Vol. XX No. I

# Poetry

## A Magazine of Verse

Edited by Harriet Monroe

April 1922
Southern Number

Charleston Poems
by DuBose Heyward
The Sea-islands
by Hervey Allen
Tidewater
by Beatrice Ravenel

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MoPoRs

How I wish that some English paper had anything like the authentic vitality of POETRY!
*Louis Golding*

Vol. XX No. I

# POETRY *for* APRIL, 1922

PAGE
Charleston Poems . . . . . . . . . . *DuBose Heyward* 1
Dusk—Edgar Allan Poe—Matins
The Sea-islands . . . . . . . . . . . . *Hervey Allen* 6
Shadows — Sunshine — Macabre in Macaws — Hag-hollerin' Time — Upstairs Downstairs — Palmetto Town
High Trees . . . . . . . . . . . *Henry Bellamann* 15
Two Poems . . . . . . . . . . . . *Marx G. Sabel* 16
Recordition—The Core
When Love is Gone . . . . . . . . . . . *Louise Jones* 18
Verses . . . . . . . . . . *Elfrida De Renne Barrow* 19
Impressions — Recognition — Twilight — Death — I Wonder
Spring Makes Me Wonder . . . . . . *Josephine Pinckney* 21
Marsh Sketches . . . . . . . . *Frances Dickenson Pinder* 22
Sea Marsh — Marsh Pools — Shallows
Two Poems . . . . . . . . . . . . *May Thomas Milam* 25
Open a Door — Jenice
Tidewater . . . . . . . . . . . . *Beatrice Ravenel* 26
Harbor Water — White Azaleas in Magnolia Gardens — Dew — The Only Child — Lill' Angels
This Southern Number . . . . . . . . . . . . *H. M.* 31
Poetry South . . . . *Hervey Allen and DuBose Heyward* 35
Poe in South Carolina . . . . . . . . . . . . *H. A.* 48

Reviews:

A Sonneteer . . . . . . . . . . . *Glenway Wescott* 49
A French Victorian . . . . . . . . . . . . . *H. M.* 51

Correspondence:

Notes from the P. S. A. Annual Dinner . *Dorothy Dudley* 53
Imports from Africa. . . . . . . . . . . . *C. S.* 56
Notes and Books Received . . . . . . . . . . . . 57, 58

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Poetry
A Magazine of Verse

VOL. XX
NO. I

## APRIL 1922

## SOUTHERN NUMBER

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## CHARLESTON POEMS

### DUSK

THEY tell me she is beautiful, my city,
That she is colorful and quaint; alone
Among the cities. But I—I who have known
Her tenderness, her courage, and her pity;
Have felt her forces mold me, mind and bone,
Life after life, up from her first beginning—
How can I think of her in wood and stone!
To others she has given of her beauty:
Her gardens, and her dim old faded ways;
Her laughter, and her happy drifting hours;
Glad spendthrift April, squandering her flowers;
The sharp still wonder of her autumn days;

Her chimes, that shimmer from St. Michael's steeple
Across the deep maturity of June
Like sunlight slanting over open water
Under a high blue listless afternoon.
But when the dusk is deep upon the harbor,
She finds me where her rivers meet and speak,
And while the constellations gem the silence
High overhead, her cheek is on my cheek.
I know her in the thrill behind the dark
When sleep brims all her silent thoroughfares.
She is the glamour in the quiet park
That kindles simple things like grass and trees;
Wistful and wanton as her sea-born airs,
Bringer of dim rich age-old memories.
Out on the gloom-deep water, when the nights
Are choked with fog, and perilous, and blind,
She is the faith that tends the calling lights.
Hers is the stifled voice of harbor bells,
Muffled and broken by the mist and wind.
Hers are the eyes through which I look on life
And find it brave and splendid. And the stir
Of hidden music shaping all my songs,
And these my songs, my all, belong to her.

### EDGAR ALLAN POE

Once in the starlight
  When the tides were low,

ICU

And the surf fell sobbing
  To the undertow,
I trod the windless dunes
  Alone with Edgar Poe.

Dim and far behind us,
  Like a fabled bloom
On the myrtle thickets,
  In the swaying gloom
Hung the clustered windows
  Of the barrack-room.

Faint on the evening,
  Tenuous and far
As the beauty shaken
  From a vagrant star,
Throbbed the ache and passion
  Of an old guitar.

Life closed behind us
  Like a swinging gate,
Leaving us unfettered
  And emancipate;
Confidants of Destiny,
  Intimates of Fate.

I could only cower
  Silent, while the night,
Seething with its planets,
  Parted to our sight,

Showing us infinity
  In its breadth and height.

But my chosen comrade,
  Tossing back his hair
With the old loved gesture,
  Raised his face, and there
Shone that agony that those
  Loved of God must bear.

Oh, we heard the many things
  Silence has to say—
He and I together
  As alone we lay
Waiting for the slow sweet
  Miracle of day.

When the bugle's silver
  Spiralled up the dawn
Dew-clear, night-cool,
  And the stars were gone,
I arose exultant,
  Like a man new-born.

But my friend and master,
  Heavy-limbed and spent,
Turned, as one must turn at last
  From the sacrament;
And his eyes were deep with God's
  Burning discontent.

### MATINS

I saw you pray today
  Out in the park—
Poor little storm-driven
  Child of the dark.

Body to earth you lay
  On the young grass,
Learning the shining way
  April may pass.

I saw the clear song
  Cardinals make
Brush your face tangibly,
  Like wind on the lake.

Then, in the hedge
  Where japonicas grew,
A little breeze was born,
  Boyish and new.

I saw it find you
  And rustle your name;
Lift you, and carry you
  Like a slim flame

Out where the trees break,
  Leaving wide skies.
Now I see always
  The prayer in your eyes.

*DuBose Heyward*

# THE SEA-ISLANDS

### SHADOWS

There is deliberateness in all sea-island ways,
Outlandish to our days as stone wheels are.
The islands cannot see the use of life
Which only lives for change;
Their days are flat,
And all things there move slowly.
Even the seasons are conservative—
No sudden flaunting of wild colors in the fall,
Only a gradual fading of the green,
As if the earth turned slowly,
Or looked with one still face upon the sun
As Venus does;
Until the trees, the fields, the marshes,
All turn dun, dull Quaker brown,
And a mild winter settles down,
And mosses are more gray.

All human souls are glasses which reflect
The aspects of the outer world.
See what terrible gods the huge Himalayas bred!—
And the fierce Jewish Jaywah came
From the hot Syrian desert
With his inhibitory decalogue.
The gods of little hills are always tame;
Here God is dull, where all things stay the same.

No change on these sea-islands!
The huge piled clouds range
White in the cobalt sky;
The moss hangs,
And the strong tiring sea-winds blow—
While day on glistering day goes by.

The horses plow with hanging heads—
Slow, followed by a black-faced man,
Indifferent to the sun.
The old cotton bushes hang with whitened heads;
And there among the live-oak trees
Peep the small whitewashed cabins,
Painted blue perhaps, with scarlet-turbaned women,
Ample-hipped, with voices soft and warm;
And the lean hounds and chocolate children swarm.

