Sappho Answers Aristotle,
by Maxwell Bodenheim

Three Poems, by Aline Kilmer

Repetitions, by Hazel Hall

Backwater, by Edward Sapir

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DEAR POETRY: I always feel that I ought to renew my thanks for your enterprise and faith, which are so ceaselessly at work on the task of renewing me.

Ferdinand Schevill

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POETRY for MAY, 1921
Mathew Bodenheim

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SAPPHO ANSWERS ARISTOTLE

IMPULSIVE DIALOGUE

POET. Will you, like other men, Offer me indigo indignities?
Undertaker. Indigo indignities! The words are like a mermaid and a saint Doubting each other's existence with a kiss.

Poet. The words of most men kiss With satiated familiarity. Indigo is dark and vehement, But one word in place of two Angers barmaids and critics.
Undertaker. Straining after originality, You argue with its ghost! A simple beauty, like morning
Harnessed by a wide sparkle
And plodding into the hearts of men,
Cannot reach your frantic juggling.

Poet. I can appreciate
The spontaneous redundancy of nature
Without the aid of an echo
From men who lack her impersonal size.

Undertaker. The sweeping purchase of an evening
By an army of stars;
The bold incoherence of love;
The peaceful mountain-roads of friendship—
These things evade your dexterous epigrams!

Poet. A statue, polished and large,
Dominates when it stands alone.
Placed in a huge profusion of statues,
Its outlines become humiliated.
Simplicity demands one gesture
And men give it endless thousands.
Complexity wanders through a forest,
Glimpsing details in the gloom.

Undertaker. I do not crave the dainty pleasure
Of chasing ghosts in a forest!
Nor do I care to pluck
Exaggerated mushrooms in the gloom.
I have lost myself on roads
Crossed by tossing hosts of men.
Pain and anger have scorched our slow feet:
Peace has washed our foreheads.
Poet. Futility, massive and endless,
Captures a stumbling grandeur
Embalmed in history.
In my forest you could see this
From a distance, and lose
Your limited intolerance.
Simplicity and subtlety
At different times are backgrounds for each other,
Changing with the position of our eyes...
Death will burn your eyes
With his taciturn complexity.

Undertaker. Death will strike your eyes
With his wild simplicity!

Poet. Words are soldiers of fortune
Hired by different ideas
To provide an importance for life.
But within the glens of silence
They meet in secret peace...
Undertaker, do you make of death
A puffing wretch forever pursued
By duplicates of vanquished forms?
Or do you make him a sneering king
Brushing flies from his bloodless cheeks?
Do you see him as an unappeased brooding
Walking over the dust of men?
Do you make him an eager giant
Discovering and blending into his consciousness
The tiny parts of his limitless mind?
Undertaker. Death and I do not know each other.
I am the stolid janitor
Who cleans the litter he has left
And claims a fancied payment.

Poet. Come to my fantastic forest
And you will not need to rise
From simple labors, asking death
For final wages.

EMOTIONAL MONOLOGUE

A man is sitting within the enigmatic turmoil of a railroad station. His face is narrow and young, and his nose, lips, and eyes, carved to a Semitic sharpness, have been sundered by a bloodless catastrophe. A traveling-bag stands at his feet. Around him people are clutching farewells and shouting greetings. Within him a monologue addresses an empty theatre.

I am strangling emotions
And casting them into the seats
Of an empty theatre.
When my lifeless audience is complete,
The ghosts of former emotions
Will entertain their dead masters.
After each short act
A humorous ghost will fly through the audience,
Striking the limp hands into applause,
And between the acts
Sepulchral indifference will mingle
With the dust upon the backs of seats,
Upon the stage a melodrama
And a travesty will romp
Against a back-drop of fugitive resignation.
Climax and anti-climax
Will jilt each other and drift
Into a cheated insincerity.
Sometimes the lights will retire
While a shriek and laugh
Make a martyr of the darkness.
When the lights reappear
An actor-ghost will assure the audience
That nothing has happened save
The efforts of a fellow ghost
To capture life again.
In his role of usher
Another ghost will arrange
The lifeless limbs of the audience
Into postures of relief.
Sometimes a comedy will trip
The feet of an assassin,
Declaring that if ghosts were forced
To undergo a second death
Their thinness might become unbearable.
At other times indignant tragedy
Will banish an intruding farce,
Claiming that life should not retain
The luxury of another laugh.
The first act of the play will show
The owner of the theatre
Conversing with the ghost of a woman.
As unresponsive as stone
Solidly repelling a spectral world,
His words will keenly betray
The bloodless control of his features.
He will say: "With slightly lowered shoulders,
Because of a knife sticking in my back,
I shall trifle with crowded highways,
Buying decorations
For an interrupted bridal-party.
This process will be unimportant
To the workshop of my mind
Where love and death are only
Colorless problems upon a chart."
The ghost of the woman will say:
"Your mind is but the rebellious servant
Of sensitive emotions
And brings them clearer dominance."
And what shall I mournfully answer?
I am strangling emotions
And casting them into the seats
Of an empty theatre.
FEMININE TALK

First Woman. Do you share the present dread
Of being sentimental?
The world has flung its boutonnière
Into the mud, and steps upon it
With elaborate gestures!
Certain people do this neatly,
Using solemn words for consolation:
Others angrily stamp their feet,
Striving to prove their strength.

Second Woman. Sentimentality
Is the servant-girl of certain men
And the wife of others.
She scarcely ever flirts
With creative minds,
Striving also to become
Graceful and indiscreet.

First Woman. Sappho and Aristotle
Have wandered through the centuries,
Dressed in an occasional novelty—
A little twist of outward form.
They have always been ashamed
To be caught in a friendly talk.

Second Woman. When emotion and the mind
Engage in deliberate conversation,
One hundred nightingales
And intellectuals find a common ground,
And curse the meeting of their slaves!

First Woman. The mind must only play
With polished relics of emotion,
And the heart must never lighten
Burdens of the mind.

Second Woman. I desire to be
Irrelevant and voluble,
Leaving my terse disgust for a moment.
I have met an erudite poet.
With a northern hardness
Motionless beneath his youthful robes.
He shuns the quivering fluencies
Of emotion, and shifts his dominoes
Within a room of tortured angles.
But away from this creative room
He sells himself to the whims
Of his wife, a young virago
With a calculating nose.
Beneath the flagrant pose
Of his double life
Emotion and the mind
Look disconsolately at each other.

First Woman. Lyrical abandon
And mental cautiousness
Must not mingle to a magic
Glowing, yet deliberate!

Second Woman. Never spill your wine
Upon a page of mathematics.
Drink it decently
Within the usual tavern.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE

First Man. We gaze upon a negro shoveling coal.
His muscles fuse into a poem
Stifled and sinister,
Censuring the happy rhetoric of morning air.
Some day he may pitch his tent
Upon the ruins of a civilization,
Playing with documents and bottles of perfume
Found in deserted corridors.

Second Man. Listen to this song
Dipped in the Negro South of America.

