mere brief and hasty summary, but we may hope that it will enlarge the boundaries of our recognized national indigenous sources. Much could be written of the folk-poetry of our European immigrants; but these, like the folk-songs of the original settlers or of their Anglo-Saxon descendants in the Southern Appalachians,
are inherited and traditional and do not spring from our own soil. An exception might possibly be made in favor of the Spanish folk-songs of the South-west, as these are of native rather than traditional source and spring from three centuries' direct contact with the soil. Also one might include the native Creole songs of Louisiana. Lafcadio Hearn, I believe, translated some of these; and Charles F. Lummis and others have made translations of both the indigenous and traditional Spanish folk-songs of the South-west. All these furnish native folk-nutriment for our poetic soil.

It may be that the folk-spirit is a necessary sub-soil for any fine national poetic flowering. It is certain at least that many of our contemporary poets are searching out the native sources of our life, as well as of our poetry, for the inspiration of their own. The soil has to be turned over; we have to examine our roots to know what they are. It would be interesting, if there were space, to trace the folk-spirit in the work of certain contemporary poets who may or may not have been conscious of this source of power: in the Ballad of John Evereldown and other poems by Edwin Arlington Robinson; in many poems by Robert Frost—for example, Brown’s Descent, which might easily pass as one of the early Yankee ballads; in Edgar Lee Masters’ Christmas at Indian Point, Steam-shovel Cut, Johnny Appleseed, and other middle-western narratives—a strain which the critics seem to have overlooked in this poet’s later work. It is in the point of view, as well as in the letter, that the
folk-spirit betrays itself; and the point of view of these men has much of it. One feels it also as the implied background of Carl Sandburg's *Cornhuskers*, and as the conscious motive of Edwin Ford Piper's *Barbed Wire*.

For the folk-spirit shows itself not only in the unconscious naivété of the instinctive and sometimes unlettered poet; it is a conscious flowering as well. If any one doubts it, he has only to turn to *The Ancient Mariner* or *La Belle Dame sans Merci*: these had a folk-tradition back of them. Traced to a remote beginning, far beyond *Sir Patrick Spens* or *The Faerie Queene*, the folk-tradition may have been as crude as our western cowboy songs, or *Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle*. Refinement is a matter of time—sometimes centuries. The important thing is to preserve the folk-spirit—and to recognize it first of all.

That we have failed to recognize its existence in our country is largely due to the fact that students of folk-song have placed a greater emphasis on the survivals of traditional English ballads in our remote mountain regions than on the more truly native and indigenous material that is all around us, which has been overlooked simply because of its more obvious familiarity and its lack of literary ancestry. But someone has to start a tradition, and the American folk-poets have done it.

Objections may be raised to the broad inclusiveness of the term folk-poetry as used in this article; and it may be necessary to re-define folk-poetry to some extent before meeting these objections. Folk-poetry, in the narrowest
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sense, is of course poetry composed and sung or recited by the people; poetry that comes from an unsophisticated source, or poetry that is purely instinctive and "unconscious"—to borrow a term used by Mr. Percy Grainger in his distinction between the music of primitive people and that of people who possess a knowledge of musical notation. But the fact of an oral rather than a written or printed tradition, sometimes a distinguishing mark of folk-poetry, is not in itself definitive, since much folk-poetry is of known authorship and widely distributed in printed form—witness the old English and Irish Broad Sheets and Chap Books. Nor is it essential that the folk-poet be illiterate or unsophisticated: we recognize Burns as a folk-poet, just as we know that John Milton is not one. When a folk-poet becomes sufficiently well-known to have his own personality established in our minds, we forget the class to which his work belongs and think of his songs in relation to himself. This of course is what has happened to Riley, Lowell, and the other sophisticated folk-poets named above.