Day after day the ocean pumps
The awful valve-gates of his heart,
Diastole and systole through these estuaries;
The tides flow in long gray weed-streaked lines;
The salt water, like the planet's lifeblood, goes
As if the earth were breathing with long-taken breaths
And we were very near her heart.

No wonder that these faces show a tired dismay,
Looking on burning suns, and scarcely blithe in May.
Spring's coming is too fierce with life,
And summer is too long;

The stunted pine trees struggle with the sand
Till the eyes sicken with their dwarfing strife.

There are old women here among these island homes,
With dull brown eyes that look at something gray,
And tight silver hair, drawn back in lines,
Like the beach grass that's always blown one way;
With such a melancholy in their faces
I know that they have lived long in these places.
The tides, the hooting owls, the daylight moons,
The leprous lights and shadows of the mosses,
The funereal woodlands of these coasts,
Draped like a hearse,
And memories of an old war's ancient losses,
Dwell in their faces' shadows like gray ghosts.
And worse—
The terror of the black man always near,
The drab level of the rice-fields and the marsh
Lend them a mask of fear.

### SUNSHINE

Do you suppose the sun here lavishes his heat
For nothing in these islands by the sea?
No! The great green-mottled melons ripen in the fields,
Bleeding with scarlet juicy pith deliciously;
And the exuberant yams grow golden, thick and sweet;

And white potatoes in grave-rows,
With leaves as rough as cat-tongues,
And pearly onions and cabbages
With white flesh sweet as chicken-meat.

These the black boatmen bring to town
On barges, heaped with severed breasts of leaves,
Driven by *put-put* engines
Down the long canals quavering with song,
With hail and chuckle to the docks along;
Seeing their dark faces down below
Reduplicated in the sunset glow,
While from the shore stretch out the quivering lines
Of the flat palm-like reflected pines
That inland lie like ranges of dark hills in lines.
And so to town—
Weaving odd baskets of sweet grass
Lazily and slow,
To sell in the arcaded market
Where men sold their fathers not so long ago.

For all their poverty,
These patient black men live
A life rich in warm colors of the fields,
Sunshine and hearty foods;
Delighted with the gifts that earth can give,
And old tales of Plateye and Bre'r Rabbit;
While the golden-velvet cornpone browns
Underneath the lid among hot ashes,

Where the groundnuts roast
Round shadowy fires at nights—
With tales of graveyard ghost,
While eery spirituals ring
And organ voices sing,
And sticks knock maddening rhythms on the floor
To shuffling youngsters "cutting" buck-and-wing;
Dogs bark;
And woolly pickaninnies peek about the door.
Sundays, along the moss-draped roads,
The beribboned black folk go to church
By threes and twos, carrying their shoes;
With orange turbans, ginghams, rainbow hats.
Then bucks flaunt tiger-lily ties and cobalt suits,
Smoking cob pipes and faintly sweet cheroots.
Wagons with oval wheels and kitchen chairs screech by,
Where Joseph-coated white-teethed maidens sit
Demurely,
While the old mule rolls back the ivory of his eye.
Soon from the whitewashed churches roll away,
Among the live-oak trees,
Rivers of melancholy harmonies,
Full of the sorrows of the centuries
The white man hears, but cannot feel.

But it is always Sunday on sea-islands.
Plantation bells, calling the pickers from the fields,
Are like old temple gongs;

And the wind tells monodies among the pines,
Playing upon their strings the ocean's songs.
The ducks fly in long trailing lines;
Geese honk and marsh-hens quank
Among the tidal flats and rushes rank on rank.
On island tufts the heron feeds its viscid young,
And the quick mocker catches
From lips of sons of slaves the eery snatches
And trolls them as no lips have ever sung.

Oh, it is good to be here in the spring,
When water still stays solid in the North,
When the first jasmine rings its golden bells,
And the wild wistaria puts forth;
But most because the sea then changes tone—
Talking a whit less drear,
It gossips in a smoother monotone,
Whispering moon-scandal in the old earth's ear.

### MACABRE IN MACAWS

After the hurricane of the late forties,
Peter Polite says, in the live-oak trees
Were weird macabre macaws,
And ash-colored cockatoos blown overseas
From Nassau and the West Indies.
These hopped about like dead men's thoughts

Amid the draggled Spanish moss,
Preening themselves, all at a loss;
Mewing faint caws,
And shrieking with nostalgia—
With dull screams like a child
Born with neuralgia.
And this seems true to me,
Fitting the landscape's drab grotesquery.

### HAG-HOLLERIN' TIME

Black Julius peered out from the galley door;
Behind Jim Island, lying long and dim,
An infra owl-light tinged the twilight sky
As if a bonfire burned for cherubim.
Dark orange flames came leering through the pines;
And then the moon's face, struggling with a sneeze,
Along the flat horizon's level lines
Her nostrils fingered with palmetto trees.

Her platinum wand made water-wrinkles buckle.
Old Julius gave appreciative chuckle—
"It's jes about hag-hollerin' time," he said.
I watched the globous buckeyes in his head
Peer back along the bloody moon-wash dim
To see the fish-tailed water-witches swim.

## UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

The judge, who lives impeccably upstairs
With dull decorum and its implication,
Has all his servants in to family prayers
And edifies *his* soul with exhortation.
Meanwhile, his blacks live wastefully downstairs;
Not always chaste, they manage to exist
With less decorum than the judge upstairs,
And find withal a something that he missed.

This painful fact a Swede philosopher,
Who tarried for a fortnight in our city,
Remarked one evening at the meal, before
We paralyzed him silent with our pity;
Saying the black man, living with the white,
Had given more than white men could requite.

## PALMETTO TOWN

Sea-island winds sweep through Palmetto Town,
Bringing with piny tang the old romance
Of pirates and of smuggling gentlemen;
And tongues as languorous as southern France
Flow down her streets like water-talk at fords;
While through iron gates where pickaninnies sprawl
The sound comes back, in rippled banjo chords,

From lush magnolia shades where mockers call.
Mornings, the flower-women bring their wares—
Bronze caryatids of a genial race,
Bearing the bloom-heaped baskets on their heads;
Lithe, with their arms akimbo in wide grace,
Their jasmine nodding jestingly at cares.
Turbaned they are, deep-chested, straight and tall,
Bandying old English words now seldom heard
But sweet as Provençal.
Dreams peer like prisoners through her harp-like gates
From molten gardens mottled with gray gloom,
Where lichened sundials shadow ancient dates,
And deep piazzas loom.
Fringing her quays are frayed palmetto posts,
Where clipper ships once moored along the ways,
And fanlight doorways, sunstruck with old ghosts,
Sicken with loves of her lost yesterdays.
Often I halt upon some gabled walk,
Thinking I see the ear-ringed picaroons,
Slashed with a sash and Spanish folderols,
Gambling for moidores or for gold doubloons.
But they have gone where night goes after day;
And the old streets are gay with whistled tunes,
Bright with the lilt of scarlet parasols
Carried by honey-voiced young octoroons.

*Hervey Allen*

# HIGH TREES

There is unprisoned day up there:

The even flow of level lights,
The passing of the wilder rains,
The perfect circle of the world—
These, and the longer ride with sun,
The earlier tryst with stars,
The virgin silver of the moon!

It must be well to hear
The broken song of trampled dust,
The long complaint of streets,
Soothed to uncertainty—
Earth's weaving flutter laid aside
Like a folded fan.

