

P-D

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I came into Douglas last evening on the Phelps-Dodge railroad—the El Paso and Southwestern—and naturally went to the hotel owned by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation. This morning I spent some time at the Y. M. C. A.—salaries paid there, largely, by the Phelps-Dodge Company. I went to the Public Library and asked, among other things, for *The Nation*. The pleasant librarian told me that they did not take it.—Yes, there were calls for it, but the management had not considered it necessary or desirable.—*The New Republic*? Yes, she had the files of a year or so up to last November—the management had not thought it necessary or desirable since then. I was puzzled, and to avoid further embarrassment sought to conceal myself behind the magazine rack. “Copper Queen Library” was stamped on the magazine covers, and again I sought the librarian.—Yes, it was the Copper Queen Library.—Yes, it was also the Public Library; you see the Phelps-Dodge Company provide the library for the town.—Oh, yes, they select the books and magazines—that is, somebody in the manager’s office does—some things are donated. I asked if all donations were accepted—well, yes; of course they are approved by the manager’s office.

I left the Library and went by the tennis courts marked P-D to the post office. I asked the man cutting the lawn, “Is this Federal property?” “Yes, from the curb over there; part of the lawn belongs to the Phelps-Dodge Company. They sold the corner to the Government for the Federal Building.” I walked through the Phelps-Dodge park to the City Hall. I went in—there was the symbol P-D—Police Department this time—or was it Phelps-Dodge? I’m not sure, but I went into a stuffy little court room and asked one of the white-hatted Arizona “man’s men” if that was the place of the “wob” cases. It was.

The sun shone in at one window but it was shut off from the others by the P-D department store building. The county attorney was conducting the preliminary hearings in a group of 351 cases before the justice of the peace. Two clever men represented the defendants—two clever men employed by the P-D.

These are unique cases in the history of the I. W. W. and of the United States, because the members of the I. W. W. with a much greater number of other workingmen are the complaining witnesses, and the men accused of crime—351 of them—are the leading citizens of the district, who conducted the deportation of nearly 1,200 men two years ago. The crimes charged are abduction, kidnapping, robbery, and assault. There have also already been filed thirty suits for damages to the men deported, aggregating \$12,000,000, with more to follow. And the results—will they bear the symbol P-D? I wonder.

Douglas, Ariz., July 18

R. J. BAKER

Stanley Sailors’ Home and America

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The war has brought the two great English-speaking people together in many ways. One of these not generally known, perhaps, is the assistance given to shipwrecked Americans by English sailors’ hospitals. Among those which freely opened their doors to Americans needing assistance is the Stanley Sailors’ Home of Holyhead. Here were received in April, 1918, for example, passengers and crew from the ship *Oronso*, torpedoed and sunk in nine minutes, when carrying, among others, 62 members of the American Y. M. C. A. mission to France. The wing of the Stanley Home used for shipwrecked crews urgently needs repair and enlargement, and Miss J. H. Adeane, honorary secretary of the special building fund, hopes that Americans may join in the undertaking. Contributions should be sent to Miss Adeane, Plâs Llanfawr, Holyhead, England, or the undersigned will forward them.

1910 Wadena St., E. Cleveland, O. OLIVER FARRAR EMERSON

Literature

Recent Poetry

The Beloved Stranger. By Witter Bynner. Alfred A. Knopf.

The Solitary. By James Oppenheim. B. W. Huebsch.

Small Craft. By C. Fox Smith. George H. Doran Company.

Poems. By Iris Tree. John Lane Company.

Catholic Tales and Christian Songs. By Dorothy Leigh Sayers.

Robert M. McBride & Company.

The Way of Wonder. By May Doney. George H. Doran Company.

Sonnets of Herbert Scholfield. Alfred A. Knopf.

ACCORDING to William Marion Reedy, who writes an introduction to Mr. Witter Bynner’s latest poems, this volume gives evidence of a remarkable, not to say tragic, psychical experience on the part of the poet. It will be recalled that a little collection of verses burlesquing the work of the imagists appeared three years ago, with the title “Spectra,” and that it later transpired that this was the work of Mr. Bynner and a fellow-poet. Mr. Bynner’s pseudonym, for the nonce, was Emanuel Morgan. Now, says Mr. Reedy, the personality of Emanuel Morgan has proved to have emerged more and more in that of his medium or creator, until it dominates his poetical work as that of the mysterious “Fiona McLeod” supplanted the personality of the late William Sharp. Since even in the volume of “Spectra” Mr. Reedy found evidence of genius beyond the reach of laughter, the capture of Mr. Bynner’s pen by the new personality—or the entering into him of the devil of imagism—is by no means represented in the preface as a tragic matter; it is we who use that word. For, despite the charm and interest of certain portions of the present volume, we cannot enjoy it without a pang of regret for the more authentic Witter Bynner of “The New World.” This quasi-submerged personage is no doubt still amused (and wishes us to be) by the imaginative antics of his incubus or “control”—by