In our country the general distribution of the printed page has blinded us to the essentially native folk-spirit of much of our poetry. Although this very dissemination of print has destroyed to a certain degree that provincial seclusion which formerly fostered folk-poetry, it has at the same time created a vast audience, and tended to enlarge our consciousness and give us folk-songs of a more general and familiar appeal—so general and familiar indeed that we have failed to recognize their peculiar significance as

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genuine expressions of the folk-spirit. By recognizing this spirit in much of our poetry, however, we may be able to make a new classification, simplifying the position of much verse which has a very real claim, as folk-poetry, upon the affections of that large body of people to whom it appeals.

Something should be said too concerning the use of dialect by our folk-poets. It has been too readily assumed that dialect is a distinctive mark of American folk-poetry. It takes more than dialect to make a folk-poet, and as a matter of fact its use has been perhaps a greater stumbling-block than help—if not to the poet, at least to our recognition of him as a folk-poet. Idiom is a finer and less crude test of the poet than dialect—a fact discovered by the poets of our generation noted above. This too is an indication that our folk-tradition is in process of growth and development.

Of course it is often assumed that we have no tradition, folk or otherwise. But this assumption is usually made by those who are uninformed—visiting Irish or Englishmen, or Europeans who have never set foot in our country, or Americans who have failed to consider the evidence or have been blind to its significance because of its very familiarity.

The subject is of course capable of much more extensive treatment than is afforded by this bare outline, which is meant to be suggestive rather than definitive. The trail of the pioneer, by which we traced the course of the folk tradition in this country, has returned upon itself. Culture has become intensive rather than expansive; and the tradi-

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tions, far from being non-existent or lost, are only just now beginning to receive their due recognition and appreciation. The poet who fails to perceive this is losing half his heritage. Our roots are double. On one side we have the heritage of classic English tradition (why it is assumed that we do not share in this equally with our English contemporaries it is hard to see!); and on the other hand we have a store of native tradition and experience which belongs to us alone. Manifestly it would be a mistake to ignore either, as it is a mistake to emphasize one at the expense of the other.

A. C. H.

REVIEWS

MR. LOMAX'S SECOND ANTHOLOGY


This book, a companion volume to the earlier *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, represents a secondary stage in the development of cowboy songs, which are, generally speaking, of two types: first, songs transmitted by purely oral tradition; and second, songs originally clipped from a local newspaper or magazine, fitted to a familiar air, and so handed down from one cowboy to another, becoming genuine folk-songs in the process. In this book the majority of the songs are of the second class, many of them having achieved the dignity of book-publication before Mr.
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Lomax, as he says, "lifted" them for his collection. This does not of course lessen their genuine folk-quality, since many of them were first known to Mr. Lomax through local cowboy versions. But it does increase the editor's responsibility to the authors, and we suggest that a bibliography should have been included. Henry Herbert Knibbs, Charles Badger Clark, Arthur Chapman, and Larry Chittendon have all published books of their own, a fact of which the reader should be fully informed.

Mr. Lomax gives two instances of the cowboys' reshaping of songs, in the two versions of Mr. Clark's *Just a' Ridin'* and *The Glory Trail*. (The cowboy version of the latter, furnished by Mr. Knibbs, was printed, under the Southern-Arizona title of *High Chin Bob*, in the August, 1917, number of *POETRY*.) This process of change and growth should be interesting to students as illustrating one theory, perhaps the most plausible, of the origin of folk-song. The song, according to this theory, is in the first place of individual authorship, and it becomes a folk-song through the continuous use and reshaping of many minds. Most of the songs in Mr. Lomax's earlier books are anonymous, or their authorship is remembered by only a few old-timers; but they, like these later songs of known origin, were unquestionably also of individual authorship.

Certain experts, especially the English or Irish, have complained that our western cowboy songs suffer because of the lack of an inherited literary tradition. Mr. Cecil J. Sharp, who has collected survivals of English folk-songs in the
southern Appalachians, says: "The cowboy has been de-spoiled of his inheritance of traditional song; he has nothing behind him." To this one might reply that however much or little he has behind him, the important thing is to recognize how much he has made of the life around him—how perfectly fitted the song is to the soil from which it springs. One can hardly say as much for the mountaineer of the southern Appalachians, who, with his inherited literary stock, has created comparatively little that is immediately his own. What one appreciates in the survivals of the old English folk-songs is precisely the literary association, with which we are all familiar. But the association of cowboy songs is directly local, and perhaps these can be appreciated fully only by one who is familiar with the life that has produced them. Certainly they appeal to a large public.