See how deeply their lifted breasts
Are stirred!
See how the highest leaf
Fingers a star!

*Henry Bellamann*

## TWO POEMS

### RECORDITION

I have hailed you.
Out of centuries, out of aeons,
During this fractional part of an infinitesimal clock-tick
    of time,
I have seen you,
And hailed you.

I have yearned toward you,
Burning.
I have looked into your eyes
During this fractional part of an infinitesimal clock-tick
    of time.

Quicker than the shadow of a monoplane
Passing over the shadow of a humming-bird,
Shall we two pass,
And be to all men's memory
Inconceivably remote.

Yet it is recorded
That out of all time,
During this fractional part of an infinitesimal clock-tick
    of time,
I have seen you and hailed you.
It is recorded!

*Marx G. Sabel*

## THE CORE

I have won free of your body at last;
  The fire and ice of it
Can neither burn nor freeze me fast.

I look upon you now no whit
  Afraid, for I do not desire:
And yet, what is the benefit?

I still must worship; something higher
  Impels me youward constantly.
Yet I am fagot for a fire

The heat of which is of such degree
  That I shrivel painlessly therein;
And I am flower for a sea

So cold all things that find it win
  To death without the slightest change.
Although I have torn the cabals of sin,

I drift beyond the senses' range
  In spiritual perfectness
To lands remote, grotesquely strange,

That thrill my passions now no less
  Than even your beauty thrilled before.
But this, this joy, is fathomless;

More certain, steadfast, deeper, more
  Inexorable, and it demands
The core of what we thought the core!

You cannot touch it with your hands,
  You cannot see it with your eyes:
Only your soul that understands
  May teach you its divinities!

*Marx G. Sabel*

## WHEN LOVE IS GONE

I am as a field of grass
Over which the hot winds pass—
  I am bowed.

As an organ left alone—
Organist and songs long gone—
  I am dumb.

I am as a goblet dried,
Wine-stained crystal rim and side:
  I am drained.

As the ashes dead and gray
When the fire has burned away,
  I am cold.

*Louise Jones*

# VERSES

## IMPRESSIONS

I feel the sands of time
  Crunch beneath my feet—
Out on the open road
  Or in the narrow street.

And when my heart is glad
  My foot-prints are light,
Tracing faintly the sands
  That glitter cool and white.

But when my soul is sad
  Heavy sinks my tread—
Deep furrows in the dank
  Dark sands where lie the dead.

## RECOGNITION

Disguised, a little hope
  Came to my door one day,
And begged for food and drink,
  And pled to stay.

Frightened, my heart said, "Wait—
  He may be born of sin."
But then my soul sang out,
  "Come in, come in."

### TWILIGHT

The grey-cloaked dusk
  Is like a nun;
Her hands folded,
  Her prayers done.

In that hushed hour
  She seems to wait,
Kneeling beside
  The convent gate.

### DEATH

Driftwood am I,
  And oblivion seems like the sea
That comes creeping, creeping
  Nearer to me.

Some day a wave
  Will pass all the others by,
And come lapping, lapping
  To where I lie.

Then on the tide
  I shall be taken out to sea,
Until nothing, nothing
  Is left of me.

*Elfrida De Renne Barrow*

## I WONDER

My heart is a small room,
And life is the light of day
That peeps in through the window
Joyous and gay.

When Time draws down the blind
And leaves me to the night,
Will God come then, I wonder,
And bring me light?

*Elfrida De Renne Barrow*

## SPRING MAKES ME WONDER

Always my love for you
Was an escaping thing,
Like gray smoke seen through half-green boughs;
Or the shadow of gray smoke wavering
On the bare ground of spring.

Why was it never joy—
Clear joy of looking up
Through drifts of porcelain-white plum-blossoms
Into the sky's blue cup?

*Josephine Pinckney*

## MARSH SKETCHES

### SEA MARSH

Like a woman who remembers
Is the marsh—
A woman who forgives, and yet
Whose every mood is dimmed
Because, forgiving,
She cannot ever quite forget.

None knows her secret heart—
One can but guess
What crying winds have stirred
To dumb distress
Her quietness;
What sodden rains have trampled her;
What lust of August suns.
She has no words:
Impassive, inarticulate
Save for the flight of birds—
Slow heron, slumbrous crane—
She keeps her counsel.
Though cities bloom and fade
And forests fall,
She does not change;
The slow years pause . . . pass,
And leave no trace—

Like snowflakes on a peasant's face.
So long
The seasons have defrauded her,
There is no festival
Upon her calendar;
In spring, no hint of welcoming
For the few flowers
That seek her smile;
No song upon her lips . . .
How should she sing?
For nothing whole is hers,
No perfect gift—
Only the spent and broken things
That drift
In from the unrepentant sea.

### MARSH POOLS

And now I know
Where are those stars
That slip like jewels
Between the night's
Most jealous fingers.
At dusk I found them,
Where the marsh had hidden them—
In a silver pocket
Of her grey-green gown!

## SHALLOWS

I must swim out—
Overlong have I stayed
Here on the warm shale;
Aimlessly played. . . .
Gathering sea-shells
Empty and frail.

One dwindles here
Where the tides creep—
Grows dazzled,
Gazing too long through the clear
Wave at the sun asleep
On the sands overnear. . . .
What if the thought of the deep
Should become a fear?

I must swim out—
Lest the urge fail,
Darken duskward
And fade, as a sail.

*Frances Dickenson Pinder*

# TWO POEMS

### OPEN A DOOR

Open a door suddenly,
  And you may see
Loved ones whom you call dead
  Happy and free.

Listen—oh, stealthily!—
  You'll find it true,
These whom you weep for
  Are pitying you.

Close the door softly,
  Lest they may learn
They have been spied on,
  And never return.

### JENICE

If Jenice dies, who is as white
As apple blossoms blanched by night—
If Jenice dies, what shall I care
If there be beauty everywhere?
All beauty will be dead for me—
The silver moonlight on the sea,
The shining glory of the skies,
Will die for me if Jenice dies.

*May Thomas Milam*

# TIDEWATER

### HARBOR WATER

All through the night I can hear the sound of dancers,
Soft-padding hoofs, and the lipping of the water,
The water, the water patting juba . . .

*Juba! Juba!*
*Juba lef' an' juba right,*
*Juba dance on a moonshine night—*
*Juba!*

Knobbly palmetto posts,
Matted trunks of sea-gods,
Hairier than monkeys, rise from the water—
The pulpy, the oily-burnished water.

Soft rocking feet of the dancers sway about them,
Long-swelling ripples with their crisp inhibitions,
Filed golden streaks like the pointed feet of dancers,
Pull of the tide, and the netted flopping motion
Of the water, the music-woven, oily-damasked water,
Water patting juba. . . .

*Juba! Juba!*
*Juba lef' an' juba right,*
*Juba dance on a moonshine night—*
*Juba!*

*Beatrice Ravenel*

### WHITE AZALEAS IN MAGNOLIA GARDENS

Your images in water! Sea-shell gray
And iridescence; like the endless spawn
Of pale sea-jellies on a moonless night—
A milky way that glamours out of sight—
Something of sea and something of the sky.
Drawn from the earth as blossoming dreams are drawn,
Most strange are you in this, that dreams alight and fly,
But you dream on all your translucent day.