She brought me collars and shoes.
She brought me whiskey and tea.
She brought me everything that I could use
But the jail-house key!

Time inserts the jail-house key
Into a succession of rusty locks,
Straining until they open.
Do you hear, beneath the rattling strut
Of this city, an imperceptible groan?
Time is turning the jail-house key.
They build larger jails for Time:

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He makes larger keys of blood and iron,
But often the labor is delayed
By pausing squeals of freedom.

First Man. An insignificant jest
In the wider life of Time.
He has dropped to this earth
To play a barbarous comedy.
Philosophers loudly explain the scenes;
But poets, with greater restraint,
Tender them a masquerade.

Second Man. Once I sat and watched
A scientific philosopher
Place white lines on a black-board,
Diagraming his mighty system of logic.
While he worked, the wind outside
Squandered its derision
And offered him a cup he dared not drink.
Afterwards, in the open air,
The slash of rain on my face
Mockingly baptised his words.

First Man. To him the wind and rain
Were trivialities against a brick wall.

Second Man. To me they were tormented wanderers
Quarreling above a doll’s house
Whose intricate patterns
Waited to be kicked aside.
I changed myself to a height
That made them whimpering pygmies,
And gave them grotesque costumes,
Enjoying the insolence of imagination.

First Man.  The scientific philosopher
Raised his umbrella against the rain,
And communed with venerable argument.

Second Man.  He was interested in improving
The lustre of a doll's house
In which I had left my small body.
Walls are enticing black-boards to some
And neglected prisons to others.
I prefer the second
Of tenuous bravado
That turns the prison into a threshold
And jests with the wind and rain that survive it.

Maxwell Bodenheim
THREE SONNETS

OLD WIVES' TALE

I saw my grandmother's shadow on the wall
In firelight; it danced with queer grimaces
As if her serious soul were making faces
At me or life or God or at us all.
And I, an urchin lying at her feet,
Then caught my first glimpse of the secret powers
That stir beneath this universe of ours,
Making a witches' carnival when they meet.
 Across the firelit dusk my sensitive mood
Dreamed out to mingle with the waifs of Time
Whose unsolved stories haunt the poets' rhyme
And in dark streets of ancient cities brood—
Like sudden ghosts rising above the grime
With beauty and with terror that chills the blood.

HOLY WRIT

It does not seem so many years ago—
Those nights when I lay shivering in my bed
And saw the candle-light round my aunt's head
Casting its hazy sanctifying glow;
And heard her read strange story after story
Of Jonah, Adam, Moses, Esau, Ruth,
[72]
Of Solomon's old age and David's youth—
Things haunting, tender, terrible or gory.
Still can I see the Queen of Sheba's hair;
And all real lions are but mockery
To him who once knew Daniel's; there's no tree
That can with Eve's great Paradise Tree compare:
A golden light gleamed through that ancient air
That leaves me homesick in modernity.

THE BOOK OF LU T'ANG CHU

In the reign of the great Emperor Lu T'ang Chu
Wise men were ordered to inscribe in a book
All the great body of wisdom that men knew.
Today I turn the pages, and as I look
I cannot see anything very new or old,
And I wonder why it was worth the trouble, then,
Of days and nights and a thousand labors untold
Which the volume must have exacted from those wise men.
But still we write—and the Emperor now is blown
As grey dust over the limitless Asian plains.
Still we inscribe all that is humanly known,
Although no ruler honors us for our pains—
Recording a thousand wisdoms, all our own,
To celebrate our good and glorious reigns.

Arthur Davison Ficke
CHARMIAN'S SONG

I'm glad I have but a little heart—
For my heart is very small:
It makes it free to come and go,
And no one cares at all.

I give my heart for a tender look,
For a gentle word or touch;
And the one who has it never knows,
And it does not hurt me much.

If my heart were great and I gave it away,
Then all the world would see;
But my heart is only a little thing
And it does not trouble me.

I may give my little heart unseen,
It is so small and light;
And only very wakeful things
Can hear it cry at night.

FOR ALL LADIES OF SHALOTT

The web flew out and floated wide:
Poor lady!—I was with her then.
She gathered up her piteous pride,
But she could never weave again.
The mirror cracked from side to side;
I saw its silver shadows go:
"The curse has come on me!" she cried.
Poor lady!—I had told her so.

She was so proud, she would not hide;
She only laughed and tried to sing.
But singing in her song she died;
She did not profit anything.

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

The heart knoweth? If this be true indeed,
Then the thing that I bear in my bosom is not a heart,
For it knows no more than a hollow, whispering reed
That answers to every wind.
I am sick of the thing. I think we had better part.

My heart would come to any piper's calling—
A fool in motley that dances for any king;
But my body knows, and its tears unbidden falling
Say that my heart has sinned.
You would have my heart? You may. I am sick of
the thing.

Aline Kilmer
BACKWATER

A CHILDISH TALE

Listen to my childish tale:
My heart was sad today;
My heart was so sad I could not find
Anything to say.

I walked out to the city's edge
Where the streets all disappear,
And I thought the fields were sad with me—
Songless fields and drear.

I sat down under a maple tree
That rose up lone and bare;
Its dying-colored leaves were strewn
About me everywhere.

I sat and pondered aimlessly
Under the silent tree,
I pondered sadly under the boughs
That I thought were sad with me.

Then in a flash I felt a cool
And steely serenity
Descending from those silent boughs—
They were not sad with me.

[76]
And I felt the steely calm of their strength
   Slip in my heart like a breath,
And I was like a wakened man
   That had drowsed away in death.

I saw that steel was the maple-tree,
   It had never been sad with me;
I saw that the blue of the sky was steel
   In its cool serenity.

We were all steel out there in the field,
   We three beyond the town—
We three that were strong over the leaves
   Dying in red and brown.

Now you have heard my childish tale:
   My heart was sad today
And it lost its sadness under a tree.
   That is all I wanted to say.

THE OLD TOWN

Oh, let me not enter the old town,
   The straggling street!
Oh, I fear, I fear the going down
   On stumbling feet!

Oh, let me not grope down the dim way
   To the pitchy sea,
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Unlit of a moon or a dim ray
   Through a cavernous tree.

All, all they will take from me
   By the black shore;
The ancients will steal me silently
   The purple I wore.

They will steal my love, they will steal my hate,
   I shall tremble bare;
They will make my body cold and straight
   And lay me there

Where my childhood sleeps forever and ever.
   Oh, I fear,
I fear the town that ever and ever
   I'm coming near.

OVERLOOKED

I was nothing, though I had a kind of pain or feeling—
   I knew her hair—
I think it might be said I knew too well, but I was nothing
   To her but air.

That other one, he knew her eyes with only half a knowing—
   I knew her eyes—
I think it might be said I knew too well whom he was loving.
   Yes, he was wise.

[78]
Oh well, and they are wed—I might indulge in grieving or
    in smiling—
    I hardly dare.
You see, it wasn't very much I was to her—nothing,
    Nothing but air.

