

THE BOOKMAN'S LITERARY CLUB SERVICE

THE BOOKMAN presents the ninth instalment of its series of literary club programs. Believing that clubs will welcome an outline which combines range of subject with an authoritative understanding of the end to be achieved, the editors have brought together representative committees of authors, students, and critics to evolve for the use of women's clubs an outline which will contain both elements. The divisions of the series are: I. Contemporary American Fiction (see THE BOOKMAN for October, November, December, January); II. Contemporary American Poetry; III. Contemporary American Drama; IV. The Short Story. After contemporary American literature has been covered, programs on the historical background of our literature will be given and these will be followed by a survey of the English field.

The BOOKMAN programs are formed, not by the editors of this magazine but by a board of advice which has been organized to include names from various lines of literary thought in America, so that the result will represent no one group. The executive committee of advice is as follows: Mary Austin, the novelist; Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick, librarian of the St. Louis Public Library; Dr. Carl Van Doren, one of the editors of "The Century"; Hon. Maurice Francis Egan, diplomat and literary critic; Mrs. L. A. Miller, chairman of literature, General Federation of Women's Clubs; May Lamberton Becker, of the "Reader's Guide" of the New York "Evening Post"; Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, rector of the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York City; Booth Tarkington, the novelist; and Rose V. S. Berry, chairman of the fine arts committee, General Federation of Women's Clubs.

The editor of THE BOOKMAN and his advisers and associates will answer promptly and to the best of their ability any questions confronting any literary club. Such questions should be addressed "THE BOOKMAN'S Literary Club Service."

THE group of poets presented this month forms the fifth part of a study program of present day poetry. The committee have tried, in mapping out this program, both to show the varying trends of modern American poetry and to combine these differing elements into some sort of ordered pattern which might be easily followed. For this reason, the poets whose work is to be considered have been divided into groups. ("The New England Group", consisting of Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, and Amy Lowell, may be found in the March number. "The Middle Western Group", including Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, and Edgar Lee Masters, appeared in April. In May Anna Hempstead Branch, Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Grace Hazard Conkling formed the first half of the group of "Lyric Poets". The

second half of the group, consisting of Louis Untermeyer, Witter Bynner, John Hall Wheelock, and William Rose Benét, was discussed in the June issue.) Of course, the same poet may belong to two or three groups. In such a case, the determining factor has been his most pronounced work.

The program is intended for a season's study. Yet in order not to make it too long, it has been considered wise to include only those poets already well known to the public. The committee wish it clearly understood that, in choosing these poets, every decision was made by ballot, the majority ruling.

The names of easily procurable books and magazine articles dealing with individual authors are listed after the account of the poet to whom they refer. As a general bibliography the following books are suggested:

References and Guides

Tendencies in Modern American Poetry.

Amy Lowell. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

The New Era in American Poetry. Louis Untermeyer. HOLT.

New Voices. Marguerite Wilkinson. MACMILLAN.

An Introduction to Poetry. Hubbell and Beaty. MACMILLAN.

Poetry in General

Convention and Revolt in Poetry. John Livingston Lowes. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

A Study of Poetry. Bliss Perry. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

The Principles of English Versification.

Paul F. Baum. HARVARD.

Lyric Forms from France. Helen Louise Cohen. HARCOURT, BRACE.

The American Rhythm. Mary Austin. HARCOURT, BRACE.

Anthologies

The New Poetry. Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson. MACMILLAN.

Modern American Poetry. Louis Untermeyer. HARCOURT, BRACE.

A Miscellany of American Poetry, 1919. HARCOURT, BRACE.

