

# "JUST OUT"—BOOKS WORTH READING

## A Review of Current Literature

"POEMS of Today." Second Series. Published for the English Association by Sidgwick and Jackson, Limited, 1922, London.

If the war has not yet inspired any poet of outstanding greatness, it has at least quickened the imagination of a number of minor singers, who have crystallised their experience into poetry of a high degree of excellence. These are mostly young men, and their work reflects very clearly the influences and experiences inseparable from a devastating war. Love of their own England, of school, of college and home, of nature, of life, sense of comradeship—all these inspire the writings of these brave young souls. They have passed through strange happenings. They have wrenched themselves apart from the life of peaceful well-ordered routine, and have embarked on a Great Adventure, voyaging with new companions to new countries. Romance has thrilled them, but realism is everywhere about them. And they see life from a new angle. To them came a new vision and a new interpretation, hence we find in them a freshness and a departure from convention, as well as a deeper sense of the mysteries of life and death, and a fuller understanding of what it is that really matters.

Among the carefully selected poems in this delightful little anthology may be found many gems. Rupert Brooke is represented by "The Great Lover," but it is too long to quote here. It is among his best, and contains, moreover, a premonition of his early death. In "Oak and Olive," by J. E. Flecker, is revealed the longing for England and home that tugs at the heart of most Englishmen:—

"Oh, well I know sweet Hellas now,  
And well I knew it then,  
When I with starry lads walked out—  
But, ah! for home again!  
Was I not bred in Gloucestershire?  
One of the Englishmen!"

In his "Song of the Saracens" one hears the tramp of the armed men, the rush of the attack:—

"We are they who come faster than  
fate; we are they who ride early  
or late;  
We storm at your ivory gate; pale  
kings of the sunset, beware!  
Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not  
in curtained solemnity die  
Among women who chatter and  
cry, and children who mumble a  
prayer.  
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp,  
and we rise with a shout, and we  
tramp  
With the sun or the moon for a  
lamp, and the spray of the wind  
in our hair."

Selections from the pen of Thomas Hardy, John Masefield, John Galsworthy, John Drinkwater and Francis Thompson, are included, since they reflect the present-day spirit. A few women, too, are to be found in this select company. Charlotte Mew is represented by "The Changeling," and in "The Little Waves of Bressny" Eva Gore-Booth has imprisoned music of rare sweetness:—

"The grand road from the mountain  
goes shining to the sea,  
And there is traffic on it and many  
a horse and cart,  
But the little roads of Cloonagh are  
dearer far to me,  
And the little roads of Cloonagh  
go rambling through my heart."

A great storm from the ocean goes  
shouting o'er the hill,  
And there is glory in it and terror  
on the wind,  
But the haunted air of twilight is  
very strange and still.



And the little winds of twilight are  
dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep  
storming on their way,  
Shining green and silver with the  
hidden herring shoal.  
But the little waves of Bressny have  
drenched my heart in spray,  
And the little waves of Bressny go  
stumbling through my soul."

It is full of a haunting quality, or is it merely the witchery of the sea?

With it may be compared this stately measure of this "Chorus from Hippolytus," by Gilbert Murray:—

"Could I take me to some cavern for  
mine hiding,  
In the hilltops where the Sun scarce  
hath trod;  
Or a cloud make the home of mine  
abiding,  
As a bird among the bird-droves  
of God!  
Could I wing me to my rest amid the  
roar  
Of the deep Adriatic on the shore,  
Where the water of Eridanus is clear,  
And Phaëthon's sad sisters by his  
grave  
Weep into the river, and each tear  
Gleams, a drop of amber, in the  
wave!"

To the strand of the Daughters of  
the Sunset,  
The Apple-tree, the singing and the  
gold;  
Where the mariner must stay him  
from his onset,  
And the red wave is tranquil as of  
old;  
Yea, beyond that Pillar of the End  
That Atlas guardeth, would I wend;  
Where a voice of living waters never  
ceaseth  
In God's quiet garden by the sea,  
And Earth, the ancient life-giver, in-  
creaseth  
Joy among the meadows, like a  
tree."

These are but a few poems culled from the collection, but they indicate in a measure the beauty and high quality of the selection made under direction of such authorities in English literature as Edmund Gosse, C.B., and E. V. Lucas.

"THE House of the Beautiful Hope," by Robert Stuart Christie, Cecil Palmer, Oakley House, London.

A first novel always brings with it a breath of fragrant anticipation. It is a store house of possible treasure. One scans the title page, runs the eye over foreword or prologue, and then comes the joy of tasting the flavour of the first few sentences. Half a dozen will suffice to reveal the truth about the author—whether he is an artist or a dauber—whether

he has surprised the hidden workings of the human mind, or whether he is merely a superficial trickster.

