AN ENTHUSIASTIC chemical research student was explaining to me the other day how a School of Chemistry justifiably falls into disrepute when it shows itself willing to allow its activities to be affected by demands and problems immediately arising out of the world of commerce. To a mild question as to whether chemical inquiry so inspired might not be as fruitful in results as any arrived at along the path of "general" inquiry my enthusiast answered, "No." The two fields, though they overlapped at points, were quite distinct—their animating interest poles apart, and to identify them was to do damage to the first interests of both. The chemical discoveries by which commercial enterprise had been most effected had been by-products of general inquiry, rich drops from a broad stream whose own richness was the precondition of the droppings being what they were. Moreover, commercial undertakings can, and do, employ their own research-workers to pick up and glean for their own special interests; which is as should be: direct means adapted to set ends: purposes reputable in their own sphere appropriately subserved. But it was not appropriate that the activities of a School of Chemistry should be diverted into the service of any or all of such immediate ends. It has its own ends to serve: to assuage and whet afresh the pleasures which still remain at their full quality human interest poles apart, and to identify them was to do damage to the first interests of both. The chemical discoveries by which commercial enterprise had been most effected had been by-products of general inquiry, rich drops from a broad stream whose own richness was the precondition of the droppings being what they were. Moreover, commercial undertakings can, and do, employ their own research-workers to pick up and glean for their own special interests; which is as should be: direct means adapted to set ends: purposes reputable in their own sphere appropriately subserved. But it was not appropriate that the activities of a School of Chemistry should be diverted into the service of any or all of such immediate ends. It has its own ends to serve: to assuage and whet afresh the pleasures which still remain at their full quality.
becomes a service for the "inactive" eminently
becoming neither, nor yet anything between, attending to
one's own business seems a reasonable preoccupation,
while the steady obliteration of the dividing line between
Journalism and Literature (Journalism and Philosophy:
it is the same thing) is a task lying to hand; especially so,
by no means unlikely that a full recognition
by the authorities of the disasters which this obliteration
invites will not be a prerequisite of any successful
dealing with the war: though, up to date, the process
which before the war had gone far, since has merely
become the more complete.

Journalism is the interested persuasion, by means
of literary forms, of the general public to back or ban
such purposes as seem good to those at whose instigation
the persuasive effort is set in motion. Those who
sketch the plan which "persuasion" is to follow may
engage and pay "journalists" who are better able
to manipulate the former, or the agency, has
to carry out their verbal plans themselves. The feature which makes journalism into
journalism is—not that it is bought and sold—but that
it is subsidiary to ends beyond itself. All journalism is
"interested": the servant of an interest and purpose;
of the needs of a passing day and the exigency.
It exploits literary form to further some particular
enterprise. It is not literature though it exploits
literature: not philosophy though it exploits it. That
the material in which it shapes itself and in the use of
which the former is made happens as the language
brings journalism as near to literature as ability to mix
paint brings the house-painter to the artist; both are
reputable craftsmen but different: both require some
ability: both have recognized uses—at least the house-
painter has: and both work in paint. What the
difference between the two exploiters of paint is can perhaps best be shown by the difference in their attitudes
associated to the permanence of their work. The house-
painter would feel more than depressed if he thought
his effects likely to last for ever, or even for a lifetime;
while the artist would give the study of a lifetime in
order to preserve a slightly added durability to his paint.
The house-painter looks to the contents of his paint-
pot to provide him with a job. He has nothing he
values particularly to put into his painting; he spreads
paint out under the direction of some one who wants a
surface coated by means of a slightly added durability to his paint. The artist out of his
paint seeks to contrive a web which shall enmesh for
time all some fact of feeling which he, at least, thinks
worth holding in memory. The difference is that one
is using a form as a contrivance to perpetuate something
which he thinks valuable: the other is expressing what
there is for him to express by flourishing the form itself.
So with literature: literature is the transparent vase
in which are preserved permanent features of the Human
Mind. The desire to secure permanence for their work
no matter how mistaken they may have been in the
means they adopted to attain to it, is an essential
characteristic of all "philosophers". For instance, deliberately selected the theological theme as
a setting for his quota of observations about Man to
men, on account of what he considered its strong promise
of durability of interest. That probably it is this very
choice which has made "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise
Regained" unknown books save in their passages of
something which is called "Truth." For of the two purposes of speech—speech the instru-
ment of gain, and as to form—that which is most favourable to permanence and as to substance an accretion of the growing stock
of unrelieved human motives; journalism being a
subsidiary form, one amongst many turned to assist,
as may be, a passing purpose and taking its character
from the end it serves; this distinction once openly
recognized, the undue contempt which journalism receives becomes as meaningless as the contempt for
presses, which makes possible a more jealous
care in fostering single-heartedness in literature. Jour-
nalism has received and earned contempt only because
it has pretended to be inspired by the purpose which inspires literature, and so has courted judgment by
standards intended for work which aspires to be judged
as literature. Judged by any standards for journalism it is not
to deceive the journalist to the journalist to escape con-
demnation. Inevitably, the journalist who merely does
honestly what he is employed to do is written down a
mean hack; whereas the commis voyageur who presses
on his picked public his employer's Pills, Pianos, Shoddy
Goods, Tinned Goods, what not, is a respectable person.
The newspaper-proprietor is the conscious hand of
journalism in the form of its readers, to whom
the "Truth", a subterfuge of facile knaves to the
detriment of the "Good of All"—that universal staking-
horse controversy—as compared on the other hand
with the manufacturer, merchant and the like,
who are accounted the backbone of the community and
embodyment of its free tradition. Yet each is bent on
winning the market in his particular manner and to
one another: the medium at least of the journalist being
more patent and obvious if his means are more subtle.
What manner of man among you being in business and
finding that his ambition—any one of the million ends
upon which men do set their ambition—"Opinion" is furred with,
what type would not set to work to influence that Opinion to the fullest extent he could?
What maker of goods but sends out his agents to influence
the market for them or company-promoter who fails to
issue an attractive prospectus! This making of dis-
sections where none exist between confusing journal
ism with literature, and what journalists say with something which is called "Truth."
Such "News" as is too difficult to be so turned promptly ceases to be "News"—and ceases to need chronicling. Such "News" as is too difficult to be so turned promptly ceases to be "News"—and ceases to need chronicling. The journalist is out to secure the adhesion of the people, and since the people accept that which is emphatically asserted and love the Strong Assertion and no less the maker of it, regulation of emphasis becomes his main business, and he learns how to let it fall just where it suits best the interest of those who employ him. If he can make himself conspicuous as a wielder of sufficiently strong emphasis he wins, as with people's good will not only for the interest he furthers but also for himself. Popularity as well as profit and the excitement which comes of conflict is on the side of journalism: it is not strange that the journalist is nowhere to seek in any branch of "literature."

