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WITH THE POETS



Blank verse tale of hate and fear

AVON'S HARVEST. By Edwin Arlington Robinson. The Macmillan Company.

Reviewed by EDWIN CARTY RANCK.

NEW volume from the pen of Edwin Arlington Robinson is an event in the world of books because Mr. Robinson always has something to say and he says it in a way that gives his work individual value to all lovers of real literature.

"Avon's Harvest" is a real achievement because, although it is a rather long narrative poem done in the blank verse that Mr. Robinson handles so easily and surely, it has none of the dullness that usually accompanies such an attempt...

Avon's hate-drawn portraits of his enemy are perfect in their peculiarly characterizing aptness. For instance he thought that "the Lord n'rs" have invented long ago some private and unspoken extermination...

But there is nothing finer in the whole poem than Avon's words: "Whenever your poet or your philosopher has nothing richer for us," he resumed. "He burrows among remnants, like a mouse"

In a waste basket, and with much dry noise Comes up again, having found Time at the bottom And filled himself with its futility."

The New Poetry

Incandescence is a fine word; It contains four syllables. Unfortunately almost everybody knows what it means.

In determinate, intercessional; I like both words, Yet why am I obsessed By the prefix "in"?

I feel, I feel, I feel The hale of intention (Again the muted "in"), White, attenuate, scintillant, Like a vapor, perfumed, Poisonous, it precedes me.

It flashes upon me, Ivory and scented fingers Savouring my breast, Increasing, incontestable, Illusive, irreconcilable! Have I triumphed again? I think so. Only the spirit, Irrational, inconspicuous. . . Ah me! Ah me! I inhale!

Go back and read Frost over

By XAVIER LYNDON.

STAGE director who specializes in collegiate dramas once told us of an interesting request he received from the head of a large university that had retained him to put on "The Mikado."



Robert Frost. From a Portrait Bust by Aroldo du Chene.

"I found that I could not 'cut' a line. Every speech, every line was an inseparable part of the whole; not a bit of padding could I find. Not until then did I realize that this virtue of succinctness is one of the secrets of Gilbert's greatness."

This same virtue is manifest in the work of Robert Frost, whose "Mountain Interval" has just been released by Henry Holt & Co. in an attractive new edition. There is not a single flight of rhetoric, not a flourish in the book. Everything the poet says contributes to a definite idea.

Luminous verse

STAR-POINTS. By Mrs. Waldo Richards Houghton, Mifflin Company.

Reviewed by RUTH ELLIOT

THIS anthology of verse was suggested to Mrs. Richards by her conviction that in a time of reconstruction "there is larger need than ever before of an uplifting and sustaining faith."

But quite apart from any "message" the policies embody of any "atmosphere" they impart, they do constitute a felicitous and engaging collection of contemporary American verse, expressed for the most part in regular metrical form with almost no violation of the classic tradition, a point significant in itself.

Of the poets who have "arrived," few names are missing from the impressive list of contributors. Sara Teasdale leads in number of selections of a single individual; we miss, however, her exquisite "I have remembered beauty in the night," as we must also regret the omission of Fannie Stearns Davis's "The Ancient Beautiful Things."

French reaction against romantics

By PANAME.

THE French world of letters has suffered a great loss in the death of Joachim Gasquet, poet and essayist. He was a large hearted friend, a lover of life and of all men.

Gasquet was an admirable art critic and one of the truest interpreters of Cezanne-whom he knew personally in his boyhood. He was born in 1873 at Aix-en-Provence, the son of a baker. He grew up a true Provencal and married Marie Girard, "Queen of the Felibrige."

When the war came Gasquet took his part with younger men, a brave and joyous soldier. Undergoing all the hardships of the first years, he came out of the conflict still the indomitable optimist, as his later books, "The Benefits of the War," "Hymns," "The Victorious Art," bear witness.

Here are his verses suggested by Helene as a type of the romantic poet: LA GLOIRE. Cueillez les roses de Corfou. . . Le clerge des cypres s'allume. Helne frissonne, et sur son cou Le soir pose une main de brume.

"Que me veux-tu, vieille douleur? Je dors dans le sommeil des marbres Et la lune comme une fleur. Vague, s'effeuillait dans les arbres.

"Que me veux-tu? J'ai tout nie. J'ai tout aime de ce qu'on nie. . . Laisse-moi dormir, oublie. Je ne crois pas a mon genie."

Et la nuit, la nuit de ses vers. A presse ses levres moroses Et dans ses vides yeux rouverts A fait danser l'ombre des roses.

Grand poete, o lucide fou, Le repos n'est pas: souffre encore. Cette main triste sur ton cou, C'est la Gloire, helas! qui t'adore.

Cueillez des roses de Corfou. Gasquet cherished a profound conviction that the period following the war was the time for a great revival of the arts. And he felt that the world's creators could only advance by turning back for guidance to the older sources of energy and form.

He looked upon the nineteenth century romantic movement as an interruption of progress. Musset with his tears and Hugo with his vast floods of impassioned oratory seemed to him false guides. He was not untouched by the intimate appeal of these men, as you, can see by the poem on Helne quoted above. But his judgment ruled against them. And he felt a deep desire to help the new generation to base its work on solid foundations.

These, he maintained, could be found by a study of the ancient classics which inspired the great Renaissance. And he pointed young French poets back to their own classic period.

For the romantics were uncertain. And the poet, if he is to be a leader, an interpreter, must be sure. He must have faith in beauty and truth as realities. He must believe in a law of life, which holds good in the individual, in families and in the State. And finding the true source of happiness in such knowledge and such faith, he will sing in clear tones. This is Gasquet's conception of the poet:

"In him, becoming attains to being. The world is transformed into an idea. He is aware of ideas, melodic forms; and when he touches the highest point his imagination, sustained by his reason, can achieve, he gives his intuition free course, lets his emotion fill these moulds, shape these ideas. . . To the singing power of expression he joins the pictorial faculty of inventing, of imagining that which shall most truly represent them to others in the musical order which he imposes upon them, to disengage a more profound beauty, a more significant emotion. He has the gift of images. He has the gift of style. He has above all the gift of rhythm, without which the rest is nothing. Rhythm completes and fulfills impulse and reason as intelligence completes nature, as being, in dominating, fulfills becoming."

Certainly there is inspiration in such words. And they help the faith of those of us who may not be poets—faith in a better understanding of life, a better social and political order than the world has yet realized.

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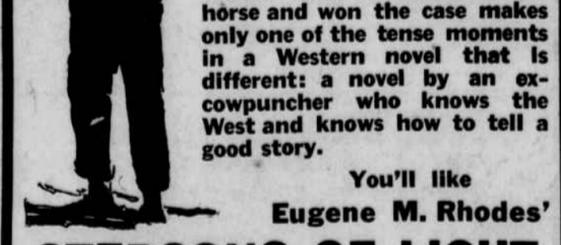
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