

easy, riding in cars." At last he reaches the coast, and with it a lyric pitch—

This is a sonnet to the Santa Clara prune.

Many years ago there was published a thick green book called *The Poets of Maine*. It can still be bought, for fifty cents. Some four hundred poets contributed to it, and at that time they must have amounted to nearly one percent of the state's total population. Unfortunately the book does not fulfill the promise of its name. There's nothing in it so good as the poetry of either Mr. Stimson, Mr. Newsom, or Mr. Melby.

There are stations, in this Territory of Poetry, at which one alights to feel a pang of something between pity and respect, and where one gets quickly on board again without a smile. Such is *The Silent Chord*, by the Rev. J. Dimpfl (Boston: The Stratford Company. \$1.25). We meet here old friends like "the riven mast," the "age scarred hills," and their inevitable companion, the "murmuring rills." We have the first cousin of other old friends: "The sun was glad when the dewdrop smiled," and many another worn pleasant phrase, hopelessly echoing worn, pleasant, friendly emotions. But even when exploring the very minor leagues of poetry one has preferences among the players. And Mr. Dimpfl is to be preferred to the *Land of Beginning Again* (by Louisa Fletcher. Boston: Small Maynard & Co.) because he is not pretentious. He never says anything like "my theme grows thunderous and my urge immense." He wouldn't think of summing up *Life* in this way: "Art at a distance stands to gaze; Bent history writes at her feet; Music close nestles to her heart, Poesy—cheek to cheek." (We thought Terpsichore alone did this nowadays.) Yet there are goodish traces in *The Land of Beginning Again*—flickerings of feeling and intelligence in the poem on Debussy.

It is high time we hit upon something with a modern note. It pierces here and there in Loureine Aber's *We Are the Musk Chasers* (Chicago: Ralph Fletcher Seymour), in a sort of emotional shorthand, in the constant recurrence of "hands," "fingertips" and "lips," in such lines as "The frank beauty of my body as it comes dripping from the bath." Not really a bit modern though—or she would not say "There is so much of wondering in every dinky thing." That's it: dinky; and also ice-creamish, and salt in the ice-cream. Mr. Ivor Winter's very slim *The Magpie's Shadow* (Chicago: Musterbrookhouse) is "modern" in a quite different way. On each page there is a title, and one line, such as "Winter Echo—Thin air! My wind is gone." One or two of the pages are completely naked. At the rate of nulla dies sine linea Mr. Winters spent a month on this volume. In yet another way Mr. S. A. De Witt (*Iron Monger*. New York: Frank Shay and Co. \$1.25) is also modern. The green-cellar-at-midnight-with-gargoyles kind: "Last night I overheard you chatting with a maggot." Occasionally he is arresting:

A negro Cyclops with one blind eye
Gropes in a dead swamp
Through swarms of fireflies.

By this time one is a little tired of casual travelling in the Poetry land of today. It is discouraging work. But there is some encouragement for these poets to be found in the poetry of the past, in this line, for instance,

Jones! As from Calais southward you and I

which was written by Wordsworth.

After swallowing much feeble poetry one loses all ability to recognize what may be good. It is a predicament a little like the professional tea-taster's.

With this difference: that the lucky tea-taster can spit the tea out again.

ROBERT LITTELL.

Japanese American Relations

Japanese American Relations, by Iichiro Tokutomi. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.50.

YOU savor the quality of this book when you run through its pages and come to a chapter heading: *The So-called Shantung Question*, and under it the opening sentence: "The so-called Shantung question is a farce framed up at the very beginning of last year (1919) by Vi Kyuin Wellington Koo, C. T. Wong, Lansing, the then Secretary of State of the United States, and others." If you know much about Japan you will then have read enough to know all that the author has to say and all that he thinks. I did. On reading the first three pages I could have closed the book and recited the rest of it so that the author would hardly have known I was not reading aloud.