Very obviously clear is it therefore that it is not that journalists consider literature "higher" and "better" than journalism that they slur the dividing line between the two. They do not any more than the millionaire who has made a name for himself as a scientific invention thinks that the scientist pottering about in his workshop with his test-tubes is anything more than a simple and probably rather silly fellow. In fact the majority would agree that most of literature is barely reputable and much of it heinous. Once thoroughly a journalist always a journalist, even when such a one believes himself to be writing literature he is not "interested," which need observe the "propagandist" drama; the "propagandist" novel; the "propagandist" philosophy; and the "reporter" poetry. "Propagandist" in terms of craftsmanship is just "journalistic." The Parson is clinching the "moral" of his sermon in the Philosophy, and the "Social Reformer" is dabbing the ornamentation on his speeches in the Drama and what not: tracts they are, of all of them. Why then this growing obliteration? It is simply a trick of the trade; a "confidence" trick. It is a far from easy task to beg support from people for one's own benefit: it puts one at a disadvantage. It deprives the people, moreover, of the comforting flattery that one's striving is solely in their interests; it quickens their suspicions and awakens their intelligence. Hence the attempt to identify journalism with literature which enables journalists to assume the garb of disseminators of an "Impartial Truth" which preserves it is literature—good or feeble literature which roughly is accepted as "Truth" and the form which all controversialists are at one in observing, that the one factor in controversy which gives it character and meaning—the personal bias of the controversialists—shall be ignored. For to have it acknowledged would deprive both sides of the rôle of the indignantly righteous and destroy the latter's benefit, which is of a sort called "disinterested." Whence the shriek of each against its rival of "Interested," "Vend," carrying the inference—true enough, as far as it goes, since each side stands for "Infection" of "Leper" and "Plague-spot" would be robbed of its relevance and emphasis. To acknowledge that all sides are "interested" is: that journalism is nothing but the language of "interests," would be to defate the journalistic balloon and defeat the purpose for which it was created: the persuading of the public that only in a spirit of immaculate disinterestedness and in the sole interests of the "Public Good" is so much wordy service set in motion. And not only as a stalking horse does literature lend its uses to journalism. As far as he is acquainted with it the journalist draws upon the funded knowledge of human nature which literature provides and uses it as far as it suits the immediate interest of his propaganda. All his knowledge of all the world he draws in to further his end. Some commentation which was running a rival propaganda and which, to a nice collection of "interested" items to inspire any journalist: Of the foregoing, a no mean writer of literature, and literate: ...
offender, the New Witness for the defence and return
outraged, Mr. Bellac’s war lectures, K. K. own sound literary reputation, the “Good—and Unise
Old Time,” the “Servile State” and the “New Bad Ones,” we
are in possession of the “argument” and of the Dramatis
Personae. Let Mr. G. K. Chesterton, journalist, after
a prelude concerning buttercups, daisies, Dickens, Fant-o-
mine, and the Ultimate Good, speak: his subject: “Truth
and the Transformation Scene” (Aug. 15th). Before the
Harlequinade, there came a thing called a Transformation
Scene, in which the scenes grew thin and other
scenes shone through them, so that one had the delightful
sensation of being in two places at once. . . . In front
let us say there would be the interior of the widow’s
cottage with a Dutch clock, a three-legged stool, a
mangle, a bedstead, a table or a what not. And you
would become gradually aware that the scene was also
the Demon’s Cave, with a Demon carousing with the
Nightmare Queen and glittering cohorts of goblins.
The Dutch clock was still there and yet it was less solid
than the Demon King. The mangle was still there and yet
it was more real than the Demon King. The mangle was
still there and yet it was more thin and spectral than the
Nightmare. All the facts grew faint as fables and the fables became
facts. Moreover it was a great part of the unreasonable
and the vertigo of the vision that the two complete
nowhere corresponded to each other even by accident.
. . . Now it is this sense of the two scenes utterly
distinct and yet simultaneous which ’the Transformation
Scene at the modern press and modern politics: and see the
realities which are the background of modern life gradually
growing and glowing through the thin sheets of our
modern newspapers. There is the same utter separate-
ness and dislocation between the two designs.”
With an air of ineffable impartiality the writer proceeds,
“IT has nothing to do with which world is the better,
it is solely a matter of which is becoming the more real.
You may like widows or you may prefer demons. . . .
The England of to-day is still divided into those who are
still looking at Scene One, and those who are already
looking at Scene Two. Or rather they can both see
both, but they cannot believe both. The front still
shows the British Constitution . . . but behind is the
goblin’s kitchen and the Servile State. Among those
who see it there is all kinds of comment: but they see it.
The New Age is mixed; and the Times is not;
and the New Statesman does not, and the Pink ’Un does not,
and the Times does not, or pretends that it does not.”

In the passage quoted, it is the remark “IT has nothing
to do with which world is the better: it is solely a matter
of which is becoming the more real. You may like
widows or you may prefer demons,” which illuminates
the method of journalism. Less of the heroic indignation
which so becomes a journalist, and a little more of the
interest and amusement in himself which Mr. Chesterton
shows elsewhere, would have made it obvious to him
that everything as far as the meaning of his article at
least was concerned, depended upon “which you pre-
ferred”; and he himself acknowledges as much when,
having to recover his position, he points out a little
lower down the page that though we “see both” we
cannot believe both. At the outset in framing the
article, the sole reason which caused him to fix upon the
simile of the “Transformation Scene”—a most ingenious
ones—was to assist him to divide the world into two
parts: the New Age was preferred—we will suppose; and
the Widows he couldn’t abide: those whom he and
his friends were inclined to dislike. His prejudices
favourable or unfavourable from the architecture of his
world: his sole conception of what is “real.” He says,
“Some of us, he (Mr. Belloc) being one, are interested
in things as they really are.” Really are! He means
“things as he would like them.” His Coming Scene—
his real world, the “true” world, the world of light
and right are—all his personal friends, those of the
New Witness, the New Age, the New Statesman even:
even” because this maintains the simian faith which
seeks to inaugurate that Servile State which vexes him
so, but which must “even” be included because it is
not possible to exclude Friend Shaw. Those whom he
loves not he leaves without even a world to live in.
“I could not debate with the Mail writer because I
do not believe in the very existence of the world in
which he lives.” “Not believe in” = have no liking
for. “Could not debate” = would not debate. No
one supposes that he could not—if he tried—with kind-
ness and a motherly patience, to explain to the hapless
scribbler who is left with no world to live in why the
world as it is “is” for Mr. Bellac “is,” while the world
as it is for Lord Northcliffe just—“isn’t”! But
Mr. Chesterton is very annoyed indeed, and he won’t.
For the time being, he is so bent on championing “the
responsible human being who is working for the ‘Truth’
that he prefers to lose all his community of intelligence
with the same sort of being “who is working for the
Trust.” He would not even consider that perhaps
both after their own fashion are working for themselves.
To the finish, he sticks to the disparate worlds of his
Transformation Scene, though it is maybe a sign of
a returning breadth of human interest that causes him to
get his metaphors mixed. “The skeleton begins to
shine through the cupboard, and was that the house
of men opens inward into the house of devils.” Well!
well! it does make one think about the desirability of
the shoemaker sticking to his last. Mr. Chesterton has
never the cunning nor the maliciousness: not perhaps
“harem-making” which is required to work that sort of
thing into the form in which it would be really effective
for his own or really damaging to the opposing side.
Mr. Belloc could manipulate it far better. He merely
deserts the service of “Truth” to lend its prestige to
dubious uses which lower it as inevitably as the prestige
of science would be lowered by a scientist of repute
who lent his prestige to bolster up the fortunes of some
dubitable commercial undertaking.