It is quite true that the cowboy’s world is less imaginary than actual. It is not peopled with fairies or ghostly apparitions—a fact apparently lamented by Mr. Sharp—but with characters quite as significant, heroic or tragic as Willie Reilly, Lord Ronald, or Barbara Allen. It is no false note for the cowboy to write of dying long-horns, or herds of buffalo, instead of wounded stags in green glades and knights in steel armor. The armor of the cowboy is his own, and he celebrates it—chaps, slicker, spurs, saddle, and horse. His life is—cattle; and those who think his adventures prosaic overlook the hidden romance, the lonely and tragic events, of the round-up, the long trail drive, and the night watch.
When the cowboy writes of himself, it is to contrast the loneliness and wildness of his life with the gentler culture he has forsaken; for most of these men came from the East, and not a few from England. To think, as Mr. Sharp seems to, that these poets sing only in the strain of "I'm a poor lonesome cowboy," is to miss the objective ballad quality of such songs as The Bull-whacker, The Buffalo Hunters, The Old Chisholm Trail, The Crooked Road to Holbrook, The Zebra Dun, Little Jo the Wrangler; and to overlook entirely those outlaw frontier ballads of Jesse James, Cole Younger, Sam Bass, Utah Carroll or Billy the Kid, which have, for the sons of western pioneers, an appeal far more immediate than the Robin Hood ballads.

Whenever the cowboy poet deserts the actual world and seeks to escape into an imaginary world, which Mr. Sharp says is the mark of the folk-poet, it is to dream of a cowboy heaven. There is a constant return to this theme. Through the long night watches the cowboy poet looks up to the stars, very near and living presences in the clear atmosphere of the West, and wonders about the hereafter in terms amusingly translated from his daily occupation:

And I'm scared that I'll be a stray yearling,
A maverick unbranded on high,
And get cut in the bunch with the "rusties,"
When the Boss of the Riders goes by.

He carries the same terminology into his courtship songs, and thereby creates a new idiom. About this idiom he is far more exacting than about any question of rhyme or meter,
and the tenderfoot who essays to enter this field is at once detected by departures from the correct lingo, or by an amateurish way of handling the various leathers.

One must remember, of course, that the cowboy songs are comparatively recent—a half-century is perhaps the extreme limit of their antiquity; whereas the English folk-songs have had the traditional shaping of many generations, the forms in which they have finally come down to us being perhaps much finer than their possibly crude beginnings. Under our modern conditions, one can not presage a like shaping and remolding of these folk-songs of the West. Railroads and aeroplanes move too swiftly to allow a slow, secluded maturing such as the older folk-songs had; and the cowboy himself is disappearing. Yet in the hands of later men—poets who have shared the cowboy’s life or come immediately after him—some of this reshaping is taking place. What the final result may be it is too soon to say, but meanwhile we may be well content to accept these songs for what they are—naive records of the hard and free life on the range, including in their homely recitatives many sharply dramatic incidents no less dramatic for being obscure, and much good-humored as well as grimly sardonic humor. And, incidentally, the western cowboy songs represent a distinct contribution to our native folk-poetry, one no less significant because it creates a new tradition instead of reflecting a tradition of the past.

A. C. H.
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IMMIGRATION AND IMPORTATION

_McAroni Ballads_, by T. A. Daly. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

_Apology:_ Falsity in life is always redeemed. But falsity in art is falsity become self-conscious, and insisting upon making a shameless show of itself. No weapons are harsh enough against it.

Let the wops who waste no words as they crawl in the mud to shrivel chip by chip the rocks of America for roads and subways—let them throw their pick-axes in the air and dance a tarantella! Let them lift their pints of clear water, at lunch time, and let the bitter remembrance of beer times be sweetened by a mystic thought! Let the dagoes who consecrated with crime Chicago's death-corner throw away their guns and join the Salvation Army! Let the big Sicilian mother put a green-and-red ribbon on each of the seven heads of her seven children—and the oldest is seven!—and send them out singing the _Star-spangled Banner!_ Alleluia!

