

ST. JOHN AND THE FAUN

G. E. WOODBERRY

I

OBLEST Imagination!
Bright power beneath man's lid,
That in apparent beauty
Unveils the beauty hid!
In the gleaming of the instant
Abides the immortal thing;
Our souls that voyage unspeaking
Press forward, wing and wing;
From every passing object
A brighter radiance pours;
The Lethe of our daily lives
Sweeps by eternal shores.

II

On the deep below Amalfi,
Where the long roll of the wave
Slowly breathed, and slipped beneath me
To gray cliff and sounding cave,
Came a boat-load of dark fishers,
Passed, and on the bright sea shone;
There, the vision of a moment,
I beheld the young St. John.

At the stern the boy stood bending
Full his dreaming gaze on me;
Inexorably spread between us
Flashed the blue strait of the sea;
Slow receding,—distant,—distant,—
While my bosom scarce drew breath,—
Dreaming eyes on my eyes dreaming
Holy beauty without death.

III

In the cloudland o'er Amalfi
Where with mists the deep ravine
Like a cauldron smoked, and, clearing,
Showed, far down, the pictured scene,—
Capes and bays and peaks and ocean,
And the city, like a gem,
Set in circlets of pale azure
That her beauty ring and hem,—
Once, returning from the chasm
By the mountain's woodland way,
Underneath the oak and chestnut
Where I loved to make delay,
(And dark boys and girls with faggots
Would pass near on that wild lawn,
And at times they brought me rosebuds)—
There one day I saw a faun.

The wood was still with noontide,
The very trees seemed lone,
When from a neighboring thicket
His moon-eyes on me shone,
Motionless, and bright, and staring,
And with a startled grace;
As nature, wildly magical
Was the beauty of his face;
And as some gentle creature
That, curious, has fear,
Dumb he stood and gazed upon me,
But did not venture near;
And I moved not, nor motioned,
Nor gave him any sign,
Nor broke the momentary spell
Of the old world divine.

IV

Love, with no other agent
Save communion by the eye,
Evoked from those bright creatures
Our secret unity;
There, flowering from old ages,
Hung on time's blossoming stem
All that fairest was in me
Or loveliest in them;
And truly it was happiness
Unto a poet's heart
To find that living in his breast
Which is immortal art.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The President of the United States

IN his inaugural address, President Wilson showed that the high hopes based upon his personality and record are destined, if events run their normal course, to be realized.

More and more noticeably, the feeling has been spreading through the country that, at this exceptional time, an exceptional man has been found to give effective shape to the ideas that have been growing in the minds of thinking people, changing the old outlook and giving to new conditions a new value. Twelve years of the twentieth century have already gone by, and the majority of men still imagine that they are living in an outmoded era. The nineteenth century had its triumphs and its failures: but the time has come to discard and pass on. We are grateful for what all the centuries have taught us, and won for us; but our work is with our own time, and with our own generation. It is not right to sacrifice the present even to the future; for in that creed lies procrastination, and the ruin, often, of great endeavors. What is worth doing, is worth doing now; and if the living can live rightly, shall it not be better for the unborn?

And so those men and women who have tried to comprehend the conditions of life as it is to-day, and to mould the conditions of life as it shall be to-morrow, have listened to, or read, the President's inaugural address. They have found in it the fine note that they expected: simplicity; strength without crudeness; purpose; idealism; realism; insight. It is the first clear expression of the twentieth century that has been given, without rodomontade, by a statesman who has the power and the will to carry it into effect. It is the unmistakable revelation, not of a party nominee, but of the President of the United States.

“Some old things with which we had grown familiar, and which had begun to creep into the very habit of our thought and of our lives, have altered their aspect as we have latterly looked critically upon them, with fresh, awakened eyes; have dropped their disguises and shown themselves alien and sinister. Some new things, as we look frankly upon them, have come to