Which ruminations are set forth as a caution: for
the guidance mainly of—the “Egoist.” D. M.
RÉMY DE GOURMONT

THE death of Remy de Gourmont, coming when so many young men have given up their lives, when so many young artists, French and German and English, have been slain, seems by comparison almost tolerable. But de Gourmont was killed by the war just as certainly as if he had met his death in a trench. And in a sense one might almost hope and believe that he was not altogether sorry to die. He had done his best work, he had lived during the comparatively peaceful years 1872-1914, had watched the growth and triumph of the Impressioniste and Sym-

boliste movements, perhaps the most interesting flowering of the arts since the Renaissance. And the arrogance and turbulence of the new century burst into war, a war which no one in the world can avoid, no one, however detached from ordinary life, can hope to ignore. De Gourmont was overthrown by the shock, lacerated by the horrors which pierced Belgium and North France, saddened deeply by the deaths of many young men in whose budding talents he believed. One has only to turn to the "Idées du Jour," short pieces of prose written daily since the beginning of the war in La France, to see how often he referred to the deaths of young artists, to the lists of dead and wounded and "missing" in the Bulletin des Ecrivains. Many of the names in these lists were quite unknown, but as de Gourmont pointed out, these are the saddest of all; they died before they had a chance to use their talent.

One does not desire to exaggerate the value of Remy de Gourmont's work. Perhaps his final worth lies not in his philosophic and similar writings but in his literary criticism. The two Livres des Masques, Le Latin Mystique, and the five books of Promenades Littéraires will interest for many years those who can appreciate the keen analysis of literature. He is invaluable as a chronicler of the Symboliste movement, and his various writings on Flaubert and Huysmans, for example, if gathered together, would make sympathetic studies of those two authors.

M. de Gourmont was rather prouder of his poetry than he cared to admit, perhaps not unjustifiably, as the extraordinary fantasy and verbal melody of the Litanies de la Rose and the Fleurs de Juda, curious outgrowths of the influence of Mallarmé, are in existence to prove. Simone, too, has beautiful passages.

One other remark might be added. Though the war undoubtedly shattered him, it did not turn him into either a wailing pacifist or a blood-thirsty imbecile. One of these two rôles, usually the latter, has been assumed by nearly every one of the notorious writers of the world. In a private letter written about three months after the beginning of hostilities, he said: "Ne laissons pas mourir le tradition des libres esprits." While he lived, he tried to preserve that tradition: it is for us to continue that tradition, if any of us remain to do so.

Richard Aldington.

FRENCH POEMS

("Simone" poème champêtre was first printed in 1892, reprinted in 1901, 1907 and 1914 by the Mercure de France. These poems are, of course, perfectly well known to all readers of modern French literature; the two selected are reprinted as a slight homage to their author, who, before his death, more than once expressed his hope that they would be translated into English. The two or three translated by Mr. Bithell are the only English versions.)

SIMONE

L'AUBÉPINÉ

Simone, tes mains douces ont des égratignures,
Tu pleures, et moi je veux rire de l'aventure.

Avec le Cygne, avec la Lyre, avec la Voie lactée ;
Avec la lune qui rit et avec la rosée,
Avec les libellules, avec les papillons,
Avec les scarabées, les guêpes, les frelons blonds,
Avec les oiseaux bleus, les abeilles et les mouches.

Elle communie avec le soleil du matin,
Elle a mis son grand voile de songe et de prière,
Car elle communie avec toute la terre ;

Elle communie avec le soleil du matin,
Elle a promis sa chair à des baisers plus beaux.

Et tout ce qui a des ailes, avec les pollens
Qu'elle s'adore elle-même et toute la nature.

Elle communie avec le soleil de midi,
Avec les nues, avec le vent, avec la pluie,

Elle communie avec le soleil du soir
Rouge comme une rose et clair comme un miroir,

Avec les nuées, avec le vent et la pluie,

Avec le Cygne, avec la Lyre, avec la Voie lactée ;

Elle a le front si blanc et son âme est si pure
Qu'elle s'adore elle-même et toute la nature.

LE JARDIN

Simone, le jardin du mois d'août
Est parfumé, riche et doux :

Il a des radis et des carottes ;
Des herbes sauvages et des betteraves

Et, parmi les pâles salades,
Plus loin, c'est le peuple des choux,

Elle a promis sa chair à des baisers plus beaux.

Notre jardin est riche et doux.

Simone, le jardin du mois d'août
Est parfumé, riche et doux :

Il a des radis et des carottes ;
Des herbes sauvages et des betteraves

N'est pas pour nous de laisser aux oiseaux

Il a des radis et des carottes ;

Et, parmi les pâles salades,

Notre jardin est riche et doux.

Le Jardin

Simone, le jardin du mois d'août
Est parfumé, riche et doux :

Il a des radis et des carottes ;

Est parfumé, riche et doux :

Il a des radis et des carottes ;

Notre jardin est riche et doux.

Le Jardin

Simone, le jardin du mois d'août
Est parfumé, riche et doux :

Il a des radis et des carottes ;

Est parfumé, riche et doux :

Il a des radis et des carottes ;

Notre jardin est riche et doux.
Les asperges tout en dentelles
Mûriscent leurs grappes de corail;
Les capucines, vierges fidèles,
Ont fait de leur treille un vitrail,
Au bon soleil gonflent leurs joues;
Et, nonchalantes, les citrouilles
Notre jardin est riche et doux.
On sent le thym et le fenouil,
among us : Henri Fabre, Remy de Gourmont, and
belonged to Paris. Paradoxical as it sounds of so
and internationally renowned Paul Bourget, Maurice
hat which so much better becomes the more popularly
Parisian not only in spite but also on account of the
right bank, the Paris of Gourmont—the rue des Saint
Pères, where he lived (in complete solitude), the Café
Florde, on the frontier line between the faubourg
(Saint Germain) and the quartier (Latin), where he took
his occasional asperdité, and the provinces. To these and
to those they are out of the world and out of date. They
are, also, unprofessional. Remy de Gourmont kept
on this border-line of semi-aristocracy, semi-Bohemia
in his life and in his work. His Paris was his own Paris;
his position in letters was unshared. He was not an
independent; he was independent. Remy de Gourmont
was born in 1858—
...to which he contributed up to the eve of his
death. His novel de Flore, on the frontier line between the
provinces.

