

## The New Books

## Poetry

(Continued from preceding page)

**VIRGIL.** The Georgics in English Hexameters by C. W. BRODRIBB. Appleton. 1929.

When Quintus Ennius took to writing Latin verse based on quantity, after the Greek fashion, the production must have sounded very strange to his contemporaries and the writers of the old Saturnian meter doubtless felt that it was a silly innovation. But, since it happened that Ennius was a genius and that Latin literature before him had been, to say the least, meager, his experiment actually persisted, and for centuries Latin poetry was written in a medium essentially foreign to the genius of the language. Had Chaucer undertaken a similar piece of pioneering we might now be perfectly accustomed to conventions decreeing that the syllable "and" should be twice as long as the syllable "the." But it is too late now. For better or worse (surely for better!) the pattern of English poetry is made by stress accent and not by quantity, and experiments in English quantitative verse remain experiments only. Nevertheless, they may have great interest as such, and not a little beauty of an exotic sort.

The use of such verse for the translation of Virgil is a clever idea. The meter of the original gives it so fair an excuse. It was also well to choose the Georgics instead of the "Æneid." Three lines from the Second Book will illustrate the tone of the work.

*Blest, aye blest to excess, knew they how  
goodly the portion  
Earth giveth her farmers! who afield  
where war's din is heard not,  
Find ready there the living that she most  
justly awards them!*

This is a fair average sample both as to dignity of movement and literary quality. The first line goes with entire smoothness, we accept the medium with pleasure. But in the second and third lines there are difficulties. "Her" must be a long syllable *metri causa* and in real life it is not. The trouble is not that we are too little sensitive to quantity, but that we are too exacting. "Blest" is a long syllable that anyone may subscribe to, but the "ing" of "living" is not. True, it is longer than the "ly" of "justly," but that is not enough. The way to find out what are the true longs and shorts of the English language is to write patter songs. If you can do it as well as Gilbert you may then be graduated to hexameters. Of course, Mr. Brodrigg will retort that his longs and shorts are as nearly real as the Latin ones, and that is true. But the difference is with the convention. The Romans could listen with tolerance to a medium sized syllable being pulled out into a long one, but it makes us nervous. However, anyone who reads this translation aloud will find that there is real value in it, even if it gives him a slight feeling of standing on his head.

**PINDAR'S ODES OF VICTORY:** The Olympian and Pythian Odes with an Introduction and a Translation into English Verse. By C. J. BILLSON. Houghton Mifflin. 1929.

It is good that the most splendid of Greek poets should be presented in this sumptuous fashion. Fine printing is highly appropriate to Pindar, whose life and works both testify to the value he put upon magnificence. If any rumors of the Shakespeare Head Press penetrate to the Elysian fields, the Theban Eagle must be well pleased at the dignity with which he is clothed by this remote generation. Also his few but ardent devotees, who so seldom meet with a Greek text which is a pleasure to the eye, will be grateful for this page as a worthy presentation of great poetry. The text, which includes only the Olympian and Pythian Odes, is unencumbered with the critical apparatus which, necessary as it is from a scholarly point of view, is a sad

distraction from the poetry. A short introduction and brief prefatory notes to the individual odes furnish the *sine qua non* of commentary, and opposite the text is printed a verse translation by C. J. Billson. This translation is a notable achievement. It is by no means the first attempt to render Pindar into English meter, but it certainly is the most nearly satisfactory. It is sufficiently close so that Pindar's thought is not seriously distorted, but it frankly sacrifices meticulous accuracy to literary quality, with the result that it has the style and spirit of an independent piece of verse. It would be a mistake to suggest that it is verse of the quality of the original, and it is a question how many English readers it will convince that Pindar is a really great poet, but it does furnish a very readable version of the most difficult of all poets to translate, a degree of success of which Mr. Billson has every reason to be proud. The illustrations are evidently supposed to be archaic Greek in style, but this is a dreadful mistake.

**POETRY OF THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE.** By J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson. Crofts. \$5.

**A VIRGIN'S DREAM.** By Max Ehrmann. Terre Haute: Indiana Publishing Co.

**SONNETS.** By George Henry Boker. Edited by Edward Sculley Bradley. University of Pennsylvania Press. \$2.

**THE VOICE OF GOD.** By George G. Cox. Champaign, Ill.: Flanigan-Pearson Co. \$2.

**DUETS IN VERSE.** By Marie Sylvia and William Wilkie Edgar. Ottawa: Graphic Publishers.

**AN HOUR OF AMERICAN POETRY.** By Charles Edward Russell. Lippincott. \$1.

**DUST AND COBBLES.** By Iva H. Drew. Boston: Ball.

## Travel

**ALTAI-HIMALAYA.** By NICHOLAS ROERICH. Stokes. 1929. \$5.

An expedition from India through Chinese Turkestan, Siberia, Mongolia, Tibet, and Western China, led by a noted artist and philosopher, through almost unknown lands, high Himalayan passes and Central Asian deserts, promises much of interest to readers of stories of adventure, as well as to students of humanity and scientists. Disjointed notes from a diary, containing much irrelevant material, however, make hard reading, and so much which the author must have seen and heard is omitted that the result is exceedingly disappointing. We learn relatively little about the countries or their inhabitants, or even the geography, and read much about the hardships and the vexations and delays caused by the Chinese and other officials during the trip which lasted from 1924 to 1928.