The look in your eyes

Was as soft as the under side of soap in a soap-dish

or “oysters white as dawn and singing from the sea.” Whereas at other moments we suppose him to be fascinated and even thrilled a little (and to wish us to be) by the unexpected combinations of association and feeling which word-jugglery, always dextrous and sensitive to sound and color, may turn up; as when one is sometimes really moved by the beauty of a new word formed by the accidents of the cards in logomachy. To look more seriously, there are in this sequence some delicate imitations of Chinese lyric, which happily reproduce the Oriental practice of presenting a fugitive analogy between a natural phenomenon and a human mood. We quote what is perhaps the best of these, called “Cherry-Blossoms”:

A child,

Looking at you, a cherry-bough,

And at me, a river,

Saw you and you, two cherry-boughs,

And laughed.

For run as fast as ever I may,

My heart

Moves only with you,

Only with your blossoms,

Remembering them

Or awaiting them,

Moving when you move in the wind

And still when you are still.

And again there are flashes of ironic imagery that swiftly illuminate whole deserts of experience; as—

And I can still go about the world

As patient as a beggar with one arm,

As valiant as a crab with one quick claw.

Mr. James Oppenheim may be viewed as the most complete follower, in our present poetry, of the Whitman tradition. Like its founder, he conceives of the poet primarily as one who exposes himself to the multitudinous impinging forces of nature and civilization, letting them roll in upon him like waves upon a bather sprawling on the beach. Like Whitman, too, Mr. Oppenheim finds the significance of all these impressions in their relationship to the progress of Man. In the intense humanity of his verse lies, one might say, both its strength and its weakness. He has the courage of faith without its insight or rationale; peers through the chaos which humanity persists in making of itself and its world, expecting always some impossible lifting of Man by Man, without perception of the ancient truth that a god must mingle in the game. The verse and style are like the thought—impressive in their surging, eddying movement among all the crags and caverns of experience, and nobly sincere in their reaction to what they find, but commonly lacking in what Coleridge called “the *shaping* spirit of imagination.” Moreover, they have all too little of the mysterious harmonies of Whitman. Despite these limitations, the poems of “The Solitary” are notably expressive of the social and intellectual confusion, the blend of half-formed, worthily felt indignations, hopes, and despairs of America at the present moment.

The frontispiece of Miss Iris Tree’s collection represents the head of the author, not, it is on every account to be hoped, by way of direct portraiture, but in more or less symbolic presentation of the pouting weariness with which she contemplates her environment. For the most part she devotes her verse to the detestable in man and nature, with the negligible indignation of the mere onlooker rather than the more wholesome anger of a protagonist; and our respect for her sufferings is not reinforced by her dangerously self-conscious interest in what her publishers call “the use and arrangement of words.” But it is true that this interest in words produces some really significant results, and also that at times Miss Tree’s indignation combines with it for the forging of weapons of penetrative satiric power.

Pity them all, the imperative faces
That peer through the dark where we sleep in our laces,
Where we skulk among cushions in opulent places,
With indolent postures and frivolous graces. . . .

Drowning our flutes, till the cries of the city
Flurry us, flutter us, force us to pity,
Force us to sigh and arrange a committee,
Tea-party charity danced to a ditty.

After all these volumes which we have been considering, it will be admitted that nothing could be better than a brisk sea-breeze; and this is ready for us in the stirring and salty chanteys of Miss Fox Smith’s “Small Craft.” Miss Smith catches and keeps the tone of sailors’ personality with extraordinarily masculine vigor, and her verse is ready either to move with a steady breeze or to tack and shift effectively as occasion requires. In the later sections of the volume she leaves the dramatic monologue to speak in her own person, more or less, and her admirable technique does not forsake her in the field of conventional lyric. Witness these lines from a charming summary of the elements of Romance:

Fords perilous, and haunted reach and pool,
Far-shining spires under the blaze of noon,
And twilight shrines of visions wonderful,
Dusk, and an angry moon. . . .

Dark crooked streets with lights like peering eyes,
Plotters in half-lit halls of palaces,
Orchards and gardens full of lurking spies,
And whispering passages.

Travail and bondage, battle-flags unfurled,
Earth at the prime, and God earth’s wrongs above,
Honour and hope, youth and the beckoning world,
Peril and war and love!