American Poetry, 1922. HARCOURT, BRACE.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY

Committee: Amy Lowell, chairman; Grace Hazard Conkling, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Carl Sandburg, Sara Teasdale, Louis Untermeyer.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The appreciation of poetry is a most personal matter. The following program represents the painstaking effort of the above group of distinguished poets and critics. It includes only names of living Americans, and most of the younger poets were omitted as not having yet won their spurs. When this program was submitted for approval to the executive committee, suggestions and emendations were many. In few cases did the comments of any one member of the executive committee agree with those of another. For this reason, we have decided to publish the program as originally outlined by the poetry committee, without change. The biographies and quotations from critical material have been added by the editors of THE BOOKMAN, and for these the poetry committee is not responsible.*

The Imagists

H. D.

Hymen. HOLT.

One of the six poets who formed the nucleus of the imagist group, and were included in the three Imagist Anthologies, "H. D." is an almost perfect example of the writer of cadenced verse. Her passionate fondness for classical mood and form has led her into a clear, almost brittle style that for some people seems cold. Yet in these delicately fashioned lyrics of hers, there is a fire, a worship of beauty, strong, determined, whole souled, though subtle. Her rhythms are varied and graceful. These poems have often been likened to delicate yet strong Greek vases. She is pagan, yet she gives to old-world culture the freshness and vitality of the new world. Hers is a

special and a rare gift, and one which it is important to appreciate and to understand if we would know the new school of poetry.

Hilda (Doolittle) Aldington is tall, dark, fragile, exceedingly shy. "Unworldly" is a proper adjective to use in describing her. She is as remote as her verses, yet withal kindly and interested. She was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, was educated in private schools, and, for a time, at Bryn Mawr College. Her father was Professor Charles L. Doolittle, for some years director of the Flower Astronomical Observatory of the University of Pennsylvania. Her literary career started while she was in Europe. Contact with Ezra Pound and other members of the English and American group of literary experimentalists then living in London stimulated her. In America, her first work appeared in the January, 1913, num-

ber of "Poetry". She is married to the English poet and critic, Richard Aldington, also a member of the imagist school. "H. D." has spent much time of late years in Greece and on the continent. She has visited America seldom. She lives quietly, and writes constantly, though her output is small. Hers has been a quiet but a forceful influence in the development of American poetry.

"Her poems are native, personal, to a marked degree. They show no slightest trace of those influences which until recently ruled American art. Deeply affected by classic literature, still it is only as a blush of colour that we perceive it in her work. The tricks of her manner occasionally recall the Greek, but her thoughts are perfectly her own. Here is a fresh flower, sprung out of a new graft upon an old stock. Here is the frank, unartificial paganism of a new world. Neither in point of view, nor in technique, does this art resemble any preceding English art, yet it is cosmopolitan in that it is a fusion of much knowledge, all melted and absorbed in the blood of a young and growing race. She takes her good where she finds it, and the perfect singleness of her aim has resulted in releasing all her forces to concentrate them upon the simple fact of beauty. There is no clipping her pattern to a traditional mode; there is no staining it for ulterior ends. It is completely personal, completely sincere. Meticulous, at times, undoubtedly, 'H. D.'s faults are obvious enough, because they are also her greatest virtues; but, in the narrow compass in which she works, she has achieved a rare and finely-wrought beauty."—*Amy Lowell in "Tendencies in Modern American Poetry"*.

"'H. D.' is the most nearly perfect of the Imagists; she is, in fact, the only true Imagist. . . . In the narrow borders of her style she has achieved a concentration so great that it has an intensity of its own. . . . In 'Sea Garden' one notices at once how many and sensitive are 'H. D.'s perceptions of nature and how diverse are the rhythms she uses to express this keenness. Often her love for the beauty of an orchard, a pear-tree, a sea-rose is so great that it hurts her, and yet, with the artist's self-inflicted blows that wring ecstasy out of torture, she opens and reopens her wounds. . . . In all of these poems one receives the impression of something thin and fine struggling out of a narrow, compressed mold, of a gift used with a knowledge of its limitations, but with almost too sharp a precision and always with a quiet distinction of utterance."—*Louis Untermeyer in "The New Era in American Poetry"*.

