

PRÆTERITA

BY LEE WILSON DODD

I WAS a poet once. To-day
How faint the rose within the gray.
Something has changed me, something cold
Has mingled with my blood, the old
Rapturous urge toward loveliness
Has quieted. I tremble less
When the reluctant sun has made
For passion's feet a purple glade,
A glade of quivering purple fire
On to the ramparts of desire.
No longer is my heart oppressed
By the sea's saturnine unrest;
My pulse no longer doubles when
The lurking moon leaps forth again
And with intenser magic fills
Some lonely winding of the hills;
Nor am I shaken inexplicably
By the unyielding mystery
Of shrouded houses and dark doors,
When through a village street there pours
Night's laggard legion blind with rain. . . .

Oh, utter joy to feel again
The ache of swift imaginings!
The spirit-tumult of mounting wings
Beating a tenuous ether far
Too bright and light to float this star,
This earthy star low-hung and deep
Below the vast where poets sweep
Flame-feathered pinions! Joy to feel
Once more the doubly wingèd heel
Spurn back the sullen weight of time!
Joy to be young again! To rhyme
The ringing changes of the heart!

Joy long past over . . . Now with art
I strain to half-remember these
Once vivid pangs, brave ecstasies
Sacred to youth and love and song!

Ye blessèd ones who wildly throng
Life's glowing portals, radiant, free,
Press not too swiftly inward! We
Who mount the stairs of memory
Yearn down upon you with regret.
Envy us not that we are set
Above you in life's temple. Wait,
Unwearied ones, by the rose-hung gate
While song's ineffable grace yet clings
To the bright soft plumage of your wings . . .
Wings ye must fold ere ye advance
Down the strait aisles of circumstance;
Wings ye must shed, alas, ere ye
Cumber the stairs of memory.

COMMON SENSE IN PRONUNCIATION

BY ROBERT J. MENNER

THE degeneration of the ways and customs of the present from those of the good old times, is a common and ancient source of complaint among people who have experienced the supposed benefits of the superiority of the men and conditions of former days. All of us have doubtless heard our grandmother or maiden aunt bewail the lack of reverence and the incapacity for useful work manifested by the younger generation. This same spirit, no doubt, leads them to deprecate also the many changed pronunciations and different modes of speech, which they

stigmatize as new-fangled or ridiculous, and quite unheard of in their day. The younger members of the family may imagine that their own pronunciation has always been the standard and preferable one, and commiserate their elders for not having discovered it lurking in some corner of the dictionaries, the Webster, the Standard, and the Century, these three, — or rather in that particular one which they consider the greatest of these. They do not realize that the pronunciation recognized as correct half a century ago, when grandmother was young, often