PASSING PARIS

The heading of this record finds too ample justification this month, although of the three whose obituary we have to mention here, the only one of pillars of that unacademic group which comprised also M. Henri de Régnier, now of the Académie, still of the Mercure, and of which that review remains the stronghold though modified by successive deaths, defections, and the natural trend of things living and literary.

But a fraction of an exceptionally industrious life's labour has been enumerated here. The Promenades Littéraires occupy five volumes, the Promenades Philosophiques three, and the Ephèges written for the Mercure periodical six. His last book came out just before his death from some condition paralyzing his mind. It is a collection of articles commenting upon the war, entitled Pendant l'Orage, published by Champion; Crès is also issuing a book by him.

Among modern men of letters in France Remy de Gourmont was certainly the most erudite. Despite, however, his immense store of knowledge it was quite possible for him to be superficial, and though his form was epigrammatic his thinking was not always clear or logical. His language was exemplary, and he will go down as a master of style. But in his intellectuality there is something delightful. On account perhaps of his lack of inspiration in judgment, or even of inspiration in writing, Remy de Gourmont leaves behind him the confidence as does, for instance, M. André Gide, the most trustworthy and the most intuitive of critics, who in Nouveau Présidentes has, strangely enough, been tempted to give precision to the peculiar unreliability in his late contemporary taken as moralist, arbitrer and philosopher.

* * *

A similarly retired and laborious life was that of Henri Fabre, the poet-naturalist, who has also been cheated from witnessing the issue of the war he deprecated with so much affection to justify it as did Gourmont. There are no books of romance more "exciting" than Fabre's descriptions of insect life, and which would have remained practically unknown to the public if not for M. Maerlinck's discovery and proclamation of its value; a very old man with the age of ninety-two in his distant Provençal home, he never condescended to leave in quest of honours or recognition, but where these eventually, and rather to his dismay, sought him out when he had left eighty years and a proud array of writings well behind him.

Camille de Sainte Croix means the loss of another enthusiast of English literature. The Nouvelle revue française had published his translations of several of Mr. G. K. Chesterton's books, one of which, The Man who was Thursday, with the title defectively rendered as Le Nommé Jeudi, appeared in Paris Journal—in the days when that paper appealed to writers and readers—after having been declined by several editors.

* * *

"To help to disperse the false reputation of 'French novels in England' is one of the objects of the Anglo-French literary bureau founded by M. Sébastien de Saint-Maurice, the simultanéciste poet, in view of providing a link between English writers and their confrères in France. To these and to those it proposes to supply professional information and to bring them into contact with each other when desired or desirable, and as far as possible render them 'respectable' as regards their career, but as I am assured, practised clause: "no Germans," brings the enterprise into line with the existing preoccupations of the majority. The Bureau, whose headquarters are at 29 Rue Vineaute, Paris, is founded on a basis of
Some half a hundred books in connexion with the war have appeared in Paris within the last month. To these must be added occasional volumes of verse, thrown out by poets at the front in an apparent pathetic attempt to keep ahead of fate, or by poets at the rear in a pathetic attempt to keep aloof of the butchery. And then there are all the books indirectly reflecting on the war, novels (Paul Bourget's Le Sens de la Mort, which has already run into seven or eight editions; Charles Génius's Les Flions de 1914; Abel Hermant's Heures de Guerre de la famille Valadier, etc.); scientific or semi-scientific works (a title: The Law of the Male; a propos of the Barbarian's Child), and so on.

MURIEL CiILKOWSKA.

Books received: Poèmes, O. W. Milose (Figuier), L'Offrande Héroïque, Poèmes, Nicolas Beauduin (La Vie des Lettres); Petite Écrits de 1915, Jean Variat (Crèse).

CHORUSES FROM IPHIGENEIA IN AULIS
TRANSLATED BY H. D.

A literal, word-for-word version of so well-known an author as Euripides would be useless and supererogatory; a rhymed, languidly Swinburnian verse form is an insult and a barbarism. It seemed, therefore, that the rhymeless hard rhythms used in the present version would be most likely to keep the sharp edges and irregular cadence of the original. While the sense of the Greek has been strictly kept, it is necessary to point out that the repetition of useless, ornamental adjectives like "μέγας," "μακάμας," for example, is a heavy strain on a translator's ingenuity. This is only one instance from many where the Homeric epithet degenerates into what the French poets call a remplissage— an expression to fill up a line. Such phrases have been paraphrased or omitted.

The fable of the play is, of course, the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, to placate Artemis and to allow the fleet of the Greeks to reach Troy.

I

CHORUS OF THE WOMEN OF CHALKIS

I CROSSED sand-hills.
I stand among the sea-drift before Aulis,
I crossed Euripos's strait—
Foam hissed after my boat.

I left Chalkis,
My city and the rock-edges.
Aretusa twists among the boulders,
Increases—cuts into the surf.

I come to see the battle-line
And the ships rowed here
By these spirits—
The Greeks are but half-man.

Golden Menelaos
And Agamennon of proud birth
Direct the thousand ships.
They have cut pine-trees
For their oars.
They have gathered the ships for one purpose:
Hellen shall return.

There are clumps of marsh-reed
And spear-grass about the strait.
Paris the herdsman passed through them
When he took Helen—Aphrodite's gift.
For he had judged the goddess
More beautiful than Hera.
Pallas was no longer radiant
As the three stood
Among the fresh-shallows of the strait.

2

I crept through the woods
Between the altars:
Achilles haunts the place.
Shame, scarlet, fresh-opened—a flower,
 Strikes across my face.
And sudden—light upon shields,
Low huts—the armed Greeks,
Circles of horses.

I have longed for this.
I have seen Ajax.
I have known Protesilaos
And that other Ajax—Salamin's light.
They counted ivory-discs.
They moved them—they laughed.
They were seated together
On the sand-ridges.

I have seen Palamed.
Child of Poseidon's child:
Diomed, radiant discobolus:
Divine Merion, a war-god,
Startling to men:
Island Odysseos from the sea-rocks:
And Nireos, most beautiful
Of beautiful Greeks.

3

A flash—
Achilles passed across the beach.
(He is the sea-woman's child
Chiron instructed.)

Achilles had strapped the wind
About his ankles,
He brushed rocks
The waves had flung.
He ran in armour.
He led the four-yoked chariot
He had challenged to the foot-race.
Emelos steered
And touched each horse with pointed goad.

I saw the horses:
Each beautiful head was clamped with gold.
Silver streaked the centre horses.
They were fastened to the pole.
The outriders swayed to the road-stead.
Colour spread up from ankle and steel-hoof.
Bronze flashed.

And Achilles, set with brass,
Bent forward,
Level with the chariot-rail.

4

If a god should stand here
He could not speak
At the sight of ships
Circled with ships.

This beauty is too much
For any woman.
It is burnt across my eyes.

The line is an ivory-horn.
The Myrmidons in fifty quivering ships
Are stationed on the right.

These are Achilles' ships.
On the prow of each
A goddess sheds gold:
Sea-spirits are cut in tiers of gold.

