

they will be read with great appreciation by those who admire vigorous, stirring verses depicting "life on the ocean wave." "Quilp N." has wisely resisted the temptation of publishing too large a collection, but has contented himself with selecting twenty-five of his best pieces. As signified on the title page, they have appeared before in the "Bulletin," "New Zealand Illustrated Magazine," and other periodicals. In selecting Kipling as his master, which it is evident this promising young poet has done, he could scarcely have made a better choice considering the subjects he most affects. Some critics sneer at young writers who take the great Anglo-Indian as a model, but when, as in this case, the model is not slavishly and weakly followed, and considerable originality of thought and fancy is apparent, one fails to see the need of the sneer. Amongst so much that is good, one can only select haphazard. Here is a specimen verse from "Night Waves":—

The waves of the Dawn sweep screaming,
Thrilled thro' with a golden song;
The waves of the Noon lie dreaming
The shimmering coasts along;
And swift in the black Pelorus
The tides thro' the rock-race flow:
But wild is the wailing chorus
That sounds where the Night-Waves go.

Here is another from "Tasman's Ships":—

The girls at home were hauling
Upon your tow-lines then,
And night would hear the bawling
Of long-years-absent men
Shouting a wild sea-chorus,
Till through a sea you swept
That leapt aboard uproarious,
And drenched them as it leapt.
Three hundred years have altered
But little in their round
Men's ways when, firmly haltered,
Their ships are homeward bound.

The following essay gives in graphic words the experience of almost, if not quite, everyone who has ever wielded a pen, and certain-

ly is not out of place in the Literary Chat columns:—

INSPIRATION.

BY MARY J. MANDER.

"There are times, we know not why, when our hand is out." How well Kipling understood the absence of inspiration when he penned those words, and who can realise their peculiar truth better than those who strive to earn some little sprig of Earth's laurels by means of the pen? Inspiration is a force, subtle and indefinable, a stimulus that bids us work, that compels us to work, that comes unsought for, and leaves us as helpless as it finds us.

It is true that we may so train our minds to regular occupation that we can sit down at stated hours and turn out good work, but be that as it may, there are times when, apart from health or effort, we are carried in spite of ourselves high above our usual plane of thought, and our brains feast upon the mental ozone of an upper and rarer air. Under the influence of this peculiar force thoughts come unbidden, also the language with which to clothe them, and further, we gain a keener insight into the beauties of the mental world.

Inspiration is as erratic and unreasonable a state of mind as the dreaming which haunts our hours of sleep. It comes to us in times of great physical weariness, and the tired body is taxed anew to cope with the increased activity of mind; in the crux of sorrow it may shine upon our intelligence and pale for a time the power of grief; in the crises of life it comes as a flash, we do its bidding mechanically, and try to realise afterwards how we stood the strain.

And what a little thing may touch the "secret springs of action!" A bar of music may rouse us, or the sight of a face that bears marks of grappling with the problems of life; a strong voice in the darkness, or a child's sweet smile; the cry of a night bird, the tinkle of