

Mr. Morton's Roses

Ships in Harbor, by David Morton. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

WHAT shall we say of Mr. David Morton, who has had so much praise of late? Mr. Morton is a prosperous and contented young man reading Masefield's sonnets on the wide verandah of a happy American home. The florid summer is about him; the soothing whir of the lawn-mower is heard. It occurs to him that he, too, can write sonnets, so he tries his hand at one, noting that much can be done by Mr. Masefield with words like "April," "Beauty" and "roses." His sonnet comes off so well that he straightway writes another—and another and another, till he has composed no less than eighty-four. These he publishes as a book.

But where Masefield has written:

"Before the smile upon the Sphinx was cold
Or sand had hid the Syrian and his arts"

Mr. Morton writes:

"When wine-red poppies stained the walls of Rome
And daisies starred those summer fields of Thrace."

(This particular sonnet of Masefield's, by the way, seems to have made a great impression upon Mr. Morton. He rewrites other parts of it as follows: for the opening "Roses are beauty," he echoes "Moonlight is memory" and for "Those women, who were roses in men's hearts," "Some Summer that was roses in his heart.") Mr. Morton, on his shady verandah, cannot squeeze out a single authentic Masefieldian *lacrima rerum*; for him there are only roses . . . roses . . . ships . . . ships . . . Troy . . . magic . . . music . . . old, old . . . Helen . . . Rome . . . blossoms . . . Camelot . . . Summer . . . Spring . . . April . . . April . . . June . . . June . . . roses . . . lovers ships . . . One wishes that Mr. Morton would have less to say about Greece and Rome and learn a little classic integrity of style from them. He is at his most characteristic when he is coupling the name of Athens with that of Morristown, New Jersey.

The Little Old House

The Little Old House, by Anna Wickham. London: The Poetry Bookshop.

ANNA WICKHAM is surely one of the most interesting poets now writing in England. *The Little Old House* is on the whole not so poignant as *The Contemplative Quarry* and *The Man with a Hammer*; it is the work of an older woman; the worst of the bewildering struggle between the woman as wife and mother and the woman as independent intelligence is over now and she no longer tears out our hearts so often with the passion of her surrender and the pride of her revolt; but as the latest instalment of the journal of an intense and original personality, it is extraordinarily interesting. The most striking thing about Mrs. Wickham is the reality of her emotions; when you read a poem of hers you feel not that you are getting a successful literary product prompted by an emotion and executed according to the best models, but that you are getting the emotion itself almost disturbingly warm and alive, with no veils of literature between you and it. Actually, of course, her poems are remarkable

technical successes: instead of the ultimate appearance of of the emotion's being determined by traditional form, as in the case of the ordinary even very good poet, the emotion is so urgent and swift and strong that it has invented its own language; it finds the right words because it demands them so fiercely. And that language is like nothing else in the world (unless perhaps Blake, a little). With its naïveté and its fierceness, its broken rhythms and unliterary use of prosaic words and turns of phrase, it is, like the greatest lyric poetry, a passionate human voice,—a bright-eyed woman speaking, hastily, hotly, tenderly, eager to give her lover pleasure, detesting the routine of domestic life, too proud to lose her soul for love, too much aware of truth to be romantic and finally brought by love to see the world, simple and bright, through the eyes of her children.

The following little poem is characteristic of this latest book, which is more concerned with the lives of people other than the poet herself than her previous books have been:

THE PERFORMANCE

When we played a Greek play to the poor,
A fat old woman quickly sought the door.
She looked like a sad black beetle in her old shawl,
A creature that one could not educate at all.
I shall go back to Plaiston before long.
And sing that woman just a silly funny song.

Selected Current Books

The Truth About the Treaty, by André Tardieu. Bobbs-Merrill.

An account of the Peace Conference and a defense of the Treaty by the former French High Commissioner to the United States and delegate to the Peace Conference.

The Man Who Did the Right Thing, by Sir Harry Johnston. Macmillan.

A Romance, by the author of *The Gay-Dombeys* and *Mrs. Warren's Daughter*.

The Emperor Jones, *Diff'rent* and *The Straw*, by Eugene G. O'Neill. Boni and Liveright.

Three plays by the most interesting of American dramatists.

The Provincetown Plays, edited by George Cram Cook and Frank Shay.

A selection from the plays produced in New York by the Provincetown Players. The volume includes *The Widow's Veil*, *Night*, *Suppressed Desires*, *Bound East for Cardiff*, *Aria da Capo*, *String of the Samisen*, *Not Smart*, *The Angel Intrudes*, *Enemies*, and *Cocaine*.

Human Behavior, by Stewart Paton. Scribner's.

A work on human behavior "in relation to the study of educational, social and ethical problems."

Contributors

PAUL BLANSHARD is director of the Rochester Labor College of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

LYTTON STRACHEY is the author of *Eminent Victorians*.

PAUL ROSENFELD is a graduate of Yale University. He has contributed numerous critical articles on art and music to the *New Republic*, the *Dial* and the *Freeman*. He is the author of *Musical Portraits*.

EDITH J. R. ISAACS, a writer on woman and economics, is the editor of the *Theatre Arts Magazine*.