5

Next, equal-oared ships
Were steered from the port of Argos
By one of the Meekians.
Sthenelos was with him.
Then the son of Theseos
Led out sixty ships,
Provo to provo from Attica.
A great spirit keeps them—
Pallas, graved above each ship.

Wings bear her
And horses, iron of hoof:
The phantom and chariot
Appear to men slashed with waves.

Fifty Boeotian ships,
Heavy with bright arms,
Floated next:
The earth-god stood at the prow
With golden-headed serpent.

Leitos, born of earth,
Guided this group of ships.

Ships had gathered
From ports of Phokis:
The Lokrians sent as many.
Ajax left beautiful Thronion
From Mykenae's unhewn rock,
Men, led out by Agamemnon,
To lead both fleets.

II

Paris came to Ida,
He grew to slim height
Among the silver-hoofed beasts.
Strange notes made his flute
A Phrygian pipe.
He caught all Olympus
In his bent reeds.
While his great beasts
Cropped the grass,
The goddesses held the contest
Which sent him among the Greeks.

He came before Helen's house.
He stood on the ivory steps.
He looked upon Helen and brought
Desire to the eyes
That looked back—
The Greeks have snatched up their spears.
They have pointed the helms of their ships
Toward the bulwarks of Troy.

NOTES ON MODERN GERMAN
POETRY

BY ALEC W. G. RANDALL

V. WALT WHITMAN IN GERMANY;
(a) ARNO HOLZ

No country, I suppose, is so ready to appreciate and assimilate foreign influence as Germany. This is a characteristic of the German mind which never fails to draw tearful laments from the extremer patriots but it is also one to which the average Englishman might pay attention, with considerable advantage to his own provincial, limited literary tastes. The average cultured German, however ridiculously chauvinist he may be in political matters, is not, when left alone by his teachers and superiors, by any means a chauvinist in art and letters. As the Hohenzollern dramatist, Ernst Wildenbruch, mournfully pointed out, shortly after the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War, the most productive force in Germany was Zola; and, had we a similar man of great and attractive talent, it would be safe to prophesy that Germany would begin imitating him within three years of the conclusion of the present war. In any case such is the German characteristic which, of course, has its disadvantages, as when, for example, it leads to immensely exaggerated chauvinism which never fails to draw tearful laments from the youthful poets and critics. Of the first nothing need be said just now, except this: that his influence endures still and that the shock produced among Germans by Verhaeren's description of them as 'barbarians' shows how great was the respect in which Whitman was held, both as man and poet. But the influence of Whitman is in the historic past; it has produced classics.

Between 1875 and 1890 this catholicity or rage of imitation was at its height. In fiction Zola was really helping to create the whole German Naturalist movement; in drama Strindberg—another example of Germany's lack of selective faculty—and, of course, Ibsen were being played before young Hauptmann; in poetry Mallarme and the Symbolists were reproducing themselves. All these, Ibsen and Zola and the rest, were purely literary influences; they provided models of technique and style. The mind of Ibsen, the personality of Ibsen—these were not of very much moment. The wider influence of personality, as opposed to the influence of literary style, was chiefly exerted by Verhaeren and Walt Whitman. Of the first of these nothing need be said just now, except this: that his influence endures still and that the shock produced among Germans by Verhaeren's description of them as 'barbarians' shows how great was the respect in which he was held, both as man and poet. But the influence of Whitman is in the historic past; it has produced classics.

It was to be expected that Whitman, as the poet of democracy, would above all attract the 'Naturalist' school. But it was the personality, the doctrine, so to
speak, which attracted; even those writers who are generally called his imitators deny that he gave much original impulse to the technical side of their work. There were plenty of examples of prose-poetry before him in Germany—from Goethe to Nietzsche. But it seems fair to assume that the translation of “Leaves of Grass” by Karl Knorrz and T. W. Rolleston in 1889, coming as it did when Whitman’s fame as a democratic pioneer was at its height, caused a revival in “reimlose Lyrik.”

The chief exponent of the theory of “vers libre” in Germany was the Naturalist poet and dramatist, Arno Holz, who, as his admirers say, “came to fulfill Whitman.” But practically the only points of contact between Holz and Whitman are, firstly, that both were democrats—Holz was a leading spirit in the group of writers which founded the famous “Freie Bühne” and, secondly, that both wrote prose-poetry. Holz, for his part, followed up or prefaced his attempts in that form by vast theoretical dissertations, claiming independence of Whitman, priority over Gustave Kahn and all kinds of pleasant controversial matters which may be found in his book Revolution der Lyrik and in his contribution to Marinetti’s symposium on vers libre. I reproduce a few of his arguments without comment for those who have any interest in comparative literature. Kahn, he says first of all, chose an “arbitrary form”; I choose the “necessary form.” (This phrase, notwendige Rhythm-nus, may be found on nearly every third line of German books on vers libre, and Holz is no exception.) Then follows an instructive example. Take, says Holz, the words, “Der Mond steigt hinter blühenden Apfelbaumzeugen auf” (the moon rises behind blossom apple-tree branches). That is prose. If you are a poet you will write: “Hinter blühenden Apfelbaumzeugen steigt der Mond auf.” Why? Because, Holz replies, “the first sentence simply makes a statement, the second gives an image.” (Der erste Satz referiert nur, der zweite stellt dar.) Having attained this, you find yourself compelled by typographical considerations to write:

“Hinter blühenden Apfelbaumzeugen
Steigt der Mond auf.”

There you have poetry—the real thing.

Holz’s principle of “necessary rhythm” is contained in the following sentence; he strives, he says, to achieve a lyric which deprives itself of all word-music as an end in itself, but, purely and formally, bears itself along on a rhythm which lives only by virtue of that which struggles to express itself. Strip that sentence of all the philosophical bluster inevitable, I suppose, in a man of Holz’s temperament and nationality, and I think you will find it sound enough.

Here are translations of two poems by Holz: both are from the volume Phantasus (1898):

BEFORE MY WINDOW
Before my window
A bird is singing;
I listen in silence, my heart full of hope.
It sings
Of the things I had when I was a child—
And afterwards forgot.

THE SUN WAS SINKING
The sun was sinking.
I waited. How long?
Invisible.
Like a sigh suppressed,
The river murmured under the willows;
And, in the darkness, I touched lightly the red flowers
Within my reach;—
They are withered. . . .
You have forgotten me.

Holz’s theories, as they stand, seem pompous and rather old-fashioned or obvious; and his practice is not of first rank, as may be seen. But the fact that his Revolution der Lyrik really did what it set out to do, namely, form a turning-point in the history of the German lyric, makes it impossible to neglect him in any notes on German poetry.

