

puffing out his cheeks at the corners of his lips.

I patiently explained that I had come all the way from America to gaze upon the sea at this particular spot—I avoided the subject of dead poets; that I had walked these many miles just for that purpose. I waxed eloquent—or at least he pitied me.

"But you can't leave this main road," he said, but more kindly. "Still, I suppose that if you kept close to the fence—not an inch away—it might not be construed as leaving the road; it might be construed that you were following the road if it did keep going."

He stuck his hand through the fence. I seized and shook it heartily. He licked his thick lips and gave me a hurt glance. So I shook his hand again, more genteelly, with less American gusto, and then—of course—I slipped a two-line note into his palm (not quite ten cents at present exchange rates). He beamed shinily, and I followed the road that was not a road.

"And, whatever you do," he called after me, "don't go in bathing. That is highly treasonable. All this coast is reserved for the King."

I thanked him again and continued along the fence, dodging around deserted concrete sentry-boxes until I came at last to the Ligurian Sea.

The greenest of green seas and a forlorn sandy shore—this is the outlook from Gombo. Save for the royal bathing pavilion, thatched and weatherbeaten, save for a rickety diving pier and three or four palm-leaf shooting blinds, the coast stretches for miles without a sign of human handiwork; only far south, at the mouth of the Arno, the village of Marina is a fleck of gold on the white sands. My gaze wandered out over the green, green sea to the tiny purple island of Gorgona, then, swinging about the palest of blue horizon circles, rested upon the hazy mountains beyond Lerici—that never-reached goal.

My mood changed—one of those quick shifts in the human feelings that transforms the whole aspect of the universe. The spirit of the lost poet hovered over the shore, investing it with pathos and solemnity. His impassioned and meteoric career flashed before my retrospection. The waves rose and broke with that same austere and relentless rhythm which cadences the last and sublime passage of "Prometheus."

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;

This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

And telling over these last lines, I was possessed by a burning urge to feel the sea against my chest, the same sea that had taken his life. I was sweating; I was parched with a thirst that the lukewarm water from my canteen would not allay. All the King's horses and all the



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

From a crayon copy of Miss Curran's oil portrait in the Bodleian Library

King's men would have had to stand between me and those low diving Mediterranean breakers. Quicker than the telling, I was running into the surf; and a dashing wave broke in a dazzle of spray over my head, and a quick delicious chill shot through my body. Glorious—for a second.

But all the time I was thinking of Shelley; of the catastrophic blow with which nature had felled him as a lesson in real charity to those whose bigotry had helped to drive him into exile; of the momentary peace and relaxation, perhaps, with which he had set sail that clear, hot morning a hundred years ago. I thought of the mockery of that last ambitious and unfinished poem, "The Triumph of Life," for fate, it would seem, had determined to punish the audacity of his having seized upon such a theme. I thought of the story of Job which he was planning to put in metrical dress, and I wondered whether the Job he might have created would have been a greater soul even than Prometheus—a soul whose lofty patience would ultimately have shamed an unjust tribal god into righteousness; who would have hoped as did Prometheus until hope created from its own wreck the thing it contemplated; who would thus have achieved spiritual liberation, even as Shelley had done during those years when English public opinion was tearing at his vitals. I imagined the poet pondering over this great new poem, matching its rhythm with the pulse of the sea he was riding, a pulse which quickened to violent fury, and I visual-

ized his own life enacting the tragedy he might have written.

And suddenly the very salt of the sea seemed to carry the tang of his spilled blood, and the sea had grown more warm than the surrounding air. I was being bathed in something more than sea, and the surf beating on the shore seemed still to carry the echo of his dying cries. I ran naked up the shore, shaking the big drops from my body with something like fright. Panting, I lay down in the sun to dry.

All around the horizon the clouds were puffing up into the azure sky, but their stalks were black, like those of white mushrooms springing from mire. And almost in awe, I watched the gathering storm, wondering what poet—this hundred years later, when the world is once more a fury of hate and destruction—what poet, what great soul is, perchance, perishing to whom the world will some day pay its belated homage.

And my hand fell upon a heap of purple shells; white on the back, purple in the hollow, and where the purple melted into white their texture was like the skin of a beautiful woman—or a poet—beneath which delicate veins flowed with rich life. Were I living in a less practical-minded age, I might have imagined that the gods had willed that the shells on this coast be forever tinted with the blood that had pulsed from the great "*cor cordium*." Certainly the blood in the veins of Shelley was of royal purple, more royal than that of the kings of the House of Savoy who have usurped the shore where he died; for, though there are greater poets than Shelley, he, and perhaps he alone, stands with Dante in loftiness, purity, steadfastness of soul, unshaken honesty of purpose, and unflinching idealism.

And when I had dressed and tramped back around the road that was not a road and the road that was a road; when I finally redeemed my kodak, I gave the green-plumed warden two purple shells.

"These," I told him, "are worth more than all the lire ever printed by the Banca d'Italia, for they are tinted with the blood of a poet."

And now I know the perplexed fellow believes me mad. Purple shells! Purple shells and an afternoon filled with the glamour of departed greatness. Purple shells and dreams.

Florence, Italy.

THE NEW BOOKS

POETRY

BALLAD-MAKER'S PACK (A). By Arthur Guiterman. Harper & Brothers, New York. \$2.

If Arthur Guiterman's poetry was as perfect as his rhymes, he would be the finest poet in America. But, alas for Arthur Guiterman! it is not so. "A Ballad Maker's Pack," for instance, affords the reader a deal of dexterous matter in point of technique, but rarely ever is that unexplainable urge which

transmutes verse into authentic poetry to be discovered. His grace and spontaneity should be perceptible to all; his facility is undoubted. It is a fatal facility, however, and it would undoubtedly be better for the versifier if his stanzas did not come so easily. He writes about everything in the 260 pages of his book—sentimental verses, patriotic effusions, legends, peeps at other

lands, nature verse, anything the reader desires. The plethora is so great that it is impossible to give a fair estimate of the writer by quotation.

