

of a little Kansas town, awaiting the coming of the night train, which was already twenty minutes overdue." (A Sculptor's Funeral.)

"Everett Hilgarde was conscious that the man across the aisle was looking at him intently." (A Death in the Desert.)

The first-quoted beginnings are later and clearly more expert. They show how, in the management of her reader, Miss Cather has progressed. They also indicate her limitation. It is her admirable gift to discern certain excellent themes and to treat them with fastidiousness and sympathy. It is apparently the paucity of her gift that she does so deliberately, with her inspiration perfectly in hand. The most exciting kind of genius, after all, whether in poetry or prose, meets us "burning bright," like Blake's tiger. This is not the type of genius to expect from Miss Cather. She burns illuminatingly and steadily, but mainly because she is sane and capable. Feeling she has, and romantic glamour, but at no time does she seem easily irradant. For this reason her very effectiveness, her shrewd impersonal security in the arrangement and despatch of her story, has a formality that takes away from the flowing line of real self-expression. Better than the familiar vast ineptitude, this formality. But Miss Cather is perhaps still withholding from her fiction something that is intimate, essential and ultimate. That, in creative art, is the Great Divide.

F. H.

The Soul of a City

*The Golden Book of Springfield, by Vachel Lindsay:
New York: The Macmillan Co.*

HOW many of us, I wonder, have still that little collection of designs and chimes, the golden cover of which is inscribed "The Soul of the City receives the gift of the Holy Spirit," which is signed "Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, rhymers and designer," and which carries the addendum "This tract has been printed by the designer expressly for gratuitous distribution in Springfield, Illinois"? And how many of us have still that little pamphlet with golden design and lettering "In Memorial of Lincoln, called The Hero of Time"? The tract and the pamphlet are by a less famous Lindsay, but they form the first draft of the book that comes at the moment of Lindsay's greatest celebrity—The Golden Book of Springfield.

Perhaps the most sheerly eloquent work that the poet has given us is the verses that are the Memorial to Lincoln. They are in the form of inscriptions for the heroes of all time, and when we know who these heroes are we know the patron saints of the prophet of the new Springfield. The heroes of time are Rameses II, Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Phidias, Socrates, Caesar, Christ, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Mohammed, St. Francis of Assisi, Dante, Columbus, Michaelangelo, Titian, Shakespeare, Milton, Cromwell, Napoleon, Lincoln. The epilogue is an address to the young men of Illinois.—

Nay, I would have you grand, and still forgot,
Hid like the stars at noon, as he who set
The Egyptian magic of man's alphabet;
Or that far Coptic, first to dream in pain
That dauntless souls cannot by death be slain—
Conquering for all men then the fearful grave.
God keep us hid, yet vaster far, than death.
God help us to be brave.

The foreword to *The Soul of the City* runs:—

The pictures of certain public buildings that appear here are used as hieroglyphics of the body and soul of the

place. They come in the following order: Abraham Lincoln's Residence; the Lincoln Monument; the Immaculate Conception Church (Catholic); the First Presbyterian Church; the Sangamon County Court House (once the State House where Lincoln was a Legislator); the present State House; the High School Building; the Hall of Horticulture at the State Fair. The institutions enshrined in these buildings and in many others, are becoming wonderful in their inner spirit. Soon the city shall be rebuilt in splendor.

It might be said that these are the words that really begin *The Golden Book of Springfield*.

The poet is earnest still, but perhaps not so deeply, not so youthfully earnest. Instead of ringing chimes from steeples he now walks the streets of the city. But his dream of heroism is in the traffickings of the street. "I ask to be forgiven if I am jealous of the furious and romantic years just coming on," says a statesman in the new book—a statesman who is looking towards the years after 2018. Is it not the failure of the great books that, before Democratic Vistas, anticipated future societies, that they shadowed forth nothing furious and romantic in the years? And is it not a measure of Vachel Lindsay's achievement that he can make us jealous of the year 2018?

The *Golden Book of Springfield* is a story interpolated with visions and inspiring speeches. The visions and the speeches are more exciting than the story; they are the core of the book: indeed, they make the Koran that is embedded in—the Koran that perhaps is—The *Golden Book of Springfield*.

I wonder if Vachel Lindsay realizes how much closer he is to Mohammed's book of visions and speeches than he is to the book that is mentioned with the greatest honor—St. Augustine's *City of God*? "Paradise is in the shadow of the crossing Swords" says Mohammed, making us know that in the spirit and in the world there must be room for exploit. Vachel Lindsay provides the room—at least he shows us that in the Springfield of a hundred years hence the room has not been narrowed: there are still classes and sects; there are clans, even; great wars loom ahead; there is youth—youth that takes its measure from Walt Whitman's *Vistas*—"fresh, ardent, emotional, aspiring, full of adventure."

Mohammed would surely approve of the abstinence of the Faithful in the Springfield of 2018. They drink coffee, but wine is prohibited. There is dancing in Springfield, but there is no wine; there is feasting, but there is no wine; there is song, but there is no wine; there is love-making, but there is no wine. So fiercely Moslem is Vachel Lindsay that he lets us see wine only in the hands of the Giour—the Man from Singapore is served with the black wine of Siam; and the heretical dynasts—were there not such in Bagdad?—who were never really with the Faithful, have hidden stores of alcohol with which they are still able to corrupt the world. Like Mohammed Vachel Lindsay has been to Heaven and has brought back an awakening account of the place. But "the black eyed girls in green" of Mohammed's faith are on earth—magnificent young virgins who, under the leadership of Avenel, the heroine of the book, ride horses and flash swords.

