

He handed me the volume, "Les Cinq Continents". It was edited by Ivan Goll. The American translations (they were excellent) had been written by Léon Bazalgette, the French authority on Whitman. He selected three poems by Sandburg, two by Masters, two by Pound. Amy Lowell, Vachel Lindsay, Orrick Johns, James Oppenheim, and Sherwood Anderson had each a poem to represent them. Their united work was both more various and more homogeneous than I had expected; it was not unworthy of a nation. . . . Curiously enough, the four English poems were not purely English. One of them, certainly not the least important, was written by T. S. Eliot!

"We like American poets", said MacOrlan, hammering the ashes from his Anglo-Saxon pipe.

## A VISIT WITH MASEFIELD

By Charles Hanson Towne

I HAD been at Oxford with some friends for several days, when suddenly I remembered that John Masefield lived at Boar's Hill, just a little way out in the country; and I wondered why I had not thought of this before. Robert Nichols used to speak to me of the little colony they had — Masefield, Bridges, Gilbert Murray, and a few others.

With a young friend who happened along, I took a bus, and then walked at least a mile and a half, inquiring all the way if we were on the right road to the poet's house. Yes, we were — keep straight on; second house to your right beyond that hill. It was hot and dusty. No rain had fallen for days and the panorama of the valley which

spread at our feet when we reached the crest of the hill seemed burning up. The grass was like straw. The view, in normal times, must be enchanting. Today it made my heart ache.

There was his house, at last! A simple enough dwelling, the grounds of which we entered through a little gate. It was not unlike many of our suburban dwellings, with no pretense, no anxiety to be greatly different from other houses roundabout.

Yes, the poet was at home; would we step in, the maid said in answer to our query. We simply sent word by her that two American pilgrims, whose names did not matter, would like to say Good day to a writer they had long admired.

The message came back that Mr. Masefield would be happy to see us shortly; but he was at work. I wondered if we had interrupted the composition of a sonnet, and I was not pleased to be the blunt instrument which would thus cut off a magical line. "But he always comes down for tea", the maid explained; and made us comfortable in the drawing room. We looked about. The model of a ship first caught my attention. The author of "Dauber" would be certain to make one with his own hands. Then paintings of his boy and girl also held us, as well as a portrait of himself. A few books, a littered desk, a hospitable fireplace and inviting chairs — these were enough to make the room cosy and livable. Suddenly, through a French window behind us, Mrs. Masefield came in "from feeding the hens", she laughed. Her husband would be in soon. He was putting some nails in a box in the barn. So it was not a poem we had interrupted!

I told her how, on my first visit to England twelve years ago, I had read

"The Everlasting Mercy" on a park bench in Chester, on my way to my steamer. The tattered copy of "The English Review" was passed from one end of the boat to the other; and when I got to New York I told a reporter who had come to interview Andrew Carnegie that I had a far more important piece of news for him: a new poet had arrived in England; and I gave him the torn magazine. In print, later, he agreed with me. And so did the whole world. Mrs. Masefield's eyes filled with tears as I told her this; and I recalled how I had, after a year, written myself to her husband to tell him of my joy in his poetry. "Did I answer?" said a deep voice behind me. And I turned to see our poet, smiling, his face sunburned, his tired eyes lighted by some divine inner fire.

"You did", I said. "I'm glad of that", he replied. And we all sat down and talked of America. I had heard Masefield lecture during the war; and he had looked then as if the weight of the world were upon his shoulders. His voice had been weary and far away. But now he looked rested and five years younger, and the resiliency had come back to his voice.

"I love America — those busy, teeming cities like Chicago and Kansas City. And New York is wonderful. It's so glorious to do as you do there — when you don't like a street you tear it down and build it over again! I have often wondered at Americans constantly coming over here to see our ancient crumbling walls, our worn out relics, when your youth and fire and fervor are so much more worthwhile."

My young friend, who had been "doing" Europe for a year, and doing it thoroughly, looked amazed. But of course, lover of young and growing

cities that I am, Masefield's words were a lyric in my ears.

"It is true", he went on. "You have so much of energy to give, so much that is inspiring and new and that plays its part in the world, you know."

He liked American audiences; but the long journeys tired him, and interfered with his work of writing; and he was not sure when he would tour the States again. But when he does come, Mrs. Masefield is coming with him. She has never been. America will be as cordial to her as it has been to her husband.

They urged us to stay for tea; but a boom of thunder echoed far off, and the first rain of the summer began to sing in the garden, and we said we must run for our bus. Another guest had come in; so we hurried to the road, Masefield showing us to the flower decked gate, and waving us goodbye. He looked like a ghost in his suit of white linen — but a healthy, normal ghost, as normal as those robust songs of the sea he has sung so well.

My young friend and I felt better for our brief visit; and as we trudged through the tapping storm, I quoted, "The days that make us happy make us wise."

## WALT WHITMAN'S SISTER

By Nellie Doty Butts

"WALT WHITMAN'S yawps!"  
Ye gods! A man of remarkable genius, absorbing interest, with a mind imaginative, creative, constructive, sounding his "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world". . . .

THE BOOKMAN slipped unheeded to