The Italian immigrants have at last their laureate poet: T. A. Daly. They have at last their modern _Divina Commedia_, T. A. Daly's _McAroni Ballads_. O the sweetish, witlessly smiling, harmless, innocent, babyish, naïve stuff! O the big old great-hearted Yankee, and how he slaps 'em on the back, and how he guffaws at 'em, and how he comforts them with his magnificent "You're all right, you're all right, McAroni!" And his books sell.

And his books sell. The dialect is untrue, the names are impossibilities (Scalabrarta, Scalabrella, Gessapalena), there is a shameful and shameless lack of knowledge of even the
most obvious facts concerning Italian; and a viscid smear of joyless, cold, stupid, false optimism is spread all over them like margarine. O naïveté of my Sicilians and Calabresi! O bull-necked, horse-necked, leather-necked old wops with a rosary in one pocket and a red handkerchief dangling from the other as big as a flag! O my old women sitting for hours and hours perfectly still—my Italian Buddhas! How this little person would paint you all up and send you around town like fake Indians! And how scared and frightened he would be should he know what tremendous things your purity and naïveté are, in this country of grey and moving pictures!—should he know what your smile is, your tremendous smile, in America—you guineas, failures, you still sweeping and making these streets, you knowing nothing of the dirty business of paper and pen, and selling books!

Somebody will come to speak of you to you and the rest. Somebody will sometime say to them how much bitterness and how much death and how much hope there is for America in your finest slogan: “America, fruits without flavor, women without color!” And this country will be your lover, taking from your true hands your ancient love. Perhaps the splendid or horrible pageant of a great race passes in a country which ought to be wide- and wonder-eyed because she is new; and perhaps this great pageant of crime, poverty, slums, songs passes, and there is no one to see it but a little man who sells many copies of his books, and who looks with condescending eyes upon what he doesn’t and can’t see.

Emanuel Carnevali

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SOUTH-AMERICAN POETRY


It is a pity that Dr. Goldberg has not pursued throughout his Studies the plan of quoting the original Spanish and following it by textual translation. His book is more than a volume of critical essays; it is the history of a literature almost unknown to the English reader, and it pretends to be also an anthology of characteristic selections from the verse of Dario, Rodo, Chocano, Eguren, and Blanco-Fombona. As a matter of fact most of these selections are given in the crude verse of Miss Alice Stone Blackwell, who, in 1896, published an anthology of Armenian Poems. In the present case, as in that, she would seem to have made verse versions from a literal prose translation and to have been ignorant of the original—a method dangerously unscholarly, and in this case unjustified by even a rudimentary rhythmic instinct. The quality of her work is sufficiently indicated by the quotation of three lines:

What thing than the lily unstained is more white?—
More pure than the mystic wax taper so bright?—
More chaste than the orange-flower, tender and fair?

Poetic diction for her seems to consist of archaisms, inversions, and echoes of that volume's phraseology which more than Kipling or Mother Goose has corrupted the popular taste in poetry, the Hymnal. How far her awkward jingles misrepresent the originals she is pretending to translate may easily be guessed after a comparison of her versions with the
literal translations of Dr. Goldberg himself. His scholarship gives us the most of the poet, and, I had almost said, the least of the translator. But the height of the translator’s art is clarity, lucidity—Dr. Goldberg offers his utmost, not his least, when he is most invisible, most transparent to the images of Dario, or Rodo, or Eguren. In eleven pages of prose translation he has probably given a better idea of the new Spanish-American verse than in all the metrical versions with which the three-hundred-sixty preceding pages of the book are sprinkled. By quoting the Spanish as well, he has enabled the reader to enjoy the melody of the original, a thing not even suggested by a crude aping of rhyme-schemes and metrical patterns. A few examples of his work will suffice. The first is Dario’s *Campoamor*:

Este del cabello cano
Como la piel del armino,
Junta su candor de niño
Con su experiencia de anciano.
Cuendo se tiene en la mano
Un libro de tel baron
Abeja es cada expression.
Que volando del papel
Deja en los labios la miel
Y pica en el corazon.