The opening chapters of the *Golden Book of Springfield* are prosaic. There does not seem to be spring enough in the board that Vachel Lindsay drags out. To vary the metaphor he is slow about bringing out Mohammed's horse. It is only in chapter five, with the coming of the girl Avenel, that the history begins to be exciting. There are sensational happenings thereafter, but it is the visions and the descriptions of things seen that make the other chapters

memorable—the Sunset Towers that are the centre of the star-plan system of the new Springfield; the great vine of the Apple Amaranth; Avenel on her white horse; the appearance of Mara, the Singaporian beauty, in her langours; the vision of Prince Siddhartha; the girls on horseback in their Diana mood; and then the awakening description of Heaven—how Avenel and her lover, ascending the Amaranth Vine, discover that Heaven had become a jungle because the Angels had all descended into the stars so that their crucifixions might again redeem.

I am glad that Vachel Lindsay has given visions instead of details of social life—they would have been imaginary anyway. I am glad I am not asked to note how the Samarai of 2018 have themselves card-indexed. I am glad that I am not shown a world altered beyond our recognition. After all, the best that a poet can do in a book such as this is to embody in a striking way some universal idea; Mohammed embodied the idea of justice, Saint Augustine embodied the idea of sanctity in social life, "A.E." in *The National Being* has embodied the idea of brotherhood. The idea, I take it, that Vachel Lindsay strives to embody is the idea of tolerance.

In the Springfield of 2018 there are whites and blacks; there are Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Christian Scientists. They have come to terms, or they are coming to terms, with each other's creeds and herediments. Each one's religion and each one's racial gift in being allowed to flow unimpeded, thus making for a richer social and spiritual life. Fanaticism has not been expunged, but it is now directed against the followers of the Cocaine Buddha and the enemies of the World Government. Race and family, and the traditions of race and family are gloried in. Vachel Lindsay puts forward a generous Americanism—a creed that is not exclusive, but catholic and inclusive. "The mystery of race," declares the American senator of the World Government, is first of all a sex mystery.—

And with endless subtleties settled by instinct, on which no man can dogmatize though they have caused jealous Othello to misunderstand and kill Desdemona, and Jessica to understand and wed Lorenzo, from the beginning. If race is first of all a sex mystery, it is next a religious mystery, which is more easily expounded, from the standpoint of politics, and touches, perhaps more clearly, our theory of World Government. The prayers at our family altars differ in tone and accent. The races with a turn for sectarianism, like the Scotch, are still working in our blood, while others are the mainstay of the Cathedral. All phases of the race—the religious mystery, moving in harmony, cleanness and self-respect are not only a part of Springfield's total personality, but of Springfield's government, in the midst of apparent mob law.

I am glad that Vachel Lindsay approaches the human problem in his Utopia, not from the side of social machinery, but from the side of the soul. Says the preacher in the Cathedral:—

Springfield has no tenements, but until the life of the United States outside of Springfield has its larger hours of leisure and more green clear spaces in which to cultivate codes and fine observances between boy and girl, the custom of selling the young girls to the slaughter will leap over the double Gothic walls and invade those groves and parks we call 'Springfield.' . . . There is only one issue for sweethearts—honor or dishonor, citizen or slave.

I should have liked Vachel Lindsay to have been influ-

enced a little by a constitution made by another poet for what was the Free State of Fiume. I should have liked to have met in print again that tenth Corporation of Workers that has 'neither art, nor number, nor title. Its coming is expected like that of the Tenth Muse. It is reserved to the mysterious forces of the people in toil and attainment. It is almost a votive figure consecrated . . . to the complete liberation of the spirit over pain and agony, over blood and sweat.'

PADRAIC COLUM

American Political Ideas

American Political Ideas, 1865-1917, by Charles Edward Merriam. New York: The Macmillan Company.

ON reading Merriam's book about American political ideas, one cannot help contrasting it with recent summaries of English thought by Laski and Barker. Across the sea, great landmarks like Locke, Burke, Bentham, Mill, and Spencer, determine the span of books. In America it is the fleeting years. There authors acquit themselves nobly by analyzing the systems of a few heroic figures. Here Merriam finds no Mills or Spencers but a veritable army of scribes, philosophers, and rhetoricians. Instead of building his chapters around the ideas of a few superior persons he summons to the court of discussion a great democracy of professors, politicians, judges, publicists, and editors.

The result is a digest of American debate on the issues current since 1865. There are, it is true, occasional summaries of contributions in general by men like Burgess, Sumner, and Veblen; but the main part of the pile is made out of the driftwood of five decades. In these pages we may discover what was thought by many persons great and small about suffrage (woman and Negro), the short ballot, direct government, the merits and demerits of legislative or executive supremacy, the individualistic doctrines of the courts, the recall of judges, changes in our form of government, nationalism and municipal home rule, bosses and primaries, pacifism and militarism, laissez-faire and socialism, and all the rest of the questions that have vexed us since Grant met Lee at Appomattox. Nothing has escaped Merriam's net. Nobody who was vocal during these years has eluded him. Finally, to make sure that all was weather tight he covered the academic associations and their doings; likewise the poets, novelists, and the singers of sweet songs. Jack London jostles Sumner and Dooley rubs elbows with Seligman. Perhaps after all there is some significance in this. Democracy insists on doing its own varied thinking. It resents Lockes, Burkes, and Mills. And why not? Do not the giants, the systematists, merely attempt to fix the process of history in a pattern of words, and thus unwittingly expose a complex of things really in transition more clearly to the slings and arrows of its opponents? In America everybody must have his fling. Political philosophy seems to be a great armory of logic, history, sociology, economics, theology, law, biology, and what not, from which each critic or protagonist, high or low, selects the weapons best fitted for his particular salient in the universal Kilkenny of talk.

Godkin scolds, weeps, and wrings his hands; Hyland is mayor in 1920. A distinguished lawyer threatens us with Magna Carta (the Latin of which he probably could