The two volumes next in view, also from Great Britain, may be viewed as fascinatingly contrasting studies in religious verse. Miss Sayers is steeped in the spirit of mediæval Christianity, and follows everywhere the forms of its literary expression, in ballad, hymn, or miracle-play, but re-writes each of them into daringly modern meanings. Reverence and naïve boldness blend, at times, as in a child’s uses of religious tradition; thus we have verses on the Good Shepherd, quaintly modeled on the nursery-rhyme of Bo-Peep, and others on “Big Brother Christ.” At other times there are deep imaginative conceits which a Donne might have hit upon; for instance, a really thrilling little poem, suggested by the old fairy tale of an ignorant boy who undertook to read a magic scroll; here it is Time blundering through God’s book from alpha to omega. Or, yet again, Miss Sayers turns her ancient matter into satire; and of satire we should not know where to find a keener instrument, in recent literature, than in her deliberately outrageous mystery-play on “The Mocking of Christ.” Packed full of meaning, then, is this singular little volume; but its admiring readers are destined to be few, since they must be possessed of a delicate equilibrium between the love of religious tradition and the ability to transcend its limitations. Miss Doney’s poems, on the other hand, are mystical in a simpler, unhumorous fashion, and if they shock any sensitive soul, it will be because of their intensely feminine fusion (or confusion) of amatory and religious sentiment. Wifehood and motherhood she finds forever suggestive of the Incarnation and the Divine Lover; she would have been of one mind with the theologians who first undertook to interpret the book of Canticles as concerned with the loves of Christ and the Church. Apart from her subject-matter, her verse glows with Irish warmth and color, and easily makes its own melody in the manner of an old song:

I’ve washed my hands in the winds, my dear, to lay
their love on you;
I’ve washed my mouth in the rain, to take your kisses;
I’ve cleansed these eyes, that shall drink your good, in
sight of the silver dew;
And I’m ready to laugh as the white soul of your blisses.

Mr. Scholfield’s volume is of a type which normally stirs, first of all, resentment: its appeal is made to depend upon a friend’s preface in which we learn that the poet is shut up to a life of invalidism. All very well for purposes humane, one thinks, but not poetic. Yet sometimes, as in a few of the “Sonnets from the Portuguese,” and in Lee-Hamilton’s on “The Wingless Hours,” we have learned that there is a legitimate blend of interest in a poem and in the life behind it. Mr. Scholfield’s sonnets cannot for a moment be placed beside those just mentioned, in point of technical attainment; but the sequence presents, with limpid clearness and sincerity, a deeply conceived and deeply moving theme. Its first section depicts in imagination an active life of marital love and paternity; its second the deliberate renunciation of the joys thus vividly apprehended. Everywhere the personality revealed is felt to be one in which character has triumphed nobly over fate; and sometimes this primarily moral value is transfigured into a value truly poetic. Sonnet 111 is such an instance:

No children heirs to my life will be born,
That I should say, In them I shall survive.
If this my all of hope, well might I mourn,
And useless would it seem that I should live.
Nor can I in my trade with friends impart—
As daily in the market-place I wait—
The title to these riches of my heart,
Which do but more and more accumulate.
Must moth and rust and mildew be my heirs,
My joy in gathered store of beauty vain?
And truths be lost, mined by a thousand cares
And melted in the furnace heat of pain?
Nay! I shall sail, when the night wind shall rise,
To a far country with my merchandise.

The Mind of Nietzsche

Nietzsche the Thinker. By William M. Salter. Henry Holt and Company.

THE Nietzsche of the literary tradition and the popular press has been a sort of Peck's Bad Boy of both philosophy and letters. To the *illuminati* of the literary world he has been an object of adoration and quotation; to certain professors of ethics and to space-writers of the Sunday press, he has been a theme of gusty and delicious reprehension. The rebellious were always envisaging life and society as obstacles in their aspirations toward Superhumanity, and the people were always taking a very vicious dialectical fall out of Nietzsche for his nasty animadversions upon the proprieties. It cannot be said that either showed signs of having read him—whether they were members of the cult of "Young Germany" or pseudo-classicists or pedants in coeducational institutions. Out of phrases like "transvaluation of all values," "superman," "will to power," "God is dead," and other such, they wove a garment into which they packed their own aversions, fears, weaknesses, preferences, hopes, impulses, frustrations, and repressions, together with their rationalizations of them, and then called the stuffed doll Nietzsche. The war did not improve the figure so produced. Its mythical redundancies were further padded with nationalisms, militarisms, and cruelties as little pertaining to the mind of the real Nietzsche as the self-revelation of that mind in Nietzsche's work was read or regarded by the German Junkers who were declared throughout the war to have made a gospel and a practice of them. The monstrous mythological figure so brought into being was about as oppugnant to the thinker and his thoughts as anything could be. Indeed, Nietzsche has suffered more misunderstanding and misinterpretation than any other significant intellect of the age. The fault, however, does not lie altogether in the age itself. There was that in Nietzsche's manner and method, that in his substance, which invited, which seduced readers to treat his work exactly as they have treated it. He was in himself too idiosyncratic, too varied and impulsive of utterance, too oracular, not to be constantly touching off passions, hopes, and hatreds, which, once set going in the reader, blind him to other things which the writer has said that are equally there and equally important. Nietzsche fired rather than illuminated his followers, and their renderings of him reveal themselves far more than him.