A greater man, a finer poet and a truer follower of Whitman, Johannes Schlaf, must be dealt with in the next note.
Her pale eyes, framed by her heavy hair, probe me everywhere, and coldly uncover to conceal one's passions. O she is wise, this woman, to bring a lover into this place. O she is wise, envelops me round, flowing incessantly, like an anesthetic. benumbing and smothering me. Sound upon sound, in each tangled nerve, but I can feel, and never swerve—of longings, like blades of steel piercing my brain. with the maddening pain her cold gaze cuts into mine like a fine-pointed instrument. Expressionless, dumb, Torture fills the faint, ascending hum of a receding motor drills SPRINGS UP—bends—falls behind—hills roll—fields revolve, undefined—Roads grow animate—interwind—RISES SUDDENLY—sinks below—To break the monotonous noise of the streets, one star is shining ... through an opening in the roofs, the red tip of my cigarette pulses like a nerve. . . . From time to time in the darkening chimney a smouldering log flares up and for an instant floods each face with the glow of a fire-lit sky; but this does not spoil the original light-harmony. The general tone is, as the artists say, blended and subdued.
for that he used to sing for us, sometimes all day and night long. . . . He taught Anna to sing. He came here, I remember it as if it were happening now, during the winter of 1787. For a year . . . about twelve years ago. No, more. . . . What a memory. God forgive me! Anna, love, how old is our Nadia?

"Twelve!"

"Twelve. . . . If we add ten months to that. . . . Well, that's just right. . . . Thirteen! Formerly there was somehow more life in the town. Take, for instance, the days Anna Pavlovna's father was here. What delightful evenings we used to have. . . . How pleasant! Singing, and acting, and reading. . . . During the war, I remember, when the Turkish prisoners were here, Anna gave an evening party on behalf of the wounded. It made eleven hundred roubles. The Turkish officers, I remember, were delighted with Anna's voice and continually kissed her hand. Ha, ha. . . . Though Asiaties they are a grateful nation. The evening was so successful that would you believe it, I entered it in my day-book. It was, I remember it as if it were happening now, in—

Seventy-six. . . . No! in seventy-seven. . . . No! Excuse me, when had we the Turks staying here? Anna, dear, how old is our Kolia?"

"I am seven, papa!" says Kolia, a very dark little boy with tawny face and coal-black hair.

"Yes, we have grown older and we haven't now the same energy," agrees Lopnyoff, sighing. "There is the reason. . . . Old age, my friend, old age! No new enthusiasts and the old ones grown too old. . . . We haven't the same fire. I, when I was younger, never liked to see things going slow. I was your Anna Pavlovna's first helper. Was there a charity evening to be arranged, or a lottery, or a newly arrived celebrity to introduce—I threw everything aside and entered into it. One winter, I remember, I worked and ran about so much that I even fell ill. . . . I shall never forget that winter! . . . Do you remember what a production we arranged with your Anna Pavlovna in aid of those who had suffered by the fire?"

"Yes, that was in what year?"

"Not very long ago. . . . In seventy-nine. . . No; in eighty, I think. Excuse me, how old is your Vania?"

"Five!" shouts Anna Pavlovna from her study.

"Well then, it must have been six years ago. Yes, my friend, that was a time! It is not the same now! Not the same fire!"

Lopnyoff and Sharameekin lapse into a thoughtful silence. The smouldering log flickers up for the last time and is buried under a layer of ashes.

ENGLAND'S SLEST OF SINGING BIRDS

The dramatists are dead: the poets have gone to the funeral: as for the novelists, it is probable that they are down the area again Bah! they were a sickly tribe.

We have been too careful of life—rather, of mere human lives. We have hedged it round with Poor Law Providences, and hankered on Infall Mortality, and the arts have perished in the atmosphere of fussy benevolence. When men split life wantonly to show their love of it, art ran joyously to keep pace with the revellers. The age of the Renaissance in Europe is the wayside instance. There is no Cellini among craftsmen to-day: if there were he would not make his neck an instrument, but would link it with Christ's Vicar—and work for the all-seeing gods. He would fret away his energy in a tinsel audacity, and work for Messrs. Waring and Gillow.

Not at all once did the world accept—save in word—the Christian belief in the equality of souls. The sixteenth century was still pagan and classical and well aware that souls are no more equal than bodies or estates. Art, which is the supreme aristocracy of the spirit, was still free therefore. Her weakness grew as grew that doctrine of equality, fostered by priests and rulers for the easier handling of the ruled, until life became so precious that men forgot living or that spending of life, which is art.

The descent is pretty ordered. There is the classic art: as an art betakes itself to filling out a great form with petty or bombastic deeds and emotions, it becomes Romantic Art. Shelley's "Cenci" is romantic—as are all the pseudo-dramas of Tennison. Romantic art further tends to give to Nature an utterly disproportionate importance—to the extent of bestowing upon it human attributes. Let us pass Wordsworth and Coleridge. The unknown poet of the twelfth century was content to write:

The mone maneth hire blee

The lile is lassom to see *

In the nineteenth century, Tennony's trained lilies are whispering "I wait," or "I come": and when in late between Cora Lowell permits the lilies to goggle their tongues at her, she is merely Tennison turning in his grave.

There are bastards even among the Muses. Of such is that misshapen thing, a latter-day realism. A kitchen art, concerned with the habits and emotions of an imaginary middle-class family. The above perhaps is an entymological collection of small men and emotions as like as fleas and not one half so lively. A perky Nonconformist art, as in the novels of Bennett. A bawdy cheapjack art, as in the best-known versifyings of Massefield.

Art once was master of life, and then her pandar, and of late her dragged body-servant has not now one single achievement to offset the sudden revival of the spirit of life. Life is spending herself wantonly for life's sake, and art has nothing to give save the sonnets of rhyming haberdashers in the evening newspapers, or the silly war plays of a sliller stage.

During all the dead great year not a single one of England's dramatists has written a play fit for a sergeant of the line to spit upon. There has not been one poem worthy the name from any of England's poetasters of the century. There is already the first trickling of the first stream of our novels.

There are also the Imagists: let us praise God a little for them. They sign one manifesto: they should have signed twenty, for whatever common aims they think to have, their ends are as far apart as might have been expected. Mr. Pound translates other men's poems so passing well that it is a pity he does anything else. Mr. Fletcher gyrates with infinite care on the point of a needle. If Mr. Aldington be young, Imagism was not still-born: if he be middle-aged, may Apollo fly away with him: he will be immature at sixty. None but young poets can afford to talk so much as do these gentlemen.

Pray regard again the degradation of literature. With the close of the Elizabethan age, poetry and drama came indoors. Throughout the seventeenth century it hung round the Court. In the eighteenth it paced with nature. From languishing with Swinburne in the bedchamber it came to brawling with Massefield in the pot-house, scouring the streets with F. S. Flint. The natural and coincident reaction is to be seen in the appealing current of "legitimate" poetry and drama. The former is in the hands of a hundred bloodless Tennysons and Shelleys: the latter has fallen among intellectuals and is therefore thric

* The moon sendeth forth her light
The lily is fair to look upon.
damned. Critics, moreover, have bred as locusts—

Craig. Every year sees another dull book on Mr. Shaw,

whose disciples will not even let him die in peace,

Such conditions produce naturally groups such as the

Imagist, intent on starting again at the beginning, and

and the like.