You will know that he will talk of the westward sweep of the thirteen colonies to the Mississippi; then the war on Mexico and the rape of Texas and California; then the sweep westward to the Pacific and then the annexation of Hawaii; then the Spanish-American war and the seizure of the Philippines, Cuba and Porto Rico. You know that he will say that the anti-Japanese feeling in China is the result of American incitation, as witness Shantung, whence America conspires to drive out Japan so that it may have the province as well as the rest of China; and that American insistence that Japan evacuate Siberia is due to America's design to conquer that, too. You know that he will dwell indignantly on America's exclusion of Japanese immigrants and then work up to a grand climax: America, locking its own continent against Japanese, simultaneously conspires to bar Japan out of its own continent, pinioning its starving inhabitants in their little islands. Thus he will explain all the questions growing out of Japan's actions in Shantung and elsewhere in China, in Korea, in Siberia. All American machinations. The Siberians, the Koreans, the Chinese don't mind at all.

In a sense this is unfair criticism. It is like saying that *Hamlet* is dull because it is so full of old saws. For Mr. Tokutomi is one of the major prophets of the school of thought of which the foregoing is the first principle. He is the foremost stylist and newspaper essayist in Japan, a member of the House of Peers and the editor of the *Kokumin Shimbun*, a Tokio daily of considerable influence. It is only because of his personality that his book is worth notice at all.

If there is any other reason, it is that there is so large an element of truth in his j'accuse, and for Americans it is good to know that only within their own borders does their country figure as the pure and spotless Columbia holding judgment on a peccant world. So one welcomes Mr. Tokutomi's unillusioned thinking and blunt speaking, particularly as contrasted with the soapy blandishments of the

pseudo-liberal Japanese who generally write for American consumption. There is a commendable forthright honesty in Mr. Tokutomi's insistence that England has befriended Japan only out of self-interest, that America has opposed Japan only out of self-interest and that Japan should act with respect to both and to the Far East only out of self-interest, for self-interest is the highest law of nationalities. But there his honesty ceases. He does not apply it equally to Japan itself. He does not say that in self-interest and self-protection Japan must subjugate China and Siberia and hold command of Asia. You would admire him for that. Instead he repeats the old cant about the over-population bursting the bounds of Japan and forcing it to expand—regretfully, of course. In that he is as dishonest as all the apologists for Japanese militarism. In fact, whenever you find a Japanese inveighing against American imperialism and American exclusion of Japanese immigrants you may be sure he is puffing a smoke screen over Japanese imperialistic aggressions, even insofar as his charges can be substantiated.

Nevertheless, one welcomes the opportunity to see as here in this book what has formed Japan's political thinking, and simultaneously utters a prayer of gratitude that the influence of the Tokutomis has begun to wane in Japan.

NATHANIEL PEPPER.

George Sylvester Viereck, Gedichte. Mit Einer Einführung von Eduard Engel. Leipzig: Hesse und Becker Verlag.

MR. GEORGE SYLVESTER VIERECK, who received much favorable notice from many critics when *The Candle and the Flame* appeared in 1912, has followed his unnoticed *Songs of Armageddon* (1916) with a collection of verse written in and translated into his native tongue. As this collection comes from Leipzig it would seem that its publication is in response to a demand from the country of Goethe for such poems as *Die Sieger* and *An den Friedensfürsten Wilhelm II.* It is to be hoped that such is not the case and that some critic with German blood in his veins will tell Mr. Viereck unequivocally that prolonged residence in America has ruined the poet that was in him.

R. H.

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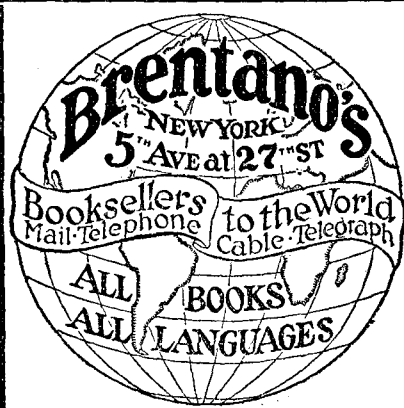
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