The great value of Mr. Salter's book, the thing which makes it unique in the voluminous literature of commentary upon Nietzsche, is the fact that he has brought together, in a mosaic of due shades and relevancies and proportions, all the things that Nietzsche has said on the various themes that he honored with his attention, and has revealed the mind of Nietzsche in its substantive structure and articulation. The traditional procedure of the Nietzscheans Mr. Salter always has in mind; and it is natural enough that he seems to understate what is usually overemphasized and to stress what is usually slurred. The result is a portrait, an anatomy or architectonic of Nietzsche's mind admirable in its impersonality, and most extraordinary in its assiduous and painstaking arrangement of multi-fold detail, not an item missed, into the great conceptual patterns of Nietzsche's thought. Thus Mr. Salter has written the best book on Nietzsche that the English language possesses, and it is doubtful whether there is anything in any other language quite equal to it.

How distinguished Mr. Salter's achievement is can be realized only by realizing Nietzsche's temperament and his way of working. He was, throughout the greater part of his life, an invalid, a man with robust constitution marred by an inherited nervous taint. His most comprehensive exercise was thinking, and his thinking was never systematic, ratiocinative, the outcome of studious and painstaking observation and analysis of facts and events. His excellent philologic training had little influence on his philosophic procedure. His sufferings, moods, and impulses

had every influence. They underlie the beat of his prose-rhythms, his oracularity, and the effect of breathlessness and things unspoken which marks much of his writing. This writing can hardly be said to consist of books. It was his wont to set down reflections as they came to him under the specific and irrecoverable impulsions of places, times, circumstances, and passions. In the course of time enough apothegms of a given kind accumulated to make up a volume, and, classified somewhat and arranged, into a volume they were made. Out of the sixteen odd tomes in which Nietzsche's utterance is gathered hardly one exhibits the continuity and architectonic proper to philosophical writing. His health was not equal to the demands of sustained and intensive work of this kind. His whole life was a battle for power over pain. The secret of him, and of his influence, is that he projected his life upon the world. His philosophy is, more peculiarly than most others, a vast pathetic fallacy. It is in essence a perverse kind of salvationism attained by standing Schopenhauer on his head. For in his beginnings Nietzsche was an orthodox and convinced Schopenhauerian. Life, he acknowledged, was will and struggle; to be was to be unhappy. The goal of existence, its eternal and ineluctable terminus, must hence be non-existence, must be the self-negation of the will, its subsidence and self-pacification into Idea—Idea particularly as art and as religion. The Apollonic, as Nietzsche would say, was a higher form of art than the Dionysian. Both the tragedy which is life and the tragedy to which art attains seek escape in the serenities of Apollo from the passions of Dionysus. That escape is salvation, that serenity is easement of the pain of being.

To Nietzsche, however, as he lived out his life, no such easement came; neither by the way of art, nor the way of religion. He found that in order to render life tolerable at all, he needed to feel more at home in the pain of it, to live in pain more abundantly rather than to escape from it. So, by a process of compensatory adjustment, he learned not only to live in pain but to insist that pain was the indispensable condition of living well. His great men, the forerunners and avatars of his Supermen, are all alone-living, pain-bearing, and pain-giving men. To endure pain, to accept and enjoy destruction, not to resist or evade it—that for Nietzsche is salvation. By making the universe the companion of his misery and his misery the metaphysical inwardness of the good, Nietzsche succeeded in easing existence somewhat for himself. His whole teaching might be summed up in the formula which sublimates this process. "Destroy yourself and your neighbor as yourself," is his burden, "in order that something better than both of you may come to be."

It was to be expected that so personally psychological and autobiographical a theory of life as Nietzsche's should be expressed in innumerable inconsistent apothegms infinitely relevant to the unshareable privacies of sentiment, impulse, and inhibition of his readers, but altogether irrelevant to the objective movement of his times. Nietzsche was blind to the actualities both of history and of society. He understood neither the industrial revolution and its social implications nor political democracy. His criticisms and commentaries on the state, society, and social programmes spring from a centre of personal resentment and are colored by a feudal "cultural" rather than an industrial "scientific" psyche. There is nothing of sociological understanding nor societal acumen in them. As bearing on the processes of social change and the real conditions and causes of progress they are simply irrelevant. As a reaction of the autonomous individual to a restraining society, as the poetry of compensation and self-liberation, they are among the more magnificent utterances of the instinctive nature in man. They awaken the desire for freedom, even though they fail to bring an understanding of it. In this is the strength and the weakness of Nietzsche, and it has been Mr. Salter's great merit, without committing himself to one view or another, to transilluminate Nietzsche so as to show his strength and his weakness in the clear.