Brutal methods might arrest where tolerance has but

assisted the descent. Let us lament the decay of

to lies and brawling, or distrusted as erratic fools. They

the need for justification by works. To-day it is hard

spurn Mr. Pound, not even for his villainous version of

The Seafarer.

squeamish are they that there is more weeping in

has bred us up this flabby-minded race of writers. So

garrets ? Semi-starvation is quite endurable when one

harsh because a few fifth-rate poets are half-starved in

quaestion. One may wonder what would be the effect

would require extreme care and a nicety of calculation ;

managers. If it were not so, there would be no Craigs

is stifling.

politicians, or museums for eugenic exhibits, only get

will never recover from the war, nor we from them.

jobbing versemakers and playwrights. A little while

because there are neither poets nor dramatists, but only

laugh at death on the flaming peaks and the arts may-

as simony in the church. Every hireling novelist and

by dollars or pounds ? Simony in the arts is as degrading

faith is senseless. And what sort of a religion is that,

Very little—less than England, much less than France,

IT is a commonplace to say that all art is religion ;

but it is a commonplace that we forget. Most of

our art to-day is as senseless as ritual without

Reasons are the mere chaff of an argument. At the

As for the novelists, God help them and us, for they

who " fights the lone hand " with no little courage,

to print some of the best poetry being written in our

language, it is not altogether an idle boast. Padraic Colum, James

steps, Joseph Campbell, Robert Frost and many

other poets of talent have been printed in Poetry, which,

moreover, has the credit of " discovering " Nicholas

of poems Miss Monroe has the able assistance of Mrs.

Henderson and Mr. Ezra Pound. One of their latest

discoveries is Mr. T. S. Eliot, also printed in Blast, whose

poetry has an individual flavour. When Poetry claims

to print some of the best poetry being written in our language, it is not altogether a

two other Chicago periodicals, the Egoist and the

November 1, 1915

where the tradition of heroic sacrifice for art still remains.

It looks an insoluble problem and perhaps it is. Still,

there are a few, small, scattered groups of people in the

United States who realize that the arts are more than
dollar bills and the body something more than a calli-

graphic machine. Of course, one must accept their

efforts cum grano, one must consider rather what they

are aiming to accomplish than what they have accom-

lished and one must put aside cantankerous and un-
sympathetic carping. It is not difficult to make fun of

people who are struggling to make their nation take its

eyes off its belly, but it is better to be sympathetic.

New York, Boston, Chicago, have their periodicals

which are the visible expression of this striving ; more

provincial places have their magazines called Masses, a journal of socialistic tendencies.

The matter is chiefly remarkable for the writings of Max

Eastman, the editor, of Benjamin de Casseres—a strange,

glorious talent—and for an occasional poem of some

But the drawings reproduced in this periodical are its most interesting feature. We have scarcely

atone in England with Miss Monroe, Bellows, and Coleman

and Sloan, unless it be Dyson, and there are half a dozen

Dysons in America. The drawings in the Masses make it

a sort of Gil Blas Illustré. Daumier, Steinlen, Degas

and Forain have moulded these draughtsmen who, in

spite of their foreign training, do get something of the

thing that is American, flavor in their work. We need

a periodical of this kind very much in England.

From New York also comes Greenwich Village, a little

fortnightly written largely by the editor, Guido Bruno,

who " fights the lone hand " with no little courage,

publishing some of the best poetry which commercial

papers would not touch. He also publishes drawings

and reproductions of ex libris. A series of little pam-

phlets called the " Bruno Chapbooks," has also been

issued by the same man.

Boston is more traditional though not less enthusiastic.

Here one finds the Bridge, a weekly, which publishes

a rather weak poetry and which promises studies and

papers, poems of modern French and German poets. More

inspiring is the Poetry Journal, which has recently be-

come more revolutionary and which has a chance of

doing some excellent work. Some of the poets de la

manoeuvre have taken an overdose of Masefield with not

altogether fortunate results, but the editors seem

genuinely anxious to cover as wide a field as possible.

In addition to poetry, the Poetry Journal publishes prose

articles, criticisms, extracts from other journals with

similar interests and a list of articles on literature from

current periodicals.

Chicago is more strenuous. Poetry, one of the pio-

neers among these journals, is quite handsomely

subsidized and has printed, along with a necessary

quantum of mediocre stuff, some of the best poetry

written in English since 1911. It has printed many of

Mr. Yeats' recent poems, Mr. Hueffer's " Heaven "

which for some absurd reason he has not published in

England—Mr. Pound's translations from the Chinese

and a fair sprinkling of the Imagists, Amy Lowell,

Fletcher, Flint, D. H. Lawrence and H. D. Miss

Monroe, one may remark, was the first, if not the

first, to publish the poetry of the Imagists, if that

be any claim to distinction. Padraic Colum, James

Stephens, Joseph Campbell, Robert Frost and many

other poets of talent have been printed in Poetry, which,

moreover, has the credit of " discovering " Nicholas

Nicholas of Spoon River anthology. In her choice

of poets Miss Monroe has the able assistance of Mrs.

Henderson and Mr. Ezra Pound. One of their latest

discoveries is Mr. T. S. Eliot, also printed in Blast, whose

poetry has an individual flavour. When Poetry claims

to print some of the best poetry being written in our

language, it is not altogether a

Two other Chicago periodicals, the Egoist and the

Little Review claim one's attention. The Egoist is a

well-printed quarterly, not in the least harum-scarum,

ded, as its name implies, exclusively to the Drama.

It makes a special feature of translations of foreign
plays and is most valuable to those interested in modern drama of the better sort. It is not in the least like the 
Mask, but one might say that it fulfills similar functions in America.

The Little Review is the frondeur, perhaps I should say the frondeuse of America. When one remembers that 
it contributes are "voluntary" that it has amusing and 
and financial troubles occasionally, that it is run 
on the personal energy of its editor, Miss Margaret Ande­ 
orson, one can only admire it and wonder how it manages 
to keep so interesting.

Hardly any of the contributors to these periodicals 
write what is known as "decent English"—but then 
how boring how utterly inexpressibly boring those 
"decent English" periodicals are! Let us grant that 
the Little Review, Poetry and the rest have not the 
pompous frigidity of the Fortnightly and the Atlantic 
Monthly, let us grant that many pages might be written 
pointing out the faults of our American friends, let us 
grant all this, but for heaven's sake let us ask ourselves 
honestly whether this ingenuous energy is not fifty times 
more valuable than those "correct" manifestations of 
bourgeois mediocrity. Let us yield to the electric 
impulse of this "incorrect" and youthful exuberance! 
Youth is the great excuse, better than charity it hides, 
it decorates, it makes adorable its multitudinous sins. 
If youth were correct it might as well be middle-age and 
give up the game. It is youth, its generics and injustices, its head-over-heels errors and dashing impulses 
that make one hurl the flatulent Fortnightly and the 
constipated Contemporary into the fire, which make one 
read the Little Reviews of the world from end to end and 
carefully preserve them in one's attic!