SHE SITS VACANT-EYED

Surely, surely, there is something for me,
    There is something to fill my spirit's measure.
Winds tell, rains tell—
    Somewhere, somewhere is my treasure.

They promised it me when a raven spoke
    Back in the reaches of maidenhood.
He spoke for God, he spoke well—
    I am groping for what I then understood.

Ten thousand pathways ran to treasure—
    The raven spoke, I saw the vision.
Suns burn, moons burn—
    God, God! I am sitting in prison!

Surely, surely, there is something for me—
    There is something to fill my spirit whole.
Sun, burn! sun, burn!
    Pity me, make a blaze of my soul!

Edward Sapir
This night my body is an offering—
I am carried to you.
Years I was near you
And you were far.
But tonight of all nights
Was not the night
To be parted.

I would fain go forth
And seek you,
And sink down by you,
As the flakes falling outside
Sink into the cushioned ground.

And that which is me
Is also a field
Glowing and boundless.

You. Your presence. Why can I not dip into your presence as I dip into sleep, clasp it and bask in it? How hold it? How savour it? It is more than I wanted. And less.
Muriel Ciolkowska

Now you have left—you, in whose presence I would steep, around whose presence I hover like a gull over the lake. And, ere I have tasted it, your presence is no more your presence.

You have left. You have returned to me. Your presence no longer disturbs me from you.

Muriel Ciolkowska

OFF THE HIGHWAY

Lilacs lift leaves of cool satin
And blossoms of mother-of-pearl
Against the tarnished silver of the deserted house.
Tall, exquisite grasses fill the door-yard with spray.
Through the sun-drenched fragrance drifts the hazy monotone of bees.
Tints of opal and jade; the hush of emerald shadows,
And a sense of the past as a living presence
Distil a haunting wistful peace.

Julia Weld Huntington

[81]
PAGEANTRY

REVELATIONS

Crystals of light,
Like raindrops,
Beat down about my head;
And I kneel low to receive them
Reverently.

POISE

I must step
From star to star
Amid the shadowed planets
That hang in the profound deepness
Of bottomless space,
With thin clouded draperies
Filming about my feet
In eddies of motion.
My path is as wide
As the pageantry of worlds
That fling themselves out
In the dance of fettered motion;
And I shall stride
As though all were still.

Amy Bonner

[82]
CHARLOTTE BRONTE
*On reading her letters to M. Héger*

O proud! O passionate! what desperate pain
Subdued that haughty soul, that iron will—
Bowed that stiff neck, wore that wild spirit, till
It bit the dust, and, broken, rose again!

What feverish, trembling fingers held the pen
Which traced those delicate characters—the cry
Of one too hungry-hearted, plain and shy,
Baffled and stung by the strange moods of men.

Discarded fragments, eloquent and rare,
Carelessly torn by man without regret;
Roughly sewn up, with some parts missing yet,
How many a woman's heart lies bleeding there!

*Blanche Dismorr*

TRAILING ARBUTUS

Why do you hide beneath the pines, and cling to earth,
Infrequent, foolish flower of fragrant breath?
Your blossoms fresh and pink, like babies at their birth;
Your twigs as brown and brittle as old women at their
death.

*Ruth Mason Rice*
LONG DAYS

I have watched long days of dawning,
    And long, long nights of dread;
And I am a little weary
    Of traveling toward the dead.
When I looked out last evening
    I thought the wan moonlight
Seemed tired and pale with shining,
    A lantern in the night.

I heard them whisper this morning
    As I heard them yesterday,
"Do you think she will last much longer,
    Dragging along this way?
Her hands are like withered flowers,
    Her face is a strange dried leaf;
She has stayed too long in her body,
    She is wheat turned dust in the sheaf."

HEAPHY HERSELF

When Heaphy, the old woman,
Is not looking,
Herself trips lightly off to Donegal
And there dances in the shadow of Slieve.

When Heaphy, the old woman,
Is looking,
Dorothy McVickar

Herself has never a chance at the dancing,
But stays in the kitchen
Mopping the floor.

Dorothy McVickar

YOUTH AND AGE

Youth has music on his lips
And in his hurrying feet,
Rhythm in his finger-tips
And in his laughter sweet.

Age has silence on his tongue—
Never a note or sound;
But his heart is often wrung
By music all around.

Youth has tongue, but lacks an ear—
He whistles, pipes and sings.
Age is still, but he can hear
Silence and growing things.

Elizabeth Hart Pennell

[85]
REPETITIONS

I plunge at the rearing hours—
Life is a steed of pride,
Who so high above me towers
I cannot mount and ride.

TWO SEWING

The wind is sewing with needles of rain;
With shining needles of rain
It stitches into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in.
(Oh, the wind has often sewed with me!—
One, two, three.)

Spring must have fine things
To wear, like other springs.
Of silken green the grass must be
Embroidered. (One and two and three.)
Then every crocus must be made
So subtly as to seem afraid
Of lifting color from the ground.
And after crocuses the round
Heads of tulips, and all the fair
Intricate garb that Spring will wear
The wind must sew with needles of rain,
With shining needles of rain

[86]
Stitching into the thin
Cloth of earth—in,
In, in, in—
For all the springs of futurity.
(One, two, three.)

INSTRUCTION

My hands that guide a needle
In their turn are led
Relentlessly and deftly,
As a needle leads a thread.

Other hands are teaching
My needle; when I sew
I feel the cool, thin fingers
Of hands I do not know.

They urge my needle onward,
They smooth my seams, until
The worry of my stitches
Smothers in their skill.

All the tired women,
Who sewed their lives away,
Speak in my deft fingers
As I sew today.
I

A fibre of rain on a window-pane
Talked to a stitching thread:
In the heaviest weather I hold together
The weight of a cloud!

To the fibre of rain on a window-pane
The talkative stitches said:
I hold together with the weight of a feather
The heaviest shroud!

II

My needle says: Don't be young,
Holding visions in your eyes,
Tasting laughter on your tongue!—
Be very old and very wise,
And sew a good seam up and down
In white cloth, red cloth, blue and brown.

My needle says: What is youth
But eyes drunken with the sun,
Seeing farther than the truth;
Lips that call, hands that shun
The many seams they have to do
In white cloth, red cloth, brown and blue!
III

One by one, one by one,
Stitches of the hours run
Through the fine seams of the day;
Till like a garment it is done
And laid away.

One by one the days go by,
And suns climb up and down the sky;
One by one their seams are run—
As Time’s untiring fingers ply
And life is done.

COWARDICE

Discomfort sweeps my quiet, as a wind
Leaps at trees and leaves them cold and thinned.
Not that I fear again the mastery
Of winds, for holding my indifference dear
I do not feel illusions stripped from me.
And yet this is a fear—
A fear of old discarded fears, of days
That cried out at irrevocable ways.
I cower for my own old cowardice—
For hours that beat upon the wind’s broad breast
With hands as impotent as leaves are: this
Robs my new hour of rest.