Sweeps of divinest nothingness, abyss
Of beauty, you are the stirred, subconscious place
Of flowers, you are the rathe and virgin mood
Of young azaleas.
                    Where heaped branches brood
Like bathers, water-girdled to the hips,
Like Undines, every blossom turns her face
Groping above the water, with her parted, winged, insatiable lips,
Each for her soul and its white mysteries.

### DEW

The new morning light is a primitive,
A painter of faintly-filled outlines,
        A singer of folk-songs.

The dew-flattened vines by my window
Are all of one innocent green.
Nothing so young as that green—
An outline cut by a child
From a soft new blotter.

But when the light grows,
They suck up a pert chiaroscuro—
Gold, meretricious, knowing high-lights,
Hopelessly clever.

Their poems
Dry in the sun.

### THE ONLY CHILD

You are not one child only,
Little one, daughter my dear—
Hundreds of shadowy children
Follow you everywhere.

Babies in twilighted corners
Play with your outgrown things;
They whisper forgotten stories,
They dance in gossamer rings.

Hundreds of outgrown children
Look from your candid eyes;

Butterfly, ceaselessly living
  In a swarming of butterflies.

You race through the garden doorway,
  And swift, like a silvery band,
The cobweb of children is after you . . .
  But the last one holds my hand.

### LILL' ANGELS

Mammy rocks the baby
  In the wallflower-colored gloom;
All the floor rocks with her,
  And the slumber of the room.
Like the broad, unceasing trade-wind,
  Like the rivers underground,
Rolls the universal rhythm
  And the rich, primeval sound:
        *All de lill' angels,*
        *All de baby's angels,*
            *Swingin' on de tree;*
        *Forty-one lill' angel',*
        *Fifty-two lill' angel',*
        *Sixty-fo' lill' angel',*
            *Sebbenty-t'ree. . . .*

On the glory of the sundown,
  Of the wallflower-colored skies,

I can see her vast Assumption
  In a cloud of cherubs' eyes.
With their gold-persimmon haloes
  Where the ripest sunlight falls,
And the cherub-tree's espaliered
  On the winking crystal walls.
    *Little yaller angels,*
    *Piccaninny angels,*
      *Chuckle on the tree.*
    *Forty-one lill' angel',*
    *Fifty-two lill' angel',*
    *Sixty-fo' lill' angel',*
      *Se . . . ebbenty-t'ree. . . .*

*Beatrice Ravenel*

# COMMENT

## THIS SOUTHERN NUMBER

EVER since POETRY began, it has believed in, and tried to encourage, a strongly localized indigenous art. Such art may not produce masterpieces—the gods alone decide that; but no one can deny that the world's most precious masterpieces—such things as Dante, Homer, Rembrandt, or the old Egyptian sculptors have left us—sprang out of intensely local loyalties, and attained to universality because the locale, grandly handled, becomes as wide as the earth; and a great master's neighbors, re-created in his art, will speak, to the end of time, for the whole human race. Today especially art needs to concentrate on the locale against the generalizing, scattering tendencies of the age; else it is in danger of becoming vague and diffused and theoretic, of losing precision and vitality.

So it is consistent that we should offer our readers this Southern Number, and should request two leaders of the Poetry Society of South Carolina to share its editorship with our usual staff. No one can go talking about poetry through the states of our south-eastern coast, as I did a year ago, without feeling that the local loyalties, always dramatically intense in that region, are turning with deep enthusiasm toward the arts. The people are beginning to realize what wonderful material has been awaiting observant eyes and creative minds: romantic episodes of early history and legend, involving three strongly contrasted races; plantation life and city life and sea life, with all their bewildering changes through three centuries of valiant history; a landscape of languorous beauty, melting into the vividly colored tropical ocean along white stretches of sand; and a proud people who have always commanded life a bit cavalierly, contrasted with the sweetly indolent, humorous, more or less loyally subservient African.

All this has waited long for its interpreters, for the South—this particular South especially—held more firmly than any other section of the country to eighteenth-century literary manners and Victorian sentimentalities. Two southern poets escaped the thraldom, of course: Poe by sheer force of genius driven by egoistic will; and Lanier by good taste and a high order of poetic instinct. Both spent most of their lives in the neighborhood of Baltimore, but more tropical sojourn in the Carolinas and Georgia strongly influenced their imaginations.

But Poe was an individualist rather than an interpreter; his high lyric strain was an intensely personal magic—coloratura of surpassing brilliancy and of an exquisite melancholy beauty. It is as southern as Charleston's moss-hung "Magnolia Gardens"; and the refuge it creates is as unreal, as weirdly remote from earth. While one should know that particular South to understand Poe's spiritual sources and sympathies, one sees his proud and tragic figure slip through like a ghost, haunting but touching not the life around him.

Nor did Lanier attempt the story. His finely observant mind delighted in nature, and he remains essentially a landscape poet; establishing, in such poems as *The Marshes of Glynn*, the rather narrow limitations of his lofty spirit and delicately sensitive talent. A worshipper of beauty was Lanier—a true poet, but hardly a great one.

Much remains to be said for this South in the arts. For a long time its people were scarcely aware of this fact; preoccupied with recovery from a destructive war, they were indifferent to the arts. Now their attitude is becoming expectant; they are at least preparing the way for the poets, painters and other artists who shall speak for them. Local exhibitions are being held, beautiful old houses are being preserved and restored; and poetry societies in various cities are gathering together and encouraging the poets who may yet immortalize their place and hour.

Of these the Poetry Society of South Carolina, thus far the most important, is exerting an influence which may yet be felt throughout the South. It is appropriate that this society should be centralized in Charleston, for, as an observer said recently,

> Charleston is the logical centre for this poetical renaissance, because the old culture, which is the only thing capable of bringing forth the new, is stronger there than in any other southern city, not excepting Richmond.

This society is well organized and intelligently conducted, offering the stimulus of criticism, lectures, local contests and prizes, with the Blindman Prize of two hundred and fifty dollars as an annual invitation to poets far and near.

The groups in Columbia, Savannah and Jacksonville are near neighbors of the Charleston society, and closely affiliated with it. Its example has been felt as far away as the Lone Star State, for the Poetry Society of Texas, with similar aims, is being organized by Mrs. Therese Lindsey, of Houston, and others. Texas indeed has been keenly hospitable to modern poets and the ideas they represent; many of the more prominent ones are familiar figures in Dallas, Austin, Waco, San Antonio and other cities.

The present number attempts to represent the southeastern groups—of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. The poems which we print by Mr. Heyward and Mr. Allen come, with one exception, from their projected book of *Carolina Chansons*, to be published next autumn; which will endeavor to remind their neighbors, and those further north as well, of the heroic history and romantic legendry of this region, much of which will fade from human memory unless the poets make it live.

*H. M.*

## POETRY SOUTH

It is a truism that creative art from its very nature must be original, the peculiarly different and unexpected reaction of the artist to his environment. This is especially true of poetry, the least concrete of the arts; and it is this very quality of unexpectedness in the poet, constituting as it does so much of the charm of poetry, that makes an attempt to forecast the reactions of any group or school of poets a task which calls for the prophetic rather than for the merely constructive critic.