I have room only to mention two other periodicals: the 
Phoenix and Others. The Phenix is edited by 
Michael Monahan, a rebellious Irishman with literary 
tastes, who refuses to kow-tow to magazine standards. 
It is a readable little paper, if not very up-to-date. 
Others, edited by A. Kreymborg, is a small periodical 
which publishes nothing but vers libre, of which its choice 
is catholic though perhaps not apostolic.

In any event, one awaits with some eagerness the developments of these beginnings. Wherever it comes 
from—New York or New Jersey, Boston or Chicago—it is 
good to see this stirring of the soil, to know that the 
poets of America are struggling for light and air.

THE GHOSTS OF AN OLD HOUSE

By JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

(Continued)

THE BACKSTAIRS

In the afternoon
When no one is in the house,
I suddenly hear dull dragging feet
Go fumbling down those dark backstairs,
That climb up twisting,
As if they wanted no one to see them.
Beating a dirge upon the bare planks,
I hear those feet and the creak of a long-locked door.

My mother often went
Up and down those self-same stairs,
From the room where by the window
She would sit all day and listlessly
Look on the world that had destroyed her,
She would go down in the evening
To the room where she would sleep,
Or rather, not sleep, but all night
Lie staring fiercely at the ceiling.

In the afternoon
When no one is in the house:
I suddenly hear dull dragging feet
Beating out their futile tune,
Up and down those dark backstairs,
But there is no one in the shadows.

THE CELLAR

Faintly lit by a high-barred grating
The low-hung cellar,
Flattens itself under the house.

In one corner
There is a little door,
So small, it can scarcely be seen.

Beyond,
There is a narrow room,
One must feel for the walls in the dark.

One shrinks to go
To the end of it,
Feeling the smooth cold wall.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

WHY DID THE BUILDERS WHO MADE THIS HOUSE

By RAOUl KRISTIAN

Stow one room away like this?

THE OLD BARN

Owls flap in this ancient barn
That has no doors.
Rats squeak in this ancient barn,
Over the floors.

Owls flap warily every night,
Rats' eyes gleam in the cold moonlight.
There is something hidden in this barn,
With barred doors.

Something the owls have torn,
And the rats scurry with over the floors.

THE WALL-CABINET

Above the steep backstairs
So high that only a ladder can come to it,
There is a wall-cabinet hidden away.

No one ever unlocks it;
The key is lost, the door is barred,
It is shut and still.

Some say, a previous tenant
Filled its shelves with rows of bottles,
Bottles of spirit, filled with spiders.
I do not know.
Above the sleepy still backstairs,
It watches, shut and still.

THE TREES
When the moonlight strikes the tree-tops,
The trees are not the same.
I know they are not the same,
Because there is one tree that is missing,
And it stood so long by another,
That the other, feeling lonely,
Now is slowly dying too.

When the moonlight strikes the tree-tops
That dead tree comes back;
Like a great blue sphere of smoke
Half buoyed, half ravelling on the grass,
Rustling through frayed branches,
Something eerily creeping through it,
Something creeping through its shade.

THE WELL
The well is not used now,
Its waters are tainted.
I remember there was once a man went down
To clean it.
He found it very cold and deep,
With a queer niche in one of its sides,
From which he hauled forth buckets of bricks and dirt.

THE FRONT DOOR
It was always the place where our farewells were taken,
When we travelled to the north.
I remember there was one who made some journey,
But did not come back,
Many years they waited for him,
At last the one who wished the most to see him,
Was carried out of this self-same door in death.
Since then all our family partings
Have been at another door.

THE TOY CABINET
By the old toy cabinet,
I stand and turn over dusty things:
Chessmen—card games—hoops and balls—
Toy rifles, helmets, swords,
In the far corner,
A doll’s tea-set in a box.
Where are you, golden child,
That gave tea to your dolls and me?
The golden child is growing old,
Further than Rome and Babylon
From you have passed those foolish years.
She lives—she suffers—she forgets.
By the old toy cabinet,
I idly stand and awkwardly
Finger the lock of the tea-set box.
What matter—why should I look inside,
Perhaps it is empty after all!
Leave old things to the ghosts of old;
My stupid brain refuses thought,
I am maddened with a desire to weep.

VISION
You who flutter and quiver
An instant
Just beyond my apprehension;
Lady,
I will find the wild orchid for you,
If you will give me
One smile between those wayward drifts of hair.

I will break the wild berries that loop themselves over
the marsh-pool,
For your sake,
And the long green canes that swish against each other,
I will break, to set in your hands.
For there is no wonder like to you,
You who flutter and quiver
An instant
Just beyond my apprehension.

EPITOUGE
Why it was I do not know,
But last night I vividly dreamed
Though a thousand miles away,
That I had come back to you.
The windows were the same:
The bed, the furniture the same,
Only there was a door where empty wall had always been,
And someone was trying to enter it.
I heard the grate of a key,
An unknown voice apologetically
Excused its intrusion just as I awoke.
But I wonder after all
If there was some secret entrance-way,
Some ghost I overlooked, when I was there.

MINOR

THE red hollyhocks are in bloom—
They thrust their wine-cups up the white wall
To your window.
It is evening, but the square of window
Remains black, impenetrable.
I turn away—
It is always like this.

Evening is shaken with the coming and going
Of many winds.
They pour
Ointments over me from a black jar:
Mirabilis, clematis, nicotine—
Unbearable splendor of sweetness
After rain.
The rich odours press upon my body,
They tear, they destroy me—
The proud odours.
I am proud too
Or I should cry.

I am tired
And the clove-pinks on my desk
Have no mercy.
They stab me with their vivid scent,
Ripe with voluptuous intimations.
The waves of fragrance press against me,
I am too tired to repulse them.

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To the Editor, The Egoist.

MADAM,—The blame of contributing to the grievances of Poland should rest rather upon the bearer of the above name, who himself elects thus to spell it, than upon M. Montague Nathan.

C. H. ADAM.

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MISS GROFF AND ANARCHISM.

To the Editor, The Egoist.

MADAM,—As the October number is the only copy of The Egoist that I have seen this year, I don’t know if I shall be re-awakening an already exhausted subject if I object, as vehemently as the merit of the article itself, to the misused phrase “the blame of contributing to the grievances of Poland should rest rather upon the bearer of the above name, who himself elects thus to spell it, than upon M. Montague Nathan.”

And isn’t, perhaps, lack of this latter kind of acquaintance with imaginary opponents instead of considering how to help to beat the Germans. She says “the question whether society shall shape itself from that decay which alone can fertilize the earth and make it fruitful” —and many translated for the first time in English:—by James W. Hall.

1. The “Mosella” of Ausonius, translated by F. S. Flint.

2. An entirely new version of the poems and conscription Miss Marsden has met with, but her October article suggests that she has never even thought of the real ones, and is answering the question whether society shall shape itself from that decay which alone can fertilize the earth and make it fruitful.


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