"This ['Hymen'] is the first collection of H. D.'s verse to appear since the slender volume, 'Sea Garden', which was published

four or five years ago. She has been called a 'Greek' in mood and temper because she has taken her symbols, to a very large extent, from the Hellenic world. The other portion of her themes are evoked as symbols from the natural objects and elements."—*The Boston "Transcript"*.

REFERENCES:

- Tendencies in Modern American Poetry.* Amy Lowell. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
The New Era in American Poetry. Louis Untermeyer. HOLT.
A Critical Fable. Anonymous. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
Poems of H. D. May Sinclair. DIAL, February, 1922.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Preludes and Symphonies. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
Breakers and Granite. MACMILLAN.

Another member of the imagist group, John Gould Fletcher, is a poet of sound, color, and the motion of words. He is versatile and fertile. He has produced poems of the desert, of the mountains, of history, of philosophy, poems in cadenced verse, in polyphonic prose, in oriental forms. Primarily a poet of the beauty of nature, he yet occasionally turns to an examination of the soul of man; but his lyrics are seldom the reactions of personality. They are broad in scope. There is an almost epic quality to be found in some of his symphonic pieces.

This poet of tempestuous or brooding beauty was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1886. He lived there, was educated there until, in 1902, he was sent to Phillips Academy, Andover. At Harvard University he found the study of language his chief interest; but he left the academic atmosphere before taking his degree, in order to travel and to study. He spent some time in Venice and in Rome, then settled finally in London. He traveled in France, however, and made a deep study of modern French verse which has had a marked effect upon his later work. Five early volumes of verse were published in England. His later, more experimental work, however, was first presented in America. Although he has lived some years in Boston, he belongs to that group of Americans who have found London an ideal background for their life and work.

"Mr. Fletcher is a virtuoso of words, and sometimes this faculty runs away with him. Some of his symphonies, some of the poems in 'Irradiations', are heaped too full of

words, the changes he rings are too heavy, he confuses too many colours, too many sounds. His enormous fecundity is responsible for this. It is hard for him to curb his exuberance. Nature has given him much, and it is difficult for him to put himself to school. His books would gain by being pruned; but, as I said in the beginning, he lacks the selective instinct. It is largely for this reason that he is not yet esteemed as he should be. But, for the discerning eye, no living poet has more distinction of vision or of style. In him, indeed, we see the beginning of that new order of which I have so often spoken. To the poet, he is a real teacher, indicating new directions, opening up untrodden ways of thought."—*Amy Lowell* in "*Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*".

"The same thing may be said of John Gould Fletcher's poem on Lincoln. The first division of it is a complete poem in itself. It tells the story of Lincoln's life in terms of the life of the pine tree. And although the rhythms are similar, the several lines of the three strophes are unified and held together rather more by symbol than by the regular recurrence of stress in the flowing of the rhythm. . . . His ideal is not an ideal

of speech in poetry. . . . He is an Imagist and believes that poetry is the setting forth of 'images' in rhythmical language in such a way as will make them stimulate emotion in the reader. His best work is excellent poetry, really felt, heartily imagined, adequately expressed in rhythm. One of the finest strophes he has written, and one quite typical of his genius, is the first in 'Irradiations'. It should be read aloud and with due regard for the pauses."—*Marguerite Wilkinson* in "*New Voices*".

"There is audible music in John Gould Fletcher's 'Preludes and Symphonies' that a majority of the free verse formists have failed to sound. He has something else, too, which makes his work exoteric—his descriptions are real."—*THE BOOKMAN*, December, 1922.

REFERENCES:

- Tendencies in Modern American Poetry.* Amy Lowell. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
New Voices. Marguerite Wilkinson. MACMILLAN.
The New Era in American Poetry. Louis Untermeyer. HOLT.
A Critical Fable. Anonymous. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

The Ironists

EZRA POUND

Lustra. KNOPP.

Scholarly, almost pedantic, playing in various accents and in many moods, Ezra Pound, from a brilliant young poet and critic, has become a somewhat bitter man of middle age. This should not obscure his undoubted brilliance. His work shows cleverness and wit. It has range. It often exhibits learning rather than feeling; but he has written beautiful and passionate lyrics as well as fervid satire and complaint.