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I thought my pride had covered long ago
All the old scars, like broken twigs in snow;
I thought to luxuriate in rich decay,
As some far-seeing tree upon a hill;
But, startled into shame for an old day,
I find that I am but a coward still.

FLASH

I am less of myself and more of the sun;
The beat of life is wearing me
To an incomplete oblivion,
Yet not to the certain dignity
Of death. (They cannot even die
Who have not lived.)

The hungry jaws
Of space snap at my unlearned eye,
And time tears in my flesh like claws.

If I am not life's, if I am not death's,
Out of chaos I must re-reap
The burden of untasted breaths.
(Who has not waked may not yet sleep.)

Hazel Hall
COMMENT

SOUTHERN SHRINES

EVERY traveler may be his own Columbus; for every journey is a voyage of discovery, leading, mayhap, to the promised land. The editor, setting out for a few talks about poetry in the warm and mellow South, discovered rich quarries in the blossoming landscape and ships of magic ready to set sail from the shores—all guarded by local loyalties jealously excited and aware.

In other words, she seemed to find a stirring of new beauty in the hearts of the people as well as in the spring-garlanded fields and hills; and an enthusiasm of preparation—a feeling of expectancy, as if efflorescence must be as simple and inevitable in art as in nature. Sow the seed, till the soil, and the harvest will surely follow—such would seem to be the faith of the new South, the South which loves its traditions but refuses to be enslaved by them, which is not satisfied to sit in colonial houses and contemplate its historic and romantic past.

To be sure, there are spinsters in Charleston and Savannah who still live on tea and toast in the midst of faded splendor rather than sell ancestral portraits by Sully and Romney, or even a single mahogany hautboy or old Lowestoft plate; *grandes dames* of the old régime who stay indoors rather than replace the carriage-and-pair with an automobile. And there are college professors to whom Sidney Lanier uttered the last audible word of poetry; who even, in extreme cases, re-
sent the present neglect of Timrod. But the nephews and nieces and grandchildren of these ultra-loyalists are forming poetry and art societies and little-theatre enterprises, and inviting up-to-date people like Carl Sandburg and Daniel A. Reed to help give them a good start. And they are aiming at a frank expression of the locale in their exhibitions and poems and play-productions—a special stress which is much to be desired, because the beauty of that moss-hung landscape, and the dramatic contrasts of feeling in the spirit of the bi-racial people, are a sufficient basic motive for putting those south-eastern Atlantic states more adequately on the modern artistic map.

Columbia, South Carolina, was the first full-stop of the editor's pilgrimage. In its little Town Theatre, the adroit reformation of a quaint old house, Mr. Reed, trained in the Chicago Little Theatre and seconded by a group of enthusiasts, is offering a generous hospitality to all the arts. Plays, exhibitions, lectures, readings, musicals, all find audience-room here and a congenial atmosphere of challenging sympathy. Even the quiet old University of South Carolina, a few steps away up the hill, seems to welcome this modern interloper into the old state capital, and to cooperate in the stirring-up process which its presence implies. And it is not easy to be stirred up under the languid southern sun, in towns whose every old mossy brick and stone is sacred but whose occasional sky-scraper seems an anachronism.

Proud Charleston was the second stage—Charleston, as
Southern Shrines

indomitable as ever, as unchangeably a beautiful great lady of heroic spirit and aspect. What Charleston wills she does: not in the bravoure Chicago manner, by a bubbling-up of helter-skelter democratic forces; but by a haughty wave of her queenly hand, the grand gesture of the assured aristocrat who never dreams of denial. Today she wills the arts: she is restoring her old houses, summoning her painters to local exhibitions, and creating the Poetry Society of South Carolina, with its two hundred members professional and amateur, and its critical committees to pass on poems and award numerous prizes. Du Bose Heyward, Beatrice Ravenel and others are leaders in this effort to turn the local ambition toward the arts; also one or two painters who recognize the pictorial charm of the colonial houses with their grilled gateways, and of the moss-draped, semi-tropical landscape.

The wealth of historic tradition and association in Charleston may well be a hope and an agony in the heart of any poet who loves her, for no art has yet expressed it adequately. The old houses bring something of it home to us—houses spaciously planned for patriarchal slave-holding families, stately enough for eighteenth-century banquets, and of an elegance befitting the crinoline of Victorian emotions; houses therefore inconsiderate of modern needs, imprisoning many a pathetic comedy of servantless impecuniosity, and perhaps now and then a tragedy of some free spirit beating its wings against ancient barriers. One wonders at neither excess of loyalty, so beautiful is the curve of old mansions along the Battery against the wide blue water of the harbor,
so full of charm are the fading memories, the lavender-scented relics, of more leisurely, better-mannered days.

If Charleston is a great lady, Savannah is a fine one. Charleston commands, and Savannah persuades. She is tempted to sit dreaming over her past, to linger in the two old moss-hung graveyards whose mournful beauty is a wonder-story all over the world. Children were romping in the Colonial Cemetery while I scanned its eloquent monuments, but they avoided the most eloquent of all—that bitter memorial of a suicide, with four coiled serpents carved in the four-square stone, under the inverted marble urn, as the only record of a nameless agonist. But Savannah does not forget that she is one of the great ports of the world, with all Spanish America to the south of her; and now and then she salutes the future with a sky-scraper. Or even with a poetry society—a little one, The Prosodists she calls it, to show that its five members are students of technique.

Jacksonville is frankly modern, with more sky-scrapers than colonial houses. And the cause of modern poetry, of modern art, is eagerly sponsored by the Round Table Club, whose membership is both professional and amateur. Marx G. Sabel, whose second POETRY group will appear in June, is one of its officers.

From young Jacksonville it is only an hour or two by motor to old St. Augustine. But even in St. Augustine the invading tourist demands a compromise between old and new; and gets a swept and garnished, guide-regulated museum-fort, a quaint little gate-guarded ancient street for his
modern trinket-shops, and numerous ultra-modern hotels disguised in pseudo-Spanish architecture. St. Augustine is on the high-road; in full-season it seems less atmospheric than San Antonio, and far less intact than drowsy old Santa Fe, still lisping Spanish to her aboriginal pueblos. But it has corners to which one may retire with the past—a little old graveyard, an ancient church or two, certain mossy walls. And perhaps the most wonderful corner of all is that barrel-vaulted guardroom of the old fort whose damp masonry is fringed to the top with delicate maidenhair.

A contrasting episode though ultra-modern seemed blessed with timelessness, like all other simple and elemental experiences. This was a flight in a passenger aeroplane over the white sands and blue water of Atlantic Beach. The sensation?—oh, merely a feeling of being joyously at ease, like a bird, as we sailed slowly through the warm, blue sky, and looked down at the fishes in the rippling sea and the automobiles crawling over the long white strip of sand, and at the cottage roofs and the stretch of marsh with its ribbon-twist of river. It seemed strange that men had waited these thousands of years to do a thing so natural, so inevitable.