This sage, with hair as white as ermine, merged his childhood candor with his old-age’s experience. When you hold such a man’s book in your hands, each expression is a bee, which, flying from the paper, leaves its honey on your lips and its sting in your heart.

This is an early poem which won for Dario, then a young journalist in Valparaiso, a prize of two hundred pesos. It is an excellent imitation of the style of the poet in whose
honor it was written. The very form of the poem gives life to the idea it expresses.

Other fragments of translation I quote, for brevity's sake, without the Spanish:

Was it perchance in the North or in the South? I do not know the day or the season, but I know that Eulalia still laughs, and her golden laughter is cruel and eternal!

Are you an artist? I disfigure you.
Are you worthy? I criticize you.
I abhor you if you are rich,
And if you are poor I stone you.
And, pillaging honor
And wounding everything in sight,
It appears certain
That man is a wolf to man.

In these translations, as in the pages of history and criticism, the student of modern poetry seeks something novel, something distinctively Spanish-American. So far as one can judge, however, by the material made available, this novelty is just the thing that is lacking. Much may have been done—we have it on Dr. Goldberg's word as a scholar that much has been done—by these young American writers to refresh the language of old Spain, and to give to the forms of old Spanish verse a newer grace and freedom. The trouble is that the Modernista renovation seems to have refreshed style only. To thought and imagery these poets of greater Spain seem to have contributed nothing. They have, indeed, imported much that is Parisian into Spanish verse; they have aped the Parnassians and the Symbolist-decadents, but they have apparently done nothing but ape.
The rich mass of material distinctively Spanish or Spanish-American seems to lie untouched while these exponents of modern verse sing of poets, lovers, sweethearts, old men, love, death as sentimentally and as vaguely as if all about them did not live and breathe a reality infinitely picturesque and almost untouched as material for poetry. It is maddening to hear a poet sentimentalize over Naxos when he should be interpreting Nicaragua.

Is South America then invisible to the South Americans, that they sing the tediously classic Mediterranean, and antiquated Olympus, instead of the South Atlantic and the Andes? If so, the eclecticism of South American poetry looks dangerously like aimless imitation.

Grant H. Code

WALEY ON THE "UTA"

Moons of Nippon, by Edna Worthley Underwood. Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago.

Arthur Waley's Japanese Poetry is, to a Japanese, a series of pleasant surprises and disappointments. As a western student of the Japanese classical language, Mr. Waley seems to be a wonder; what he offers us here has never been attempted before. But whether he understands Japanese poetry or not is a question. The book is a good dictionary, and an aid to the grammatical study of the Japanese classical poems.
The book contains almost two hundred old *uta*, a form of Japanese poetry, with a grammatical foot-note to each, and a translation. As the author reminds us, the *uta* consists of five lines, arranged in 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, syllables. This form of poetry was written as a part of the *naga-uta*, "long song," and was called *tanka*, "short song," previous to the eighth century, during which period the Japanese poets dropped the longer part and ventured on the *tanka* as an independent poem. Ever since, the thirty-one syllable *uta* has been the standard.

In the introductory chapter Mr. Waley writes the history of Japanese poetry in a scholarly manner. He says: "The *naga-uta*, 'long songs,' of Manyo were an unsuccessful experiment. The Japanese poets quickly realized that they had no genius for extended composition," etc. Perhaps Mr. Waley overlooked the *jorori*, *biwa-uta* and the *noh* plays. In the western conception of poetry these are poems, and I do not hesitate to class some of *biwa-uta* with the most beautiful English lyrics. Probably it did not occur to him that long compositions were distasteful to the Japanese poets, so that they simply did not call them poems.