There can be no doubt about this first story from the pen of Robert Stuart Christie. From the very beginning the attention is secured and maintained until the last word is read. Moreover, there is a freshness of treatment that is intriguing. The two love stories, inextricably mingled as they are, and pulsating with intense feeling, do not alone supply the pathos that amounts almost to tragedy.

Over and above this is the development of a soul on the one hand, on the other is the rapid deterioration of the one who puts self and self-interest first, until she becomes incapable of fine feeling, or even of understanding anything noble in human nature.

An artist, sincere, utterly unselfish, and guided by high ideals alone, is fascinated by a beautiful face and gracious manners, and wakes up to find that the woman behind used them merely as a mask. In temperament, aims and ambitions, she is of the earth, earthy. When her hard, calculating greed and falsity are revealed to her husband, something dies in him. The mainspring of life is broken. Most mercifully for the saving of his reason he meets with an accident which robs him of memory. And then, amid strange romantic surroundings, he meets a pearl among girls. She is unspoiled and wholly sweet—a mystic without knowing it—a child-woman of rare clarity of vision. And then Fate, in the form of his wife, intervenes. Suddenly memory returns, and the triangle is straightened out—how, it would not do to tell.

Such a book is not meant for hurried reading. Its romantic atmosphere amid modern surroundings is a distinct departure from the novel of today, and as such it certainly merits a high place among current fiction.

"ART in Australia." Published by Art in Australia Limited, Sydney.

This fine quarterly maintains its high character, both in the matter of letterpress and illustrations. Among the latter are excellent colour reproductions, of which "Grace," an oil painting by George Coates, and a landscape by Arthur Streeton, are fine examples. Augustus John's "Portrait of a Boy" is another notable study. Of the articles much might be said. In the realm of constructive criticism the articles on Art, Literature, Music, and Architecture, as treated by Lionel Lindsay, J. F. Bruce, Howard Ashton, F. Bennicke Hart, Harold Parker, Arthur Jose and Jack Lindsay take a high place. No Australasian art lover can afford to pass them by. Other articles of much interest include one by Hardy Wilson, giving the history and des-

cription of a remarkable model of a horse found in a grave in China, and supposed to have been executed in clay during the Han or Wei Dynasty, about 300 A.D.

Our copies are from Whitcombe and Tombs Limited.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

[No MS. will be returned unless accompanied by stamps. No liability is undertaken re voluntary contributions. Name and full address must appear on the MS. itself.]

M.S., Patangata, via Otane.—Many thanks for appreciation. We hope to fulfil all expectations. Thanks for offer; at present we are suited, but will file your letter. Your little contribution very seasonable. Will be used shortly.

Miss A.K., Paeroa.—"The Ladder Down the Cliff" is under consideration. Verse also.

J.F.C., St. Albans, Christchurch.—"The Difference" is a charming sketch, but somewhat slight. It has the making of a rather good little story.

Miss G. J., Devonport.—Your article is a most excellent beginning in that particular kind of writing. The matter—ideas—are interesting, but the style requires brightness to redeem it from prosiness. An apt quotation, provided it is fresh, a terse way of expressing an idea, above all concentration of meaning into the fewest possible words, provided they leave no doubt as to that meaning—these are some points to be aimed at in writing prose.

H.S.H., Gisborne.—I like "A Fantail's Song," it is dainty. The hedge-sparrow is certainly an imported bird. One is tempted to wish that he were the sole representative of the sparrow family. The warbler, "riro-riro," as the Maoris call him, is the native songster.

"KIA-ORA," Te Kuiti.—Many thanks. Your story is too long drawn out, without making headway. There is an art in telling a story—of painting a word picture in descriptive work without an abundance of adjectives. It should be done in a few vivid, well-chosen words—sometimes by suggesting, rather than by stating with meticulous detail, and the use of many words. This is where terseness tells. Wordiness not only checks the zeal and interest of the reader, but it weakens the picture and the meaning. Practice in *précis* writing would be of the utmost help to you.

C.E.R., Mount Albert.—"The Unsympathetic Visitor" has many good points. The idea is quite good, but requires vitality in its treatment. A long drawn out narrative in the past tense can become rather dreary. Vera's long, long thoughts before the arrival of her visitor—though they may be true to life—would quench the reader's interest half way through the story. Have you studied the construction of a really good short story? You will note that the interest is caught and held almost from the first sentence.

MARION T., Wellington.—Your verselets show promise; but require a good deal of revising. "Crash" does not rhyme with "dash," nor "soon" with "croon." The grammar is faulty in line three of the fifth verse. You cannot be too severe in criticising your own work. A good plan is to lay it aside for some weeks and then to re-read it with a critical eye.

The Editress will be pleased to receive for publication a type-written copy of their favourite verse or short poem from readers of "The Ladies' Mirror." The name of the poet should always be appended, and the sender should give her own name as well.