From Jacksonville I followed the northward trail of the blossoming spring, stopping at Atlanta's suburb, Decatur, for a day in the Agnes Scott College, which has a course in modern poetry; and at Bowling Green, Kentucky, where new oil-wells are piercing the century-old farms, and new ideas the patriarchal before-the-war traditions; and finally at Louisville, where Cale Young Rice, Hortense Flexner
King and others keep the muse's fires alight, and where Otto A. Rothert, convinced that Madison Cawein was one of the immortals, is devoting years to the preparation of a monumental *Life and Letters* complete enough to satisfy the demands of the poet's vociferous future fame.

The journey was another reminder of the variety and potential richness of culture, of imaginative and spiritual life, in these far-flung United States. The problem is, of course, to make the local loyalties generously productive and creative instead of narrowly exclusive and prejudicial, to sweep away hindrances between the imaginative energy of elect souls and the adequate expression of that energy in the arts and in life. The energy is there—of that I was once more convinced during this southern journey; but against its vital force rise always the dead walls of conservative repression.

The people, there as elsewhere, must learn that beauty is created from within—it cannot be inherited from the past or imported from over-seas, or manufactured for passive minds by theatrical and movie syndicates and subserviently popular writers and artists. It is an achievement of the individual soul; and if the individual soul fails to achieve it, to create its own beauty in some one of the innumerable art-impulses or spiritual impulses of life, something within that soul turns to dust and ashes. And what is true of the individual is true of the group: hand-me-down art and literature, hand-me-down ethics, morals, politics—the ready-made everywhere, the self-created crowded out, speeded away—this is the dusty-ashen threat against our modern civilization.

*H. M.*

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The Death of “B. L. T.”

THE DEATH OF “B. L. T.”

“The Line” came to a full stop with the passing of Bert Leston Taylor on the nineteenth of March. Who now will carry on “the column that made Chicago famous,” the column of wit and wisdom founded in the old Record by Eugene Field of happy memory, and built up in the Tribune as a finely whimsical all-American monument by the genial genius who has gone?

It would be difficult to set bounds to the influence of this witty wise man, who so modestly, so humanely, so urbanely, disguised in kindly humor his good judgment and good taste. The warmth of his sympathy mellowed the penetrating keenness of his satire—he never expected too much of “the so-called human race,” and always felt himself a fellow-offender in its inexplicable derelictions and vagaries.

In music, art, literature he was a sane and penetrating critic; a word in “The Line” went further than many long reviews to set some clamorous best-seller in its place or promote some shy work of beauty. His column was an open book of the amenities; Henry Kitchell Webster, in his memorial address, called it a daily letter to his friends, classing him with Gray and Fitzgerald among the great letter-writers of the world.

But he ranks also, with Frederick Locker and Austin Dobson, with Oliver Wendell Holmes and Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Eugene Field among the best of the ever-to-be-gratefully-remembered lyrists of the drawing-room and—no, we don’t have drawing-rooms now-a-days—of the living-
room and library. One might quote an hundred poems to prove it; we choose Canopus because it is, not better than many others, but possibly a keener self-revelation:

When quacks with pills political would dope us,
When politics absorbs the livelong day,
I like to think about the star Canopus,
So far, so far away.

Greatest of visioned suns, they say who list ’em;
To weigh it science always must despair.
Its shell would hold our whole dinged solar system,
Nor ever know ’twas there.

When temporary chairmen utter speeches,
And frenzied henchmen howl their battle hymns,
My thoughts float out across the cosmic reaches
To where Canopus swims.

When men are calling names and making faces,
And all the world’s ajangle and ajar,
I meditate on interstellar spaces
And smoke a mild seegar.

For after one has had about a week of
The arguments of friends as well as foes,
A star that has no parallax to speak of
Conduces to repose.

Thus one felt heights and depths in this man, against which he measured sublunary affairs. His gayest word was always in scale, always had perspective. So it is not surprising that he was thoroughly at home in the woods and all wild places of nature, as some of the finest of his more serious poems—The Road to Anywhere, for example—prove.

He died in the spring-time, as he wished. Let us hope that the white-throat, whose music “is sweet as April’s sun,” will sing over his grave.

H. M.
THE POET AND MODERN LIFE

The problems confronting the modern poet are exceedingly complex. How can poetry, which is essentially order, affirmation, achievement, be created in an age, a milieu, of profound doubt and discouragement? How is it possible to build up a “spiritual monument” when the most necessary elements are lacking—in a period of social disorder, mental anarchy, when so very few are at all concerned with intellectual progress and so many are utterly bounded by material progress? How, again, is the poet to obtain the ideas and knowledge which are the matter he works with, when he is simply confused by an immeasurable discord, a vast unsynthesized knowledge? And does not this situation, undeniable, I think, and so much more acute than it was fifty years ago, lend strength to Matthew Arnold’s pessimism, and force us to conclude that now, if ever, must be an age of criticism, an age of pure conservation, if any intellectual life is to survive the dying of the Renaissance? The narrow ideas of comfort and utilitarianism, which are the motive force of the contemporary revolution, must of necessity be unfruitful in the larger sphere of the mind. In our progress we have become curiously abased; from the Hellenic dream of god-like man in harmony with nature, from the mediaeval dream of man transcending nature through religion, from the Renaissance dream which infused a new life into Hellenism, from those centuries when the life of the senses and the intelligence struggled with the life of the spirit and sentiment, we have fallen into an apathy of discouragement
where we hope for no more than that each individual should conform to "modern standards of living." Man exists spiritually as he conceives of himself; and the modern world conceives of man, through a vague deceptive mist of "social reform," as an animal which eats, drinks, is clothed, travels and needs to be amused; add to this a little confused "education," a little tepid "religion," and a fair amount of ancient superstition revived as "new thought," and you get a not too incorrect picture of the modern world and its motives. Deep spiritual enthusiasm and energy, disinterested thought, unfettered intelligence, profound culture, where will you find a combination of these essentials of poetry?

Meanwhile we go on writing, many just echoing the words of their predecessors, some trying to strike out rough new images of vitality, a few trying to add to mere vitality the mellowness of culture, the permanence of intelligence. Certain writers, impatient with that mere aping of a vanished order which is unhappily the mark of modern poetry in England, have thrown violently aside the reflective, the intellectual aspects of their art to create something which is essentially only vital. This is preferable to stagnation, but it is not nearly enough. I should like to see that vitality more mellow, saturated with fertile ideas, enlightened; for so far it has done little but interpret a violent material activity. How indeed could it do more? The essential elements are lacking, for without an intelligent, enlightened, cultivated milieu each poet speaks into pandemonium, loses himself in confusion or in egotism, in provincialism.  

R. A.
REVIEWS

PASTELS


In this slim volume Haniel Long presents his rhymed lyrics in their various colors—pastel transparencies, romantic and oriental opaques. We miss the free-verse student sketches, which Alfred Kreymborg includes in his Others for 1919. As usual the free-verse medium seems to make the poet relax and be natural; in it Mr. Long sees and feels with clean honest lines, washing in his emotions with their own colors. In the best of his rhymed lyrics, he works through a group of imperfect songs played on pipes rather than on a lute or a lyre. In this group—Madness, Midnight Sun, With Compliments, Song of Young Burbage, The Winter Sprite, I Gather Treasures of the Dark—each has a promise which unfolds to an art achievement in a pagan pastoral idyl of real beauty, The Herd Boy:

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

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

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

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

The other poems in this vein go scurrying through surfaces painted in transparencies over nothing, rhyming insignificantly. The poet's attempt at wilder pagan freedom is weakened by a natural love for pastoral restraint—or is it an academic inhibition?