Indeed, to the Japanese poets thirty-one syllables were a little too long to be a good form, so during the seventeenth century they preferred three lines, seventeen syllables, and called the form a *senriu*, or a *hokku*, according to the kind of mood it creates.

*Dragon-fly Catcher*, by the lady Chiyo, which has been translated so often into English, is a good example of the
Waley on the "Uta"

hokku. She writes of the death of her only son: before her eyes still flickers the vision of a happy child dancing after a dragon-fly. The tragic mood of the mother's wandering mind after her child's death is successfully created by seven words; five hundred words would not have created so vivid a mood as these seven. And Mr. Waley says:

It might have been expected that the Japanese, having confined themselves for centuries to the five-line uta, would at length have grown impatient of its restrictions, and embarked on wider seas. Paradoxically, they pursued an opposite course. The five lines were contracted to three lines, and the hokku . . . . became the standard metre, etc.

I do not wonder that this step seems a paradox to Mr. Waley. It is fortunate that he did not translate the hokku.

"A little potted flower, six lights shine within"—as Mr. Noguchi describes the hokku, the combination of seven or eight words, creating the immeasurable mood of nature, or of the highest tension of human emotion—this is Japanese poetry. Therefore the Japanese poets carefully select the creative and suggestive words, avoiding all descriptive words. The change of one syllable out of the thirty-one, without changing the meaning, may destroy the poem. A successful translation is impossible. The following is an example from the book:

1. Nawa no ura ni
2. Shiwo yaku keburi
3. Yu sareba,
4. Yuki-sugi kanete
5. Yama ni tanabiku.

On the shore of Nawa
The smoke of the saltburners,
When evening comes
Failing to get across,
Trails over the mountain.

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Reading the translation one wonders what it is all about. It has completely lost its original identity, yet no better translation could be made from word to word. The "saltburners" might be taken for witches or similar creatures by the reader, but they are peasants who manufacture salt from salt water, and live a very simple life.

In the original, I feel the quietude of a spring evening. The heavy steamy smoke from the saltburners' huts, drawing lines, slowly trails toward the mountain and settles into one stratum across its middle. There is a suggestion of a calm sea, a mirror-like sheet of water without a stir of air; perhaps a boat or two with its sail flapping, going nowhere, as evening gradually closes in. With this setting as a background, the poem creates the mood of the simple village life. It is something akin to "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day." However, the Japanese poet does not go into the description of a graveyard, or get sentimental over would-be heroes and poets. He simply takes you there and puts you in the mood, so that you can stretch your imagination as far as you please.

Mr. Waley truly says: "The translations in this book are chiefly intended to facilitate the study of the Japanese text; for Japanese poetry can only be rightly enjoyed in the original." So, instead of trying to give poetry in a translation, which so many bad poets have tried and failed to do, he makes a strenuous grammatical study of the poems and inserts foot-notes which may assist students. Besides this, one chapter is devoted to notes on grammar, which are as
accurate as in a Japanese text. To a poet who is interested in Japanese poetry and sincerely desires to study it, the value of this book can never be over-estimated. Thanks are due to Mr. Waley for this bridge into an unknown poetic world.

Mrs. Underwood's *Moons of Nippon* has a pretty, supposed-to-be-Japanese cover design, showing a pine tree, a large yellow moon and blue waves. There are a few pleasing short poems in the volume, but I do not know from what language they are derived. The author says they are translated from the Japanese. 

Jun Fujita

**NEGO POETS**

*Fifty Years and Other Poems*, by James Weldon Johnson.  
*Songs of my People*, by Charles Bertram Johnson.  
*From the Heart of a Folk*, by Waverley Turner Carmichael.  
*The Band of Gideon*, by Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.  
Cornhill Co.

The Negro race has given so much musically to America that we look eagerly for signs of what we may expect in poetical contribution. But a mere half-century after the Emancipation is too soon to make even a forecast. *Fifty Years*, by James Weldon Johnson, which opens with a poem in celebration of the Proclamation, containing strong passages, and has also some good dialect pieces, is the most important of the volumes here grouped. What Charles Bertram Johnson says in his poem *Negro Poets* is true, for even Paul Laurence Dunbar's achievement of a few fine
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poems, both in and out of dialect, does not quite satisfy the aspirations of his race:

Full many lift and sing
Their sweet imagining;
Not yet the Lyric Seer,
The one bard of the throng,
With highest gift of song,
Breaks on our sentient ear.

