

## A PAGE OF OXFORD VERSE

[*Poems from Oxford Poetry, 1922. The Cambridge Review's criticism of this book is printed elsewhere in this issue.*]

### AUDIERNE

BY ANTHONY STEELE

[New College]

DEEP in a land of ragged furze,  
Coarse grass and stunted pine,  
Of capped and comely women,  
Of cider, not of wine,

Like pinioned wraiths of muslin  
The cobalt nets hang unfurled,  
By the town of little fishes  
Near the very end of the world.

### 'IN LANDS MADE DESOLATE'

BY JOSEPH BREWER

[Magdalen College]

IN lands made desolate by war,  
Little men hurry to rebuild their towns,  
Hasten in shame  
To cover up the signs of their silly  
quarrels,  
Lest some grown-up God should catch  
them out,  
And laughing,  
Make their cheap passions ridiculous  
In the eyes of the universe.

### TWILIGHT

BY F. W. BATESON

[Trinity College]

Now tiptoe night hath lured away  
The laggard rustic from the hay;  
An earliest owl shrills  
Between the hills.

Stilled is all else: not yet there pry  
Beetle or bat to mar the sky,  
Nor dismal ghost to delve  
For mouldered pelf.

No crumpling whisp of smoke betrays  
Or cotter's fire or tavern blaze;  
No glowworm shames the dark  
With pilot spark.

Alone I prow! intent to share  
The drowsy hour's sweet despair,  
And younker moon to spy  
Climb up the sky.

### SUMMER

BY C. H. O. SCAIFE

[St. John's College]

HOT summer comes  
And hums  
A drowsy tune.  
In June  
The flies are young,  
Among  
The flowers just blown  
They drone.  
When August's told  
They're old,  
And fall asleep  
Sunk deep  
In parched-up grass.  
Like glass  
Lies each small pool,  
And cool  
The old fish swim  
By slim  
And graceful reeds;  
The meads  
Have lost their rills,  
The hills  
In slumber lie,  
The sky  
Is vastly deep  
And sleep  
Folds round the lands  
Her hands.

# LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

## LIARS IN LITERATURE

UNDER the engaging title, 'On Liars,' the lively person who dons the mask of 'Penguin' weekly in the London *Observer* recently contributed to that newspaper — which has just celebrated its one hundred and thirtieth anniversary — some entertaining comments on the immortal liars of literature. It is a subject of which much might be made, and it is by no means certain that 'Penguin' has got to the bottom of it. Still, it is hardly fair to blame 'Penguin' for not plumbing the depths of falsehood. This is what he says: —

'For the three men who were most celebrated in the faculty of lying in fiction, we have to go to three different countries. Baron Münchhausen, Sir John Falstaff, and Monsieur Tartarin of Tarascon are three great liars and three great men. The lies of all three have added to the gayety of nations. Falstaff, "unimitated, unimitable Falstaff," is my own favorite of the three, but this is, perhaps, due to the limitations of nationality. Certainly the story of the men in buckram is neither more circumstantial nor more incredible than Tartarin's story of the forty lions he killed, or Münchhausen's account of how he rode the Lithuanian horse that was cut in two by the portcullis, and yet continued to drink at the fountain until the fountain nearly ran dry because the water ran out of the horse's severed trunk. When we read lies like this last, we are forced to agree with Oscar Wilde and lament the decay of the rich rhythmic utterance of an earlier time.

'Among modern liars, Thackeray's Mr. Archer, in *Pendennis*, is a man with whom I regret that I cannot be-

come better acquainted. We are only twice in his company — once in the Back Kitchen and once on the Epsom race-course, and on each occasion Mr. Archer shows that he has a pretty talent. Compared with Archer, Andrea Fitch, in *A Shabby Genteel Story*, is a mirthless liar, though we are told that Fitch "never spoke the truth, and was so entirely affected and absurd as to be quite honest at last: for it is my belief that the man did not know truth from falsehood any longer."

'Dickens's Mr. Stryver, in *A Tale of Two Cities*, and Trollope's Miss Gushing, in *Doctor Thorne*, both became liars through having been crossed in love. Stryver, after Lucie Manette refused him and accepted Darnay, "married a florid widow, with property and three boys. He was in the habit of declaiming to Mrs. Stryver, over his full-bodied wine, on the arts Mrs. Darnay had once put in practice to 'catch' him, and on the diamond-cut-diamond arts in himself, madam, which had rendered him 'not to be caught.' Some of his King's Bench familiars, who were occasionally parties to the full-bodied wine and the lie, excused him for the latter by saying that he had told it so often that he believed it himself." Miss Gushing took a similar tone when Mr. Oriel became engaged to Beatrice Gresham. "If she had only chosen to exert herself as Miss Gresham had done, she could have had Mr. Oriel easily; oh, too easily; but she had despised such work," so she said. Miss Gushing, like Mr. Stryver, found a willing ear into which to pour this mendacity, which "she repeated so often that it is prob-