Mr. Long's more colorful dipping into the romantic is rather limp, and in the panoramic his sweep is tight. *The Death of Alexander the Great* lacks the freedom and flare of pageantry, which we find quite glorious in his free-verse *Student* group, when he would have his girl enter his

    class-room window
    On the elephant's trunk.

In his rhymed pageantry it is as if he were trying to blow a fanfare of trumpets on his pipes. However in *Dead Men and the Moon*, *Dead Men Tell No Tales*, and *His Deaths*, there is the swagger and color of truth romantically expressed, perhaps romance truthfully expressed.

*The Cuban in the States* lacks Spanish feeling and interest. The pitch is too high in his remote tropical effects, the tone too thin, the touch too cool, not enough of the green-eyed serpent subtleties. *There Was a City Where Serpents Writhe* comes nearer finding the remote than *Gifts*. And the war poems are too personal—they look puny against the conflict. War is a stride in the ages, an impressionistic record from a gigantic panorama.  

Laura Sherry
Mr. Edward Storer is not typical of the English poets of today; he may have some of their virtues and weaknesses, but he has others which are peculiar to himself. He is English in his clinging to decoration, to suavity; he is English in a kind of inarticulateness which prevents his saying all the fine things that are in him; but he is un-English in his profound and unaffected love of beauty, he is un-English inasmuch as he hates quaintness. The rough strength of the "vital" poet is not his; when he tries to interpret modern life he fails because this life is so alien, so hostile to his subtler conceptions. He makes me think of some pupil of Heine, intoxicated by Heine's adoration of Hellenic beauty, but most un-German in that the ideas he works with are very few and simple. Moreover that English love of decoration leads him away from Heine's fine simplicity; though one feels how Mr. Storer struggles against this national vice, how he has lived with the classics to purge and lighten his mind of all the sluggish barbarity still adhering to the English character. His earlier work, fragile and imaginative, lacked strength but never sweetness; his new book retains this Ovid-like sweetness and has gained strength, the strength of brevity and thought, and therefore it is his best. Intentionally or unintentionally he had criticised his own poetry in these words:

It is so near to silence as to seem
Silence awakening,
A listening rather sweet;
A mood evaporating
That has entered in
To all your spirit
Numbing it with peace,
Oozed to the very core of you
With ethereal sweet;
A vaporous light,
Luminance rarified,
Yet dewy with the sap of earth;
Bitter a little
From the great salt sea.

But let me not be misunderstood; in pointing to a "weakness" in this fine highly-wrought poetry I do not mean to imply any inferiority to the poetry of vitality. The weakness in Mr. Storer's poetry is the weakness of much thought, much emotion, much living; of a cultivated mind turning in disappointment and discouragement from the present to linger in imagination over the happier past, with a charm, a lightness, an elegance wholly delightful. The melancholy, the skepticism, the discouragement of these poems, their sad devotion to a lost ideal of beauty, their haunting insistence on the Horatian theme of

the dream called life,
Rosy with a little love,
Quick with sharp sorrows—

are certainly delightful to react to in certain moods, yet typical of that unavowed but deep despair which holds so many sensitive minds in a distracted Europe. R. A.
COUNTRY SENTIMENT


The poetry of Robert Graves compares with the mass of good modern poetry, especially in the United States, as the trim, well-ordered English farm compares with the vast cattle ranch of Wyoming or the great wheat farm of North Dakota. Mr. Graves has chosen a small field, withal one chosen by many English poets before him. He tills it well, and it brings forth lovely blossoms if not always luscious, satisfying fruit.

Melody, everyday humanness, fancy, quiet whimsy, chivalry—these are words that come to mind as one reads Mr. Graves' verse. They represent qualities found in Skelton, in Surrey, or in Herrick, poets in whose tradition Mr. Graves would probably class himself. One gets the impression that the author studies rather than observes, as when the boy stays away from church and goes walking—

To ponder there in quiet
God's Universal Plan.

These are the boy's own words! Such boys exist only in eighteenth-century English paintings.

Generally, however, Mr. Graves presents clear, vivid pictures, as in Finland:

The skies are jewelled all around,
The ploughshare snaps in the iron ground.
The Finn, with face like paper
And eyes like a lighted taper,
Hurls his rough rune
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

At the wintry moon,
And stamps to mark the tune.

Country Sentiment shows an advance over the author's first book in story-telling and dramatic power, in hardness and cleanness of expression:

Here they lie who once learned here
All that is taught of hurt or fear.
Dead, but by free will they died:
They were true men, they had pride.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

RECENT ANTHOLOGIES

A Queen's College Miscellany. Queen's College, Oxford.
American and British Verse from The Yale Review. Yale University Press.

The above list is a slight indication of the present rush
Recent Anthologies

of anthologies; and incidentally it is proof of a public for modern poetry: a public, however, too eager for pre-digested food, too eager to lean upon the opinions of editors and publishers. Perhaps this is inevitable—in these crowded days no one can read everything, even in one specialty. But the public should choose its anthologies carefully, avoiding those whose motives are frankly commercial.

Our list may be divided into four groups: The first includes those anthologies intended to introduce a group of young poets connected by similar ideals, or perhaps merely by acquaintance or propinquity; second, subject anthologies; third, résumés of a period or a locale; fourth, reprints from special magazines.

Under the first heading there is no suspicion of a commercial motive. The poems included in such collections may be well or ill chosen: the new claimants for the laurel may be raw or crude, affected or supersophisticated; or they may be young geniuses trying their wings; but at least the publisher is making room for the unknown and taking a gambler's chance with the public. The first two titles listed above are of this kind; and although neither pamphlet contains any very exciting evidences of genius, a variety of talent—fictional, critical, liminal and musical, as well as poetic—is displayed in an admirable typographic setting. The two miscellanies, though of recent work, are not confined to undergraduates, the first including names like Robert Graves and Edith Sitwell. In poetry the most—I had almost said the only—interesting exhibits are in a mood of

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sarcasm verging on the grotesque—*Absinthe* by Royston D. Campbell, *The Survivor* by Godfrey Elton, and this bit of satire by E. W. Jacot:

Jabez Q., the millionaire,  
Has oozy hands, dead lichen hair;  
A grey rag eye—no spark is there.  

He also has a garden close,  
Where Jabez likes to think he grows  
The most expensive kinds of rose.  

Once he puffed a ring of smoke  
Towards the stars; it spread, it broke,  
Disintegrated past revoke.  

Jabez watched it; hiccuped "Gee!"  
Then shuddered . . . what if he  
Become like this—vacuity?  