H. H.

TWO ESSAYISTS


Two collections of lectures. The former is at its best when on the subjects of Rhythm and Personality. Here is an extract which shows that Mr. Newbolt is no advocate of fixed and unchangeable metrics in poetry, but believes, like other progressive minds, in “perpetual change”:

Poetic rhythm is not an applied ornament, nor the result of a mechanical process, nor the fit subject of a pedantic criticism. It is, on the contrary, part of the poet’s means of expression, and an aid to the communication between spirit and spirit: its quality is of a subjective nature, and should be studied mainly from a subjective point of view. . . . Since poetry is a personal expression, and the essence of personality is distinctive, the natural tendency of poetic rhythm will be toward perpetual change. It is strange that any opinion, any feeling, however conservative, should fight against this, for it means that while we keep all that the past has given, what we shall receive from the future will be new gifts instead of copies of old ones. And, whether welcome or unwel-

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come, the historical fact is beyond dispute that our poetry has shown a long continued development of rhythm; and always the effort has been toward greater freedom, to be used for more complete and natural self-expression.

The structural value of the book is in its earlier chapters, as represented by the above extract. The remaining chapters, though conceived in a modern, liberal spirit, constitute but a loose miscellany, ranging from Chaucer to Futurism.

Professor Palmer’s book is the personal excursion of a man who has loved poetry while devoting his life to another specialty, and who stakes out his independent course across the field of English verse: Chaucer, Spenser, George Herbert, Pope, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning. Does Chaucer reflect too exclusively the outer world? We have Spenser. Does Spenser inhabit too persistently a musical dream-land and neglect the individual soul? We have Herbert. Does Herbert tend to lead us into “metaphysical” tangles? We have Pope. Does Pope detain us overlong in the orderly, well-planned world of the classicists? We escape via Wordsworth. And so on. Marked omissions, surely; but a chain, after a fashion. Milton? “Too big for me,” says the author modestly. And Herbert—why so much of him, especially when Donne would have served so much better? Chiefly because, “bearing Herbert’s name, I have had him as a companion throughout my life, and have studied him elaborately.” Donne, in turn, seems “too big”—and too complicated. These papers are biographical as well as appreciatively critical, and each is accompanied by suggestions for reading.

H. B. F.
NOTES

Mr. N. Howard Thorp, of Santa Fe, N. M., better known as “Jack” Thorp to his many friends in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and across the Border, is the author of five poems in John A. Lomax’s collection of Cowboy Songs—Chopo, The Pecos River Queen, Little Jo the Wrangler, and Speckles; this last printed in Mr. Lomax’s book under the title of Freckles, a Fragment, just as it came from the hands of a local printer who had lost half the copy. These five songs were first published in Mr. Thorp’s small book, Songs of the Cowboys, set up by an Estancia print-shop in 1908—a western “best seller” never recorded in The Publishers’ Weekly, though perhaps the only book of verse which could be said to compete in this respect with the Spoon River Anthology. Mr. Thorp is an old-time cow-puncher and cattle man, and his songs are the fruit of experience. His gift is instinctive, like that of all real cow-punchers, and its charm is precisely in its fresh and indigenous folk quality. It is quite unconsciously, on Mr. Thorp’s part, that the theme of What’s Become of the Punchers presents the age-old theme of Villon, and more recently, of Edgar Lee Masters. The theme of course was old when Villon used it, and the similarity is mentioned merely because it is interesting to note the fact that some themes, no matter what the dress, seem to be eternally recurrent.

