

'Ten bars of gold and our liberty,' cried the woman.

'You are free,' said the master, 'and my overseer shall count you out the gold.' And with his own hands, with the greatest of care, he detached the cloth from the loom, rolled it up, and carried it away.

Free! They were free! The ox driver wept at the woman's feet, not from happiness, but from the atrocious, the torturing fear that the miracle of his life was coming to an end. And the woman gazed on him with gentleness and great majesty.

'For thee,' she said, 'I broke asunder the bonds of celestial law. Of another world am I, as thou knowest well. Know, then, that I am the Goddess of the Loom of the Heavens. For thee have I labored, and now that all is accomplished, I must return to my place amid the constellations of the sky. Do not weep, live in the memory

of thy happiness, live faithful to honor, faithful to the memory of thy celestial bride. The times that are to come will reunite us.'

And gently gathering her robes about her, the celestial lady was swept up into the sky. And at last the ox driver could see her eyes no more.

Many years he lived, years enriched by dreams of his vanished bride. True to honor; true to her he remained. At length his trials were over, and death closed his eyes on earth. And sweeping to earth in a moon-mist, the powers of heaven caught up his soul, and placed him amid the stars of the sky. Close at hand, in her heavenly mansion, dwelt the lady of the loom.

Once a year the falling stars trace themselves into a luminous bridge, and over their arch of flame the Herdsman of the Heavens passes to the house of the beloved.

[The Anglo-French Review]

PIERROT — IMPENITENT

BY MARIA STEUART

HEART, my Heart, for all your pleasures
 You have wasted many treasures!
 Let me count what you have done,
 What has left me one by one.
 Peace and sleep and joy of youth,
 Dreams of fame, regard of truth,
 Old-time faiths and thoughts and deeds
 Cast aside — aside like weeds.
 Now of loves and friends bereft
 I sit alone, with nothing left,
 Facing hunger, sickness, cold,
 Death himself, ere I am old.
 Yet whatever you have lost me
 It was worth whate'er it cost me!

[*The London Mercury*]

THE LITERARY YEAR IN REVIEW

BY J. C. SQUIRE

THE first whole year of peace has ended, and it is natural to throw a backward look upon its literary production. It is certain that to the historian it will be a year in which various tendencies continued to act; it is possible that his eye, in long retrospect, will observe in it the appearance, the sudden appearance, of new literary developments and important personalities. But it is, as a rule, only in long retrospect that such portents are recognized as such; and though we think that during the year certain movements which have been for some years in existence have been continued, that there are drifts which are easier to perceive than to analyze, we cannot persuade ourselves that 1919 added more than the normal amount to the existing volume of good English literature. It was, in fact, as a literary year very much like one of the war years. Perhaps it should properly be regarded itself as a war year.

The principal physical factor which, in our present relation, operated during the war was the absence on service of the great majority of those young men who would have been beginning to write. These were, with rare exceptions, precluded by sheer force of outer circumstances from literary enterprises of a sustained kind; and, as most of those who survived have left the army within the last year, we could scarcely expect so soon as this to find them producing large and ambitious books. It may also reasonably be argued that the war atmosphere still prevails. Peace has come — and it has not yet come universally or conclusively — not suddenly but with the

slowness of a northern dawn. Problems from which even the most self-sufficing mind cannot escape harass the intellect and weigh on the spirit of the civilized world. We are not yet in a position to estimate post-war literature, for we have not yet got post-war literature.

The opinions of intelligent men may differ to some extent as to which were the most remarkable novels of 1919; that they were very few is, we conceive, a matter of general agreement. Of the older novelists, Mr. Conrad produced in *The Arrow of Gold* (a work begun long ago and recently completed) a book which, though not among his masterpieces, was worthy of him. Mr. Wells, in *The Undying Fire*, a modernization of the Book of Job, wrote an imaginative, an exciting, and an eloquent book. It was much better shaped and trimmed than has lately been usual with his books, and, for the first time since he abandoned scientific romance, he concentrated entirely on doing what he can do better than other people instead of trying to do what he cannot do. The other elder novelists did nothing that was unexpected and little that was good; and their successors have not appeared. A Fielding or a Dickens is a rare product; but we see no young novelists of whom it can be predicted with any assurance that ten years hence they will occupy places such as are now occupied by Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett. It seems certain that they will not be found among that pre-war group whose merits Henry James examined with such generous consideration, whose defects he indicated with such delicate diffidence, in a famous article which 'betrayed' rather than stated his alarm, even his pity, for the English novel.

There have been a few books which have attracted attention by their