When his body—horrid doubt—  
Suffered this atomic rout,  
Would it . . .  

His cigar was out  
"Waal," said Jabez, "I'm doggoned!"—  
And pitched it in the lily-pond.

Of the subject anthologies, the second series of Mr. Clarke's *Treasury of War Poetry* is mostly depressing reading; apparently the first series gathered the cream, leaving for this, with of course a few notable exceptions, skim milk. The book seems to represent the war-muse's too-sober second thought—neither her first fierce inspiration nor her final verdict.

*Dreams and Voices*, a book of parental and filial poems by modern poets of varying quality; and *Joyful Sorrow*, with entries, chiefly by British poets past and present, intended to
cheer up those who grieve—these are two curious examples of publishers' efforts to attract a special public. *Lillygay: An Anthology of Anonymous Poems*, is more intriguing, with its lively little wood-cuts by Eric and Percy West. Its cheering lyrics and ballads must be centuries old—at least some of them are, the beautiful *Lyke-wake Dirge* for example; and no reviewer would be mean-spirited enough to guess at a later origin for others.

Of our third class, Mr. Untermeyer’s *Modern British Poetry* is the only example. It is a companion to his rather elementary *Modern American Poetry*, both running from 1870 to 1920, and being intended especially for young students. In the latter case one was forced to wonder at the poor showing of a rich period, but the British volume may be a little more satisfactory.

In our fourth class, of magazine anthologies, the *Yale Review* book opens with *The Passing Strange*, one of Mr. Masefield’s finest meditative poems; and its other entries—by Messrs. Robinson, Frost, Fletcher, Sassoon, Mmes. Teasdale, Wharton, and other poets—show that this magazine has done generous work in this department.

As good manners would almost debar us from reviewing the anthology of our most steadfast fellow-specialist in modern poetry, we shall permit the editor of *Contemporary Verse*, Mr. Charles Wharton Stork, to speak for himself in regard to his anthology, which brings together the more notable poems from several years' issues of his magazine. In the *Introduction* he says:

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POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

Most of the other magazines, we thought, were over-stressing the appeal of novelty. We believed that the growing power of American poetry could be shown to express itself in forms that an average person could enjoy. . . . The great universal motives of the race—love of home, delight in outdoor nature, generous human sympathy, kindly humor, and a quiet, first-hand religious sense—all of these will be found in abundance.

However,

A moderate number of free-verse ventures have been included, where genuineness of feeling and beautiful handling of its changing rhythms have seemed to justify the exceptions.

And the editor inquires:

Where, one may ask, is one likely to find more American idealism than in a volume such as this?

Perhaps one may question Mr. Stork's conclusion. He says:

The American people has a right to ask that poetry should express the thoughts and emotions of this generation in a style which can be widely understood and appreciated.

Do poets worthy of the name take orders, even from that formidable connoisseur, "the American people"?

The haphazard arrangement of the book makes appraise-ment difficult—the poems are quite ungrouped, whether by subjects or authorship. However, one may find, by search-ing, Joyce Kilmer's gay dialogue, The Ashman, Edwin Ford Piper's Gee-up dar, Mules, and a few fine lyrics—by Sara Teasdale, E. Merrill Root, Marx G. Sabel, Helen Hoyt and one or two others.

H. M.
FRENCH POETS IN ENGLISH


The introduction to this anthology is so lucid and complete that the reader expects equally competent translations. It sets forth briefly, but well, a history of the poets of France from the thirteenth century to the present day, showing how their personalities were affected by their times, analyzing their methods of work and estimating their values in as fair a manner as is possible to foreign thought. And, throughout, we find those who would translate urged to keep to the spirit, rather than the word of the original. With all this in mind, it is a shock to turn to the opening poem, which reads like a Scotch ballad! Here is one stanza:

The mirk did fa' lang syne, lang syne,
When twa fond systres wi' hands that twine
Went doun to bathe whaur the waters shine.
Blaw wind, bend beugh in the stormy weather,
They that be leel sleep saft taegither.

Clearly, the author of this anthology has, as he says, attempted to match the French language as closely as possible with that of the same period in English literature. He has followed this plan with all his translations of old French, and it seems to me a grave mistake, even an affectation. For the flavor which should infuse its spirit into the English is altogether missed.

Mr. Thorley has done better with the more modern poems. He says is his introduction:

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The real task of a translator is that of re-creating, and unless he can bring to his original as much as he takes from it, he had far better leave it alone.

But he has sometimes fallen short of his theories, as in his renderings of Gautier. *L'Art*, the oft-attempted, has been translated better by Dobson, or Santayana. Again he says:

It is so difficult to keep rightly informed and critically aloof amid the trumpeting and disparagement of rival clans, whose activities seem only to bewilder the native doctors, that a mere foreigner may be forgiven for including frankly what happens to appeal to him.

And he has given evidence of his critical aloofness in *The Cloud*, considered one of the most delicate of the *Émaux et Camées*. Of this he has done into English only three of the original nine stanzas; omitting the whole point of the poem, which seems hardly fair to the author.

The renderings of Baudelaire are especially fine. They have the spirit of the French, and yet—truly a rare achievement—they do not read like translations. Mallarmé's *Apparition* keeps the subtle savor of the original. The author has been less happy with the ten versions of Verlaine. Maeterlinck is represented by only one poem, *The Seven Maids of Orlamonde*, a questionable choice but well translated. *Autumn* and *Cleopatra*, by Samain, are beautifully presented. Rodenbach’s *In Tiny Townships* is as musical in English as in French. Of the translations of de Régnier, *The Secret* and *Experience* are excellent, while good renderings of Viéle-Griffin, Fort, Bataille, Gregh, Guérin and many other poets give distinction to this anthology.

*Agnes Lee Freer*
Symbolists and Decadents

SYMBOLISTS AND DECADENTS

La Mêlée Symboliste, by Ernest Raynaud. La Renaissance du Livre, Paris.

Here is an example of the fine book-making of La Renaissance du Livre. Consisting of reminiscences of the author and his poet-companions, it suggests Gautier's La Fenêtre Ouverte, and is equally fascinating.

A chapter on Les Zutistes, founded by Charles Cros, describes the Café de Versailles, where every evening this leader gathered about him such men as Coppée, Richepin and Raoul Ponchon. Here Louis Marsolleau recited sentimental bagatelles or noble poems, and here Poussin was made to read over and over again his artistic achievement, La Jument Morte, which resounded through the breweries of the Latin Quarter for several seasons. But what assured this order, aside from the renown of Charles Cros, a place in history, was that it was the cradle of a lyric evolution, in which, perhaps, the two most prominent figures were Laurent Tailhade and Jean Moréas. From their fruitful controversies arose the new movement. Here is a portrait of Jean Moréas at that time:

He always went gloved in white, corseted tightly, his glossy hair curled in the latest fashion, wearing a multicolored cravat and a flower in his buttonhole. His timid nature was hidden under brusque mannerisms, and he fortified himself with an insolent monocle. His hatred of mediocrity was expressed in brief aphorisms. And Tailhade draped himself, like a Spaniard, in a black, scarlet-lined cape. Full of anecdote and wit, he offset the disdainful haughtiness of Moréas toward bad poets by firing at them a volley of cleverness. No one knew as he did how to use irony and unctuous epigram.