Nevertheless, poets as a rule are so profoundly affected by their environment that by understanding it, if we cannot precisely predict their reactions, we can at least say within limits what they will not write about, and perhaps even be able to forecast the general tendencies of a school or group in its day and place. If, in addition to the physical environment, we have also some grasp of the historical and ethnic background from which poets speak, some comprehension of the immediate social and local problems which surround them—in short, some knowledge of the poets themselves—we shall be able, to a large extent, to tell not only what subjects they will be most likely to select, but also, in a more limited sense, in what mood they will approach their theme; and from mood their style, for it is mood that dictates style.

It is from this standpoint of physical and spiritual environment, from the historical background, and from a survey of the tendencies evident in the verse being written by southern poets today, that this cursory presentation of the condition of poetry in the South is attempted. In so brief a space its statements must be rather general, with all the many exceptions implied.

Despite some vigorous assertions to the contrary, it seems as if southern poetry were going to be decidedly regional in spirit, with a quick human appeal but strongly local in tone—poetry of and about places. Much of American verse is city poetry. It is the similarity of our city life perhaps which has given to a great deal of American verse a note of sameness that is too often mistaken for a universal realistic appeal. The city, too, has given American poetry a tendency to mirror back the drab, and accentuated an almost morbid desire for self-expression which the crowd begets. There has been, to be sure, a gain in thought-content and sophistication, but the spontaneous and simple have been sacrificed, while the constant search for the "new" has brought about a ceaseless experiment with alien forms. It seems probable that poetry written from the South will be, in nearly all these respects, the opposite of what has rather arbitrarily been called "city-verse," for the South is still predominantly agricultural. Although industrialism, under the spur of northern capital, has ridden in ruthlessly here and there, the plantation of one kind or another is still the economic, vital unit; and it may be expected that when the plantation poet speaks, it will not be from the necessity of introspectively asserting his existence as an individual apart from the crowd, but of objectively reflecting in simple measures the patriarchal life remnant about him. In this he will very likely be profoundly impressed by his sub-tropical or mountain landscapes, and reflect the spontaneously lyrical and primarily rhythmic melodies of the Negro. Indeed, the effect of the Negro on southern poetry demands a treatment by itself.

It is significant that the syncopation of the Negro, which has found its way into "jazz" music and verse, has seldom been adopted by southern poets. This is partly due to a "subconscious-intellectual" color-line, for strong social and racial prejudices are carried over into art; but to a still greater extent the omission of "jazz" in southern poetry is due to the fact that the short, choppy effects of syncopated rhythms do not lend themselves to the intimate mood of memory and contemplation which the South has to express. Therefore, the more obvious employment of Negro rhythms, and the attempts to gain the ear by poems in unauthentic dialect must not be overestimated. Due credit must be given, however, to the Valentine Museum of Richmond for its publication of authentic Negro dialect-poetry, and its experiments in recording for phonographic reproduction the exact sound of the passing speech of the old Negro. Thomas Nelson Page of Virginia, Harry Stillwell Edwards and Joel Chandler Harris of Georgia, and Janie Screven Heyward of the South Carolina coast country, together with a few others, are deserving of mention for having created literature which correctly records the Negro dialect of their own localities.

The southern muse must be careful how she handles the tar-baby; but the weird, the bizarre and the grotesque in Negro life and story, and the tone of the "spiritual" will have to be reckoned with—indeed, they have already made themselves felt. With the Negro, poetry, music and the dance are still closely associated, as in all primitive races, and in the recognition and perpetuation of this condition lies a great opportunity for American art in the South. It is much to be desired that the southern group may recognize this immense fund of rich material for poetry which Negro music, legends and folk-lore hold in trust, and that the time may rapidly come when there will be Negro poets who can use adequately the artistic values inherent in their own race, and produce something worthy. Unfortunately Paul Lawrence Dunbar stands almost alone; his was a unique contribution to literature, as Tanner's has been to painting.

The Negro, however, is not the only source of folk-lore in the South. Even richer in poetic material is the lofty back-country of the Appalachians. The rush of American civilization has thus far touched only the fringes of this rugged land. Today one may take a trail from one of the mountain towns, and by traveling horseback for fifty miles in from the railroad he will discover for himself an eighteenth-century pioneer settlement; provided he is not mistaken for a revenue officer, and his route subjected to an immediate change of destination.

The mountains of the Carolinas and Kentucky were settled in the days of Daniel Boone and earlier by sturdy Scotch-Irish and English pioneers who built their isolated settlements behind the ramparts of rock. There, sequestered from the flow and change of civilization, they have continued to live the life of the pioneer. There are certain remote districts in the Black and Great Smoky ranges where life has remained absolutely static for a century and a half. There it is still possible to hear old English ballads and folk-tales which passed from current use generations ago; and one still encounters Elizabethan words. Certainly nowhere else in the America of today can one find conditions so favorable to the development of genuine folk-expression; with the background of an old, but still remembered civilization, and an absolute isolation which encourages the crystallization, by word of mouth, of the idea into the story.

The mountaineer responds but little to beauty. In his great tumble of hills, which contains forty-six peaks of over six thousand feet, including the highest point east of the Rocky Mountains, amid a flora that is bewildering in its pageantry of color, he is stubborn, vindictive in anger, elemental as a child in his amusements, shrewd, silent, and unerring in his estimate of the "furreners" he may chance to meet. It should be added here, by way of extenuation, that the mountaineer is naturally on the defensive. Living as he does by a code of ethics and morals out of the past, he finds himself contending with the incursions of the present, and he knows instinctively that he is at a disadvantage.

But it is among the mountain women that one finds the pathos and tragedy of these isolated people. Burden-bearers, tillers of the soil, the women are old at thirty. Their faces tell nothing of their thoughts, but there is always a characteristic quality to the speaking voice: the tone is low, soft and drawling, invariably dropping to a lower key at the end of every remark, with an effect of hopelessness and infinite sadness.

The only emotional outlet for the mountaineer is the religious revival, and the occasional neighborhood dance. To both of these forms of entertainment he responds with the greatest gusto, and the extreme revivalist sects, such as the "Holiness" and the "Holy Rollers," have made many profitable excursions into his fastnesses. But such outbursts can not long combat the native reticence of the people, and they soon become self-conscious and indifferent.

In spite of the fact that the southern mountaineer is probably the most interesting and least known figure in our national life, it will be many years before he will write his own story, if ever. The lack of schools, and his rooted indifference to educational advantages, will keep him much as he is, but he should be transcribed through the medium of some art before he passes; for there is nothing else quite like him on the continent.

The statement has been made earlier that southern poetry may be largely of and about places. If environment is going to affect our southern poets, if they are going to be at all objective, this will necessarily follow, for there is no other portion of the country so districted—i. e., where sections differ so one from the other as in the South. To pass from the country of the mountain-whites to the Carolina Low Country, for example, is to pass from one world to another, one with a different fauna and flora and a different ethnic background. Here the poets may tell of the sea-islands, with tidal lagoons where the wild-fowl, ducks, marsh-hens, and strange gawky heron feed, and the migrating song-birds pass through each year like a recurring flame. They may speak of magnolia and azalea gardens, oriental in a polychromatic spring; of swamps and eerie live-oak forests where the Spanish moss hangs like stalactites in twilit caverns; of the miles of deserted rice-fields where turbaned blacks walk ruined dykes; and of the ancient baronies and manors, each with its legend, where the deer feed around the stately columned houses—shells of a life and an epoch which have passed away.