Mr. Phil LeNoir was born in New Jersey, and went west just before Arizona’s anti-gambling law went into effect. He saw something of the early and wilder life in the mining camps and along the Mexican border, and came to know many of the “old-timers.” He witnessed the first battle of one of the Mexican revolutions. For about ten years he was a Y. M. C. A. and Chamber of Commerce worker in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas; and for several years he worked among the punchers, riding fence principally, as he was not strong enough for the heavier work. He was one of the founders of the Las Vegas Cowboys Reunion, and was secretary of that organization for several years. During the war he was General Secretary of the New Mexico Council of Defense, and was also with the army Y. M. C. A. at Fort Bliss. For the past two years he has lived in Santa Fe.

Lucy Eddy (Mrs. Arthur J. Eddy), of Chicago, has appeared before in POETRY.

Alice Corbin (Mrs. W. P. Henderson), who has lived for some years in Santa Fe, requires no introduction to the readers of

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**Notes**

POETRY. She offers the following notes on the origin of her *New Mexico Folk-songs*:

"The Ballad of Macario Romero" is translated from a Spanish version recorded by Professor Aurelio M. Espinosa, who has secured four separate versions of this popular song, which has a distinctly typical local flavor. The version here translated was recited by a young girl, Juanita Lucero, of Tafoya, New Mexico. (*Chata* means pug-nosed.)

"Madre María" is from a Spanish version secured by Miss Barbara Freire-Marreco from an Indian woman at the Santa Clara Pueblo. (The Indians have preserved many of the traditional and popular Mexican songs.) This is an old song, probably brought to New Mexico by the Spanish padres, other versions having been obtained in South America. The final stanza is obviously a later addition.

"Manzanita" was given to me by Mrs. N. Howard Thorp of Santa Fe, who remembered it from childhood.

"Chula la Mañana" is a free translation of a popular song. (*The* word *tía* means *aunt*.)

"El Coyotito" is a translation of the Spanish version in Charles F. Lummis' *The Land of Poco Tiempo*. Mr. Lummis has himself made an excellent English translation of the song, but has left out—perhaps judiciously—some of the tang.

"Christ is Born in Bethlehem" is a New-Mexican nursery rhyme given me by Mrs. N. Howard Thorp.

"The brief epigrams known as *coplas* represent a form of popular improvisation in verse. At the country *bailes*, which are strictly chaperoned in old Spanish fashion, the couples indulge very little in conversation during the dance; for if they talked much they would be thought to be flirting. In fact, to our notion, such an assembly usually seems to be pervaded by a deadly solemnity; but when the young man escorts his companion to her seat, it is considered highly proper for him to address her in a *copla*, which he has had the skill to improvise or remember. Other circumstances also furnish suitable occasions for the use of *coplas*, as may be imagined from those given.

"Cundiyo and Petrolino's Complaint" are poems of my own, interpretations of the folk-spirit. Petrolino is an old blind peddler, a familiar figure among the *placitas* that dot the slopes of the Santa Fe Canyon. He carries a stick in one hand with which he taps his way, striking it against fence-posts and thus making sure that he keeps out of the way of burros and carts in the middle of the road. On his other arm he carries a basket containing a small stock of
piñon nuts, needles, thread, and face-powder; this last being much in demand by the young Mexican girls, whose dusky complexions acquire a distinctly lavender tone under its coating. It is said that Petrolino is not quite so blind as he makes out, else why should he go peering into windows after nightfall? But it is certain that he is very deaf; and also that he likes to talk when he finds a listener. One of his cronies is a "loco" in our neighborhood, who is usually aimlessly busy herding a few stray goats out on scant pasturage, and when the two of them get together for a little rest on the shady side of a corral on a hot summer day, their discussions, a tanto voce, carry far. Thus my version of Petrolino's shouted complaint is an almost literal translation.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:
The Fool of Love, by Herbert S. Gorman. (Lyric Series No. 2.) N. Y. Poetry Book Shop.

PLAYS AND PROSE:
The Widow's Veil, by Alice Rostetter (Flying Stag Plays No. 9). Egmont Arens.
Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, collected and arranged by Lady Gregory, with two Essays and Notes by W. B. Yeats. (Two series in 2 vols.) G. P. Putnam's Sons.
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