Ezra Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho, but lived much of his early life in Pennsylvania. He attended the University of Pennsylvania but was graduated from Hamilton College. Although he was the editor of "*Des Imagistes*", he withdrew himself from the group on the publication of the first Imagist Anthology, and for some years called himself a vorticist. Later his work developed in other directions. He lived many years in London, but his lack of sympathy with the trends of English poetry finally induced him to settle in Paris. Although he is separated from the United

States by the Atlantic Ocean, his criticism and diatribes still reach American publications on occasion. Early a leader in the new movement of poetry, he has allowed his position to slip away, and his early promise as a poet to be somewhat dimmed by his poses and mannerisms.

"And yet there is a definite distinction in Pound's work. His painstaking study in collecting literatures has yielded him an accent, an attitude. He maintains a certain grace of bearing, even when he poses before the mirror of his art, draped in a coat of many cultures that he has constructed, patch by patch, from other and more original designers. He has really little to say, but he says that little in a manner that gives his words the tone of authority. It is not so much the phrases as his gestures that are distinguished and arresting. It is the wave of the hand that explains and identifies Pound. Some of his followers who are not so well-known have surpassed him in his own *métiers*: the Aldingtons are far more genuinely Hellenic and chiseled than he; T. S. Eliot has a much lighter

touch in recording the ironies and overtones of a conversation; John Gould Fletcher is a more daring experimenter in the clash of colors; Maxwell Bodenheimer has a more delicate and dextrous imagination—but Pound triumphs in the gesture. He raises his arm, his fingers become nimble, his eyebrows go up—and what, when spoken, is tawdry and trivial, becomes glamorous with a suggestion of mystery. This is his power. The effect is that of a verbal legerdemain; the speech is mostly dumb-show, but he still simulates the magic of life. He is like Gordon Craig's supermarionette and his art is poetry in pantomime."—*Louis Untermeyer in "The New Era in American Poetry"*.

"His poems ['Lustra'] are too complicated for hasty judgment. One must read and read again a week later. They are ironical, jeering and intolerant. They are lonely, contemplative, searching, carefully formed and firmly living. Perhaps you hate Ezra Pound. He says many of us have the manner. Perhaps you like him, but whatever else you do you cannot ignore him. He has an individual fashion of saying things and he is without fear."—*K. B. in the Boston "Transcript", December 6, 1916.*

REFERENCES:

- Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry.* KNOPF.
The New Era in American Poetry. Louis Untermeyer. HOLT.
A Critical Fable. Anonymous. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
Ezra Pound and Poetry. W. Rice. DIAL, May 1, 1913.
The Work of Ezra Pound. Carl Sandburg. POETRY, February, 1916.
Ezra Pound, Poseur. Louis Untermeyer. NEW REPUBLIC, August 17, 1918.
The Reputation of Ezra Pound. May Sinclair. NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, May, 1920.

T. S. ELIOT

Poems. KNOPF.

From the obscure and difficult mazes of his poetry, there rise occasional pictures of great beauty, moments of superb satire and others of an almost clownish humor. It is a perverse talent, much discussed and difficult to understand. His more ardent admirers consider him a genius, and there is enough in his work so that his most ardent enemies can scarcely call him fool.

Still another of the expatriated Americans, T. S. Eliot has lived for some years now in England, where his criticism as well as his poetry has a hearing. The editors of

"The Dial" last year awarded him their \$2,000 prize for his long poem "The Waste-land", which was hailed by some critics as a brilliant achievement, by others as absurd; in fact, some suspected it of being a hoax, because of its obscure symbolism. Eliot was born at St. Louis, in 1888. He was graduated from Harvard, took a master's degree there, then later studied both at the Sorbonne and Oxford. His stay in England dates from 1913. I am inclined to think that those who find great art in him as a poet, sometimes miss the point of his satire and of his really rare sense of humor.