But if the past does not call the southern poet, the thrusting of industrialism into the Piedmont cotton and tobacco regions, with the rise of the factory system, child-labor, and a burning racial problem, offer a tremendous theme and a possible chance of legitimate propaganda for the present. Then in Florida, at such towns as Miami, a frontier is being peacefully settled, and dotted with villas Roman in their scale and magnificence; while from the Everglades the firelight of the stone-age Seminole glows in the midnight sky when he holds his secret corn-dances. Southward stretch the coral keys, haunted by huge sea-turtles, that crawl out to hide their eggs where pirates once hid gold; and even today the eagle boat of the whiskey-runner shelters there, making for Nassau or Bimini. Then there are the plains of Texas rich with the dusty-golden dreams of Spanish empire, with enchanted mesas, pueblos, Indian stories and cow-boy songs; or the cane-brakes of Louisiana, and faded Creole New Orleans of the old river days.

How absurd to say the South has nothing but genealogy! Who will sing of them, these cities—of Santa Fe or El Paso, San Antonio or St. Augustine, and of old Charleston with her three hundred years of memories? Who is going to write the epos of Coronado, of the lost Fountain of Youth, of De Soto, of the pirates, of Africa transplanted, of the outlandish voodoo that still lingers, and of the strange new Christ the Negroes worship? Is there no one who will tell over again from the clearer light of a better time how the awful, keen sword of civil war struck down these states, how the slave and freedman passed, and how through bitterness they have come to a saner, sweeter life again? Here is a challenge to the American renascence. It is ardently to be hoped that the South will continue to reply to it as she has begun to do, and that she will give us largely of her rich landscapes and historical material, and speak of and from the life of her memory and of her present. And it is also to be hoped that the cleverly inane, or the small accidental dream-life of the individual, so seldom worth uttering—tiny loves and smaller hates, and the baldly phrased usual; above all, the banal echo and the purely sentimental—will be left unsaid.

Faked sympathy, and crocodile tears for the past, are the stops which the southern poets must most carefully avoid. Unfortunately, the *vox humana*, pulled out full, is still good for a round of applause almost anywhere, but in the South there is an inherited bias in its favor.

In colonial times no other section of the country was so much affected by the eighteenth-century classical school as the South, particularly the Carolinas and Virginia. New England seems to have preserved and perpetuated, almost down to modern times, the spirit of the Puritan seventeenth-century literature, but in the South your Cavalier gentleman imported his advance leaves of the "latest books published in the United Kingdom," had them specially bound, added his book-mark; and read his Pope, his Johnson, and his Goldsmith, not always his Burke, with complete satisfaction. Education and plantation tutoring were largely in the dead languages; and in South Carolina the old Huguenot French stock read the

French Bible, Voltaire or Rousseau according to their generation. Nowhere was the effect upon originality of style more blighting. Almost until the civil war the couplet of Pope held full sway—the English romantic movement seems to have had little effect upon it; verse remained an accomplishment of the idle and the polite, extremely sentimental and absolutely eighteenth-century in style. Even today the old idea that there is a distinct poetic jargon persists in the South, and realism in poetry shocks the academic sense, while in files of old newspapers and privately printed books that throng second-hand book-stalls these old voices still tinkle from the dust in their endless couplets. In the aggregate an astonishing amount of such verse was written. Take General Albert Pike's *Hymns to the Gods*, for instance; and William Gilmore Simms, who heads the list with eighteen volumes. How many single poems survive today?

Poe stands out from this crowd of gentlemen poetasters as the great exception. He actually developed his own forms, not turning to new forms but improving on the old. He reflected the life about him; for his poems are much more biographical than is generally suspected, and most of his verse shows strong southern influence in landscape and rhythms. Nevertheless, he also did not escape tradition entirely, and partly for that reason he seems more European now than American, but none the less great for that.

It took the civil war to goad southern poets into an authentic local utterance, although there were a few years, just before 1861, when it seemed as if the Charleston group—Hayne, Timrod, Simms, and some others—would make that city a southern literary capital. A magazine, *Russell's*, was started there under much the same kind of impulse as the *Atlantic Monthly;* but Sumter was fired on, and the war put a period to all such activity. Both Hayne and Timrod dealt with landscapes and nature, but they are chiefly remembered for their war poems, and because, with a very few others, they were the only voices which to any degree adequately phrased the despair of reconstruction. Timrod once wrote to Hayne: "I can embody it all in a few words—beggary, starvation, death, bitter grief, utter want of hope." It is impossible to judge men writing under such conditions by the ordinary standards of criticism. The wonder that they wrote at all is only transcended by the miracle that they also achieved some memorable lines.

Art, as it is the finest expression of the life of a people, is the last thing to recover from the ravages of war. Reconstruction, with its spiritual and economic despair, put a gag in the mouths of singers; the few voices that did speak were more like croaks than songs. However, one ludicrous little man by the name of Coogler, in Columbia, S. C., conferred five volumes upon a faintly amused world:

Maude—for her gentle name was Maude—
  Wore many smiles, and they were sad;
A thousand virtues she possessed,
  Many of which I never had.

This, in its own way, is really great, and the last two lines could have stood truthfully for the relation of the southern poet of that time to his muse; for these were the days when prejudices, and the heritage of war, were too strong to permit of literature being written. Shakespeare himself would have been taboo on account of the Dark Lady of the Sonnets. That Sidney Lanier should have spoken out of this environment is all the more wonderful. He was indeed a protest against his age north and south:

> O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
> The time needs heart—'tis tired of head.

Like Poe he developed his own style and theory of verse, and was not content simply to use the old forms as Hayne and Timrod had done. His knowledge of the two arts of music and verse largely made this possible. Lanier was too modern in one sense for his time, and too conservative for the moderns. He worked against frightful physical and spiritual odds, in the seventies and eighties, and despite it all at times achieved great beauty. He and Poe are, of course, the great names the South has to offer to American poetry. Madison Cawein should not be forgotten. These men overcame literary taboos and traditions, and dared to have personality; with them poetry was not simply polite.

The last few years have brought a new spirit into the South. With the recovery of her economic life has come the possibility of renewing the old culture, and an opportunity for a leisure not due to apathy and despair. The great war has also stirred and disturbed her subtly and immeasurably, till a vast territory which has for a while lain poetically fallow is now awakening, and from here and there voices, small and inadequate perhaps, but nevertheless earnest and distinctive voices, are giving it utterance.

It is their desire that the rest of the country know and recognize this; for while these voices may utter with a *timbre* peculiarly their own, it is because they are moved, not by a provincial pride, but by the renascence of poetry throughout America; and being so moved by this spirit, they claim to be of it. The South will never express itself in constricted forms; mood, inclination and tradition forbid, nor does it feel the urge completely to slough the old. Here, where the tides of immigration have brought no alien tongues, the grand tradition of English poetry still lingers strongly in an old culture which has survived the wrack of civil war and of reconstruction—a European culture, planted by a strong stock in colonial times; and it is from this tradition and from the descendants of that stock that the southern poetical renascence must come. It will accept with modern spirit the new forms in verse, but accept them as being valuable for their loosening effect upon the old rather than as being all satisfactory in themselves; and it brings to American poetry a little known but tropically rich store of material, an unurbanized beauty, the possibility of legend, folk-song, romance, historical narrative, glorious landscape, and an untired mood; in short, a content which will save it from that sure sign of literary inadequacy, a too nice preoccupation with form.