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At this time the two were merely at their début, their period of dilettantism. Later they were to descend from their ivory tower to write for the periodical *Lutèce*, wherein Verlaine had already begun to print his *Poètes Maudits*. *Lutèce*, once a banal gazette of the Latin Quarter, was becoming the official organ of advancing symbolism. To this paper we are indebted for poems by Paul Adam, Rachilde, Henri de Régnier, Jules Laforgue, Francis Viélè-Griffin, and Ernest Raynaud. According to Raynaud, *Lutèce*, which came to its end in 1886, had the glory of devoting itself entirely to the poets of the new school, who wrote for it their best and worst poems.

To me one of the most interesting things in this little volume is the discovery of the origin of the word *décadent*. Verlaine was sick in bed, his confrères gathered about him. On the bed lay a magazine in coarse gray paper. Someone took it up and read mockingly from the cover, “*Le Décadent!*” —and asked, “What imbecile invented this ridiculous title?” “I am the imbecile,” challenged a crisp voice. The author turned and saw Anatole Baju, a little man with flaming eyes set in a wizened face. The history, as given by Raynaud, of this founder of *Le Décadent* is very entertaining. Verlaine, who ardently supported the magazine, defines its purpose thus:

*Décadence* is Sardanapalus, in the midst of his women, setting the torch to his funeral pile; it is Seneca reciting poems as he opens his veins; it is Petronius masking his agony with flowers; it is the marchioness walking to the guillotine with a smile, and with care not to disturb her coiffure. *Décadence* is the art of dying beautifully.

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Symbolists and Decadents

Le Décadent raised a hue and cry from the symbolists; yet their aims against the literature then in vogue were alike. Both wanted to be freed from form which had outlived itself.

A. L. F.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

TWO NEW MAGAZINES

We welcome two new magazines which are to be devoted wholly or largely to poetry—The Measure, published by Frank Shay at 4 Christopher Street, New York; and The Double-dealer, from 204 Baronne Street, New Orleans. The former began in March, the latter in January.

The Measure: A Journal of Poetry is thus advertised:

Edited by Maxwell Anderson, Padraic Colum, Agnes Kendrick Gray, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, David Morton, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O’Neil, Genevieve Taggard. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board.

We are much interested in this experiment of a shifting editorial board. As fellow-editors, we wonder how it will be arranged—will each pair of acting editors accept only the exact number of poems to be used in their own three numbers and return all others? or will there be hold-overs from one quarterly editorial pair to the next—hold-overs accepted by the first pair and perhaps despised by the second and third and fourth? At any rate, so populous an editorial board, with a three-months’ elective tenure of office, makes for variety, relieving the editors of the danger of satiety and the magazine of a too monotonous consistency.

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POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

The first number, while not exciting, is competent and interesting. There is nothing revolutionary, but there are characteristic poems by Padraic Colum, Robert Frost, Conrad Aiken, Alfred Kreymberg, Hazel Hall and others we know, besides two or three less familiar entries. The longest poem, *Ice Age*, by Genevieve Taggard, asserts once more her unusual promise; and Wallace Stevens’ *Cortège for Rosenbloom* is a beautiful airy fling of his magician’s wand.

Maxwell Anderson, the first editor, seems not over-confident in his initial article: “This is not an age favorable to great poetry,” he says; “there are not any great poets writing at this time in English, or none so far uncovered . . . . The very value of art, of life, grows dubious.” And he confesses:

*The Measure*, then, is a hope against hope, a venture in the face of despair, a fiddling while Rome burns . . . If *The Measure* gets hold of an undoubted masterpiece once in its career, it will be lucky. *Poetry*, of Chicago, has come out uninterruptedly for ten years without doing it. This is not the fault of the editors of POETRY. If there had been masterpieces to print, they would have printed them.

Not yet ten years—only eight-and-a-half; so there is still hope! But meantime may we remind this despairing young editor that it takes a master to recognize a masterpiece; and a slow procession of masters, in accord across spaces of time, to pronounce the ultimatum?

*The Double-dealer* is an auspicious attempt to give the South a literary organ. It ought to succeed—we hope and trust it will, for the South has a right to speak with its own voice; and those members of the staff whom we know—for
Two New Magazines

example, John McClure, the New Orleans poet, and Vincent Starrett, Chicago correspondent—are certainly competent.

The local flavor is not yet very strong in the first three numbers, but no doubt that will come. Meantime we have a gay-spirited monthly which has the air of being happily alive, and some of whose entries—of stories, plays, criticism, verse—are vivid and interesting. H. M.

NOTES

Mr. Maxwell Bodenheim, formerly of Chicago but now of New York, is the author of Minna and Myself (Pagan Pub. Co.); and of Advice (Alfred A. Knopf), which was reviewed last month.

Miss Hazel Hall lives in Portland, Oregon. Her first book of verse will soon be published by the John Lane Co.

Mr. Edward Sapir, of the Canadian Geological Survey in Ottawa, is the author of Dreams and Gibes (Poet Lore Co.).

Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke was listed last month.

The other poets in this number are new to our readers:

Aline Kilmer (Mrs. Joyce Kilmer) of Larchmont, N. Y., is the author of Candles that Burn, published in 1919 by the George H. Doran Co.

Madame Muriel Ciolkowska is a poet and journalist resident in Bellevue, France. She has served as Paris correspondent of the London Egoist and other critical journals.

Julia Weld Huntington (Mrs. John P.), who has published verse and prose in various magazines, lives near Norwich, Conn.

Ruth Mason Rice (Mrs. Willis B.), a resident of New York, has published a novel and written for various papers. Miss Dorothy McVickar is living at present in Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; and Miss Amy Bonner and Elizabeth Hart Pennell (Mrs. Henry B., Jr.) are residents of New York City. Miss Blanche Dismorr is an English poet, resident in or near London. So far as the editor knows, none of these six ladies has published as yet a book of verse.
BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:
The Last Knight and Other Poems, by Theodore Maynard. Frederick A. Stokes Co.
Seen and Unseen, by Yone Noguchi. (New Ed.) Orientalia, N. Y.
Julian Hunter: Soldier Poet, and The Dales of Arcady, by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe.
Roses and Rime, by Glenn D. Whisler. Pri. ptd., Cleveland.
Dreams at Twilight, by Ada Emery McCurdy.

ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:
The Garden of Bright Waters: One Hundred and Twenty Asiatic Love Poems, tr'd by E. Powys Mathers. Houghton Mifflin Co.

PLAYS:
Mary Stuart, by John Drinkwater. Houghton Mifflin Co.
Two Mothers, by John G. Neihardt. Macmillan Co.

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Of Poetry, published monthly at Chicago, Ill., for April 1, 1921.

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