DRAMA
WHITEHEADED BOY (THE). By Lennox Robinson. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. \$1.75.

Those people who witnessed the production of Lennox Robinson's amusing

three-act comedy by the Irish Players last season will hardly need any comment relative to the play. "The White-headed Boy" is fairly representative of the contemporary manner of the Irish stage. No small part of its success is due to the mellow drollery of the dialogue, which is distinguished by a delightfully light touch. It sets off admirably the apt character.

THE MAIL BAG

BIRDS AS MONEY SAVERS

IN the issue of The Outlook for June 21 I read with interest "How Birds May Save a Billion Dollars' Worth of Foodstuffs a Year." As a lover and protector of bird life, I heartily agree with all Mr. Moulton says except his statement in regard to the bob-white. He says: "The policy of absolute protection recently adopted by one of the States is not called for by strictly economic considerations." Doubtless he refers to Ohio, and I want to say that with us it was a policy of absolute protection or extinction.

Ohio is a great industrial as well as agricultural State. Towns and cities are close together, and our farms are overrun by hunters and trespassers, many of whom hunt without permission of the landowner and assume that everything is free in the country. Can you imagine the feelings of a farmer who had found a little flock of frightened quail on his farm, petted and fed them through an ice-bound winter, only to have them ruthlessly exterminated during the open season the following fall? Persecuted as they were by dog and gun, the time came when they were rarely seen, except now and then one with a broken wing or a leg shot off that had escaped the hunter's bag to die of pain and starvation.

We farm folks know that the bob-white is our most faithful ally in our endless war on weeds and insect pests; we know too that bob-white never did a harmful thing in his life, and that the meat on his little breast would never pay for the ammunition and time required to kill him. Largely through the efforts of the Ohio State Grange, State Senator C. A. White of Lisbon, Ohio, and the farmers of the State generally, a law was finally enacted putting bob-white on the song-bird list, where he should be. A few years of protection and two open winters have increased his kind wonderfully. They step daintily and fearlessly about our premises now, even condescending to answer our rather inferior whistle, and we are proud of their friendly confidence.

Sportsmen and manufacturers of ammunition are making a desperate effort to get them back on the game-bird list. Some of their arguments might be amusing if they were not so maliciously false.

One is that the bird, being so very prolific, will soon become more numerous than the country can support. We reply that when they do will be time enough to begin the slaughter. Another is that, since they are no longer valued as game birds, they are becoming extinct through starvation and neglect; yet it is an undeniable fact that they are many times as numerous as they were when on the game list. Another is that unless the coveys are shot to pieces annually the species will deteriorate through inbreeding and eventually become extinct; and we are moved to inquire sarcastically how they think Mother Nature ever managed to run her business before they came on the scene with a shotgun.

If sportsmen want to do the country an economic favor, let them have an open season the year around for rabbits and red squirrels, for these two pests destroy billions of dollars' worth of foodstuffs annually and do no perceptible good. Or, if they must shoot birds, let them try their marksmanship on blue jays and English sparrows, whose vices outnumber their virtues and who do their utmost to drive out more desirable birds.

In winter droves of juncos, titmice,

chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, five or six different varieties of woodpeckers, and a few cardinals come to the writer's home for feed. We hang suet and bones on trees about the house, and even on the back porch, where the smaller birds, especially chickadees, come quite fearlessly. A high shelf on the porch is kept supplied with crumbs, and some are scattered on the ground, for juncos prefer crumbs and will eat meat only as a last resort. An ear of easy-shelling corn is fastened on a window ledge for the cardinals, as this is the only place we have found where the jays, sensing our hostility, will not molest them. Evergreen trees afford a welcome shelter for all.

In the springtime horsehair, bits of string, cotton, and other nest-building material scattered about help to attract the migratory birds. A hollow behind our house, with a stream of spring water and scattered forest trees interspersed with cherry and mulberry, makes a paradise for more birds than I have time or space to mention here. All summer long they furnish us with exquisite music and protection for garden and orchards. It is well worth any one's while to cultivate the friendship of birds.

MARY CALDWELL.

Leetonia, Ohio.

COLONEL THOMPSON DEFENDS THE A. A. U. AND REPLIES TO "AMERICA'S BOSS-RIDDEN ATHLETICS"

IN The Outlook of April 19 you printed an article by Newton Fuessle, called "America's Boss-Ridden Athletics," and featured it on your title-page.

In this article Mr. Fuessle refers to the American Olympic Association as an arm of and a "subsidiary of the Amateur Athletic Union," and makes a series of grave charges against the A. A. U. By featuring Mr. Fuessle's article The Outlook indorses his charges, and as The Outlook passes into the libraries of the best element in the country, these charges, if unanswered, remain a continuing charge which must necessarily weaken the influence of the American Olympic Association, and therefore I ask you to publish the following statement.

The A. O. A. was organized to promote the Olympic Games—that is, inter-

national amateur sports—to encourage every American youth, not merely to better his muscular development, but to make the best possible body that the thews and sinews given him by God and his ancestors will permit; to elevate and broaden the standards by which athletes to compete in the games are chosen; and to kindle in their souls such a love and respect for the United States that the world will say, as Baron de Coubertin, creator and President of the International Olympic Committee, said of our 1912 team at Stockholm: "Until your teams are animated by the same patriotism which controls the representatives of the United States you cannot hope to compete with them."

If all the organizations that participated in the meeting of November 25,