*Hervey Allen and DuBose Heyward*

### POE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

In May, 1828, Poe enlisted in the army under the name of Edgar A. Perry, and was assigned to Battery "H" of the First Artillery at Fort Independence. In October his battery was ordered to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C. Poe spent a whole year on Sullivan's Island. Professor C. Alphonso Smith, the well-known Poe authority, says: "So far as I know, this was the only tropical background that Poe had ever seen." That the susceptible nature of the young poet was vastly impressed by the weirdness and melancholy scenery of the Carolina coast country, there can be little doubt. The dank tarns and funereal woodlands of his landscapes, or at least a strong suggestion of them, may all be found here. The scene of *The Goldbug* is definitely laid on Sullivan's Island; and here are dim family vaults and tracts of country in which the House of Usher might well stand.

> Dim vales and shadowy floods
> And cloudy-looking woods,
> Whose forms we can't discover,
> From the tears that drip all over—

was written while Poe was in the army at Fort Moultrie, and appeared in his second volume in 1829. There are later echoes:

> Around by lifting winds forgot,
> Resignedly beneath the sky,
> The melancholy waters lie.

*H. A.*

## REVIEWS

### A SONNETEER

*Poems*, by Stewart Mitchell. Duffield and Co.

The sonnet in our time occupies a lonely and illusory pinnacle. Due to the obsolescence of other imposed verse-patterns, it is mistakenly considered a special province of poetic art, which it is not. It may be an important form only by virtue of its history: it is perhaps the only purely romantic system which has become entirely acclimated; in periods of great fecundity in our literature it has had the cry of fashion; it has attracted profound and celebrated writers. Sequences of sonnets have been substituted for that anomaly of our art, the long lyric, as in Christina Rossetti's *Later Life* and Donne's *Holy Sonnets*, probably the best we have. It is fortunately based on a ten-syllable line peculiarly pleasant in the English tongue. Within it one can experiment, as the Elizabethans did, in complex passions and subtle argument properly dramatic. It may be made the journal of an introspective or passionate life, as in Mr. Blunt's *Proteus* and *Esther* sequences. But its possible rhymes are easily exhaustible in our language, and thereafter reminiscent. Unlike its musical namesake, the sonata, there is no esoteric logic or balance to govern it. Other forms, such as the sestina, may set a pace for more varied music. I suspect its present dismal distinction is due in part to the mere fact of its obsolescence. Modern sonnets are many, and usually mediocre. Each new bundle arouses one's hope: "Here, after all, at last, may be the real thing."

One's hope is not altogether dashed by Stewart Mitchell's book, which contains about two dozen, although he does not invent a new music, or trouble the old unsubtle cadence. The effect, never achieved by this poet, of a truly great sonnet like Donne's *Death Be Not Proud* is produced by the clash of a surging internal movement upon or against the rigid scheme. Among contemporaries Miss Millay will best bear comparison with her masters in this respect. Sonneteers like Mitchell write too much "in the pattern," with a resultant tonal emptiness, or invirility.

His art rather reeks of the intellect. Vision and passion are strained through nets of speculation and sieves of analysis. Nothing actually escapes, or would seem quite to satisfy him. That any trace of ecstasy is hard to identify may be because he makes the mistake of codification inaccurately associated with the *fin de siècle*—with Ernest Dowson, the original work of that subtle translator Arthur Symons, et al. When human affairs are generalized into "parched desire," "redolent splendor," "pitiless fates," etc., the odd commonplace holds true that identity, force and conviction go out of them. Modes of thought and address, "preserved" as fruit is preserved, tend to limit the precision of verse as a means of communication. "The conditions of life pre-determined slavery to be easy and freedom hard," says Marianne Moore. One wearies, to the point of fury, of this brand of expressivism:

> Bring me, this evening, crimson wine
> Such as in twilight seems to keep
> Secrets of death in serpentine
> Sinuous sleep.

At its best, however, this book is not an arid field for those who prefer the rewards of a discreet cultivated mind to the glare and quaver of more fickle if stronger imaginations. *Glenway Wescott*

### A FRENCH VICTORIAN

*Plays of Edmond Rostand*, translated by Henderson Daingerfield Norman. Illustrated by Ivan Glidden. Macmillan Co.

In spite of certain confusions of idiom, this is a rather spirited translation of the most popular French playwright of his day. It rhymes almost as lightly and easily as the original, and has a similar slam-bang movement, and the same flavor and color of swashbuckling, noisy romance. Rostand "put it over" adroitly with the crowd, almost persuaded his audiences that *L'Aiglon* was tragedy and *Cyrano* high comedy; and now that he is dead we have him Englished *in extenso*, and majestically enthroned in an octavo edition, with illustrations of a naive sentimentality worthy of 1850.

But already the tinsel is tarnished, and the loud fame of the dead poet slinks around the corner into the past. These plays, though of French origin, seem as Victorian as *The Princess*—they bear no relation to modern poetic or theatric art.

The translator, in his preface, is at some pains to explain the meaning of *Chantecler*, that subliminal mystery: "Like so much great poetry," he says, "its application is at once local and universal." We refer the faithful to his guidance; if anyone has failed to understand *Chantecler*, now is the time for enlightenment.

"He meant much to the French," remarks one who knows them. Yes, he stressed certain conventions, certain traditions, as dear to the hearts of Frenchmen as the pioneer-cowboy convention, stressed by Service et al., is to our own. That he should further artificialize these conventions was inevitable—a temperament of such romantic ardor must glamourize and melodramatize, must repay not only principal but interest. The public is always grateful for this service—great was Rostand's reward in his day. But the day was short—already it is a quaint yesterday. *H. M.*

## CORRESPONDENCE

### NOTES FROM THE P. S. A. ANNUAL DINNER

"Which way to the dinner?" we asked of the doorman at the Hotel Astor.

"Which dinner do you want to go to?" he said, unrolling a long scroll; "the Shoe-lace and Ribbon Manufacturers' banquet, the wedding on the ninth floor . . . ?"

"The Poetry dinner," we told him.

"Central ballroom straight ahead."

Stopped by a jazz band and loud applause, we asked again if that was the Poetry dinner. No, we were told, that was the Flower and Feather Manufacturers' banquet. The Poets' opened with organ music—their music was over. Centre door straight ahead.

Yes, music for a long time was over—through a redundant parade of meats and sauces, and the polite murmur of poets and friends of poets; broken now and then by loud clapping from without, perhaps from the hip flasks of the Flower and Feather Manufacturers of America.

A guest at the table where we sat, an army captain, suddenly wished the dinner might be reported as Rabelais would have done it. We wished so too, though it seemed a petition for the moon. If Rabelaisian eyes and ears were there, what could they do but sleep beneath so decorous a murmur of two hundred and fifty poets and friends of poets, all in standardized evening array?