"At least two-thirds of Eliot's sixty-three pages ['Poems'] attain no higher eminence than extraordinarily clever—and eminently uncomfortable—verse. The exaltation which is the very breath of poetry—that combination of tenderness and toughness—is scarcely ever present in Eliot's lines. Scarcely ever, I reiterate, for a certain perverse exaltation takes its place; an unearthly light without warmth which has the sparkle if not the strength of fire. It flickers mockingly through certain of the unrhymed pictures and shines with a bright pallor out of the two major poems."—*Louis Untermeyer in "The Freeman", June 30, 1920.*

REFERENCES:

- A Critical Fable.* Anonymous. HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.
Modernists. Mary M. Colum. LITERARY REVIEW, January 6, 1923.
The Poetry of Drouth. Edmund Wilson, Jr. DIAL, December, 1922.
T. S. Eliot. Gilbert Seldes. NATION, December 6, 1922.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Advice. KNOPF.

Brittle, penetrating, filled with dry humor and biting satire, Bodenheimer is the youngest of these three ironists, and perhaps the least given to a contemplation of beauty. He lets his satirical sense feel its way among personal and social problems. He is an introspective satirist. Vivid in his sense of drama, and of description, he records both events and people with faithfulness. If music is lacking in his verses, it is perhaps compensated for by adroitness.

Maxwell Bodenheimer was born in Mississippi in 1892. He is wispish in appearance, with sharp features and sandy hair. His conversation is as biting as his poetry. A keen analytical mind and a contempt for the unintelligent make his reactions and ex-

pressions fearless and rather terrifying. For three years he was an enlisted man in the army. He spent some years in Chicago, and is definitely associated with the group there. I have never known him to hesitate to criticize a man's work because that man was his friend. Both in his work and in his person, he seems afraid of friendliness. This is, in a sense, his strength. Uncompromisingly, he looks at life through a strong lens of ironical humor. American poetry has needed this note. Bodenheim is a sort of poetic Jonathan Swift, a twentieth century Pope turned democrat.

"His delicacies are daringly clear and his images are fresh without attempting the latest heresy. Bodenheim's sensitivity to words makes him especially expert in his use of the verbal nuance. . . . Bodenheim has no superior in the whimsical-grotesque." — *Louis Untermeyer in "The New Era in American Poetry"*.

"Mr. Bodenheim uses words in a cryptic, esoteric fashion, attaching to them meanings of his own, as though they were his

private property and not the common possession of the race." — *Review of "Advice" in "The Athenaeum", November 5, 1920.*

"'Advice' is indubitably one of the important books of the year as it is one of the books most compact with beauty, actually worthy of frequent rereading. It is a book small only in size, for behind its lines tremble the multitudinous vibrations of a world of beauty and thought." — *Herbert S. Gorman in the New York "Times", December 26, 1920.*

"Mr. Bodenheim has proved himself a very capable artist. Once the reader is willing to lend a bit of sympathy to his theory there is much to enjoy in his poems ['Advice']. The clew to their virtues may be a little difficult to get, the harmony may seem discordant, the images a trifle confusing and fantastic but careful discernment will bring unity out of the picture, and with a vivid phase of imaginative suggestion." — *William Stanley Braithwaite in the Boston "Transcript", November 27, 1920.*

THE BURDEN

Translated from the Swedish of Marta af Sillen

By Charles Wharton Stork

SHE carried her water pitcher, —
 From the well by the gate she bore it,
 And high on her head she wore it.
 — In the South 'tis a second nature. —
 And her carriage was straight as that of a queen,
 Though she was but crowned
 With earthen pride,
 And her motion the while was poised, serene,
 As the calm when the sound
 Of music has died.
 But the way that she trod was a dusty way,
 Her burden the weight of every day,
 And her steps with their gliding grace
 Won a humble guerdon;
 Yet silent I watched her, and now I see
 That no posture has more of majesty
 Than theirs who, steady of pace,
 Walk erect with a burden,