Readings and speeches, and more speeches: in which we were told that poetry in the last twenty years had become a practical traditional force in the life of America, that the Poetry Society of America was starting young poets on the right road, creating a more catholic art ("In fact anything now is poetry," one speaker permitted himself to say), was breaking down the standardized patterns, giving the individual a show, making the country safe for poetry, turning out vital, valiant, normal, practical poets; that the poets were too humble; that we live in a glorious age for poets; that they are a force for good against preachers, reformers, business men . . . etc., etc. In the course of which one was glad to meet refreshing honesty in the Nebraskan voice of Edwin Ford Piper, light skill in the humoresques of Wallace Irwin, flame in the rhymes of John V. A. Weaver.

And in the five-hour program there were three numbers in higher relief, moments of waking for any Rabelais present—those of Chang Peng Chun, Amy Lowell, and Carl Sandburg.

Early in the evening Chang Peng Chun brought a stillness into the room, a brief mood of contemplation. He wondered if American poetry today was just "a passing phase of trenchant curiosity, or the poetry of power, poignancy and mist." To the Chinese, he said, poetry meant something "leisurely, unhurried, seriously seeking the depths, enjoying the feeling of pain-happiness." He thought of it as an art that might bring about in this country a new way of judging values—according to human satisfaction and not material gain; it might correct the evils of mechanization. He ended on an evidently bitter note—a hope that "China might be made a paradise for China, and not for pirates and profiteers." He gave these as classic definitions:

> Poetry is like the sound of the rhythm in the void; is like the color in phenomena; is like the moon in the water; the image in the mirror. There is an end in words, but the meaning will waft on forever.

Two hours more of speakers, and Miss Lowell rose, and curdled some of the guests by the acid of her anathema against the trend of the evening. With the one Chinese exception, she damned it as a kind of benefit performance, "a phonograph repeating encores." She called for "the sharp clash of critical emotional insight;" but in vain that evening.

At length at midnight Carl Sandburg did what seemed beyond doing—brought a maimed and dying audience to life again by magnets of the art which after all they must have come for. The room at last began to take on an air of enjoyment, extending even to the two surviving head-waiters in the wings. The definitions he submitted stood beside those fished from Chinese lore: poetry—"a mystic sensuous mathematics of fire, smokestacks, waffles, pansies, people, and purple sunsets; a kinetic arrangement of static syllables; the capture of a picture, a song or a flair in a deliberate prism of words." The mathematics of a long deliberate supple poem, *The*

*Windy City*, held his audience through its number of changing themes—a far blend, annealed in music, of movement, color, noise, mood, shape and fact; likely to baffle critics who label this poet as either "lyrical" or "rugged." Three songs to a guitar—one of them *Jay Gould's Daughter*, an ironic railroad caprice—perhaps lightened the intensity of this number, and perhaps deepened it.

An hour of values contemplative and exciting, to four hours of futility! An unfair ratio, it seemed to some of us.

*Dorothy Dudley*

### IMPORTS FROM AFRICA

*To the Editor:* Speaking of your Southern Number, have you seen the *Imports from Africa* contributed recently to *The Reviewer*, of Richmond, Va., by Mrs. Julia M. Peterkin, who lives on an old plantation near Fort Motte, S. C.? Here is one of these Negro carvings —it's called *The Plat-eye:*

> Ef you trabble roun' at night, 'specially in de spring, endurin' de small o' de moon, you mor'n likely to see a plat-eye. Long up yonder by Gilliken's sto' at de ben' o' de road close by de two notch mile pos', a lil dog'll come a runnin' up by you an' kinder rub hisse'f up on you leg. You shoot at em, an' it'll tu'n to a hawg. You shoot 'em agin an' it'll tu'n to a hoss. Shoot em agin, an' it'll tu'n to a man 'thout no head. But you keep on ashootin' an' it'll tu'n to a fog, jus' somep'n nother kinder like a cloud. Den you run. A cowardly man don' tote no break bones.

The Negroes on Lang Syne Plantation are in straight descent from the first arrivals. Mrs. Peterkin is listening in on some rich folk-lore. *C. S.*

## NOTES

The May number of POETRY will be issued from a different address, 232 East Erie Street. Our new office will be a few blocks north-east of the present one; being across North Michigan Avenue, and a quarter of a mile nearer Lake Michigan.

We hope that our friends, new and old, will find us no less accessible and hospitable than we have endeavored to be in the abode which has sheltered us since POETRY began. "Five-forty-three Cass Street" has become an important part of our history, and we hope that the bright south room in Erie Street will welcome as many guests and gather as many memories.

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Mr. DuBose Heyward, of Charleston, who is secretary and one of the founders of the Poetry Society of South Carolina, has been a contributor to POETRY and other magazines. Together with Mr. Hervey Allen, he will publish next autumn a book of local ballads and descriptive pieces, *Carolina Chansons*.

Beatrice Ravenel (Mrs. Francis G.), of Charleston, S. C., is a well-known contributor to this magazine and others; a writer of stories as well as verse.

Mr. Marx G. Sabel, of Jacksonville, Fla., also requires no introduction to our readers. Nor does Miss Josephine Pinckney of Charleston, or Mr. Henry Bellamann, of Columbia, S. C., author of *A Music-teacher's Note-Book* (N. Y. Poetry Book-shop).

The other contributors appear for the first time in this magazine:

Mr. Hervey Allen, of Charleston, is the author of *Wampum and Old Gold*, recently published by the Yale University Press in the *Yale Series of Younger Poets*.

Mrs. Frances Dickenson Pinder, a member, like Mr. Sabel, of the Round Table group at Jacksonville, Fla., has contributed verse and prose to various magazines.

May Thomas Milam (Mrs. J. C.), of Atlanta, Ga., has also contributed to the magazines.

Elfrida De Renne Barrow (Mrs. Craig B.), a member of the Prosodists group in Savannah, Ga., has published little as yet. Ditto Miss Louise Jones, who was last year a student at the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

### ORIGINAL VERSE:

*Collected Poems of James Elroy Flecker.* Edited, with an introduction, by J. C. Squire. Alfred A. Knopf.

*Epitaphs*, by Lady Margaret Sackville. William Brown, Edinburgh.

*The Rainbow's Foot*, by Julius W. Muller. Priv. prt'd, New York.

*Vagrants*, by Georgia E. Bennett. Ralph Fletcher Seymour.

*The Land of Beginning Again*, by Louisa Fletcher. Small, Maynard & Co.

*The Blue-Dragon Ballads*, by Alfred James Fritchey. Privately printed, Los Angeles.

*Veils of Samite*, by J. Corson Miller. Small, Maynard & Co.

*The Magpie's Shadow*, by Yvor Winters. Musterbook II. Musterbookhouse, Chicago.

### MASQUES:

*The Land of the Aiouwas*, by Edwin Ford Piper. Midland Press, Iowa City, Ia.

*The Masque of Morning and Other Poems*, by Edward Viets. Four Seas Co.

### ANTHOLOGIES:

*Modern Verse, British and American*, edited by Anita P. Forbes. Henry Holt & Co.

*Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1921;* edited by William Stanley Braithwaite. Small, Maynard & Co.

*A Little Book of Verse, Peabody High School.* Press of Thomas Siviter & Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

### TRANSLATIONS:

*The Kobzar of the Ukraine, by Taras Shevchenko.* Done in English Verse by Alex. Jardine Hunter. Priv. pr'td, Teulon, Man., Canada.

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