Of greater value is the evidence collected "that the story of the life of Issa, the Teacher (Jesus), is accepted and lives throughout the entire East." This may be the result of the missionary efforts of Nestorian or other early Christian missionaries, or may have filtered from village to village, as the stories of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia have penetrated. There are also the legends of Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattava, savior and deliverer of Northern Buddhism, of Gessar-Khan, "The Coming One," and of Oirat the Messenger of the "White Burkhan." Everywhere there seems to be eager anticipation of the coming of one who is to redeem humanity and purge the world of its manifold ills.

The numerous illustrations are reproduced from pictures in the Roerich Museum in New York, founded to assist in realizing his vision of "binding humanity into a brotherhood through beauty." Those who are influenced by his original personality will welcome the opportunity of studying its revelation in these flashes of thought and inspiration written in moments of "first, fine, careless rapture." The pictures are the product of Russian modernism, and many of them are replete with the mysticism and symbolism which also often appear in the text.

## The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

**Competition No. 65.** A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the most entertaining extract from the essay on Chinese Philosophy mentioned in the "Pickwick Papers." It will be remembered that Mr. Potts, the author, explained that he read the article on China and the article on Philosophy in the Encyclopedia and "combined his information." (Entries must not exceed 400 words and should reach the *Saturday Review* office, 25 West 45th Street, New York City, not later than the morning of August 26.)

**Competition No. 66.** A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best short poem called "The Sea Serpent." (Entries should reach the *Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of September 9.)

Attention is called to the Rules printed below.

The prize of fifteen dollars for the best short rhymed lyric called "July Nightfall" has been awarded to Jean Waterbury, of Wooster, Ohio.

## THE WINNING ENTRY

## JULY NIGHTFALL

*JULY is nightfall,—is the hush  
that falls  
On Summer while the Summer is not  
done  
That sharp surmise which oftener  
appeals  
Than where the very terror is begun;  
That death that first must die along  
the mind,  
That all alive is but more keen to  
death.  
No single flower yet has grown  
resigned,  
Emotionless, as to that final breath.  
"No Summer passes," louder than the  
rose,  
The zinnia, less certain, louder cries.  
The bird that sang in Spring how  
wisely knows,  
Remote, he ponders those melodious  
lies;  
The pain of death is most to know  
you die;  
The Winter night falls darkest on  
July.*

JEAN WATERBURY.

THERE was an enormous entry for this contest, but the great majority of the lyrics were merely descriptive, verbal etchings with no point of rest, no man against the sky. None of these descriptions was compelling enough to match the more personal utterances of the week of which the best came from Homer Parsons, Frances H. Gaines, Claudius Jones, Bernice M. Goetz, Clinton Scollard, and Julia Coates. Arjeh, Eleanor Glenn Wallis, and Daniel O'Keefe all made excellent objective uses of the title. Jean Waterbury, on the whole, deserves the prize for her thoughtful sonnet which is marred by the false di-syllable "flower," and betrays in its uncomfortable punctuation a certain inadequacy of phrase. She has obviously steeped herself in the poems of Robert Frost. I liked, too, Bert Leach's eight lines.

*The sun gleams in the ample West,  
A medal on an athlete's breast;  
Fleet-footed day his race has run  
And wears the trophy he has won.*

*His presence is to grace the ball  
And hold the hearts of maids in  
thrall;  
This garb he doffs, and dons to go  
A spangled sable domino.*

This stood out from a large number of verses with ragged edges and vague images. Ralph A. Emling, beginning with a few lines of prose description which betrayed a lamentable lack of knowledge as to the nature of verse, suddenly achieved the genuine lyric cry with—

*O parched night, take me in your  
hands!  
Lose me in the depth of your un-  
peopled vastness,  
That, forsaking men, I may be  
brought to her, my all;  
And breathing on her breast again  
know happiness!  
Rolling, shadow-streaked Ocean,  
Night heed my call!*

Jean Waterbury's second and third entries deserve mention. Caroline Pollitzer had been reading Julia Peterkin's Pulitzer Prize novel and

made her poem a monologue by Scarlet Sister Mary in the act of turning July from her door. Another interesting entry, full of good things, but overpopulated by personifications, came from George O. Jager. In preference to the best of these I print some poems left over from recent competitions.

"WHAT SONG THE SIRENS  
SANG . . ."

(Not to Odysseus)

*Did the warm scent of cattle tethered  
That stirred their hooves in the  
dim barn-shadows  
And fragrance of summer apples  
gathered  
Drift with the cool mist from the  
meadows?  
When the dew fell  
O home-bred lad,  
Did the dusk's magic  
Turn you sad?*

*Did the last thrush song, breathless-  
heard,  
All life's experience in its meaning,  
Build a great silence round your  
need,  
Until an ancient hurt returning,  
Remote, as youth's  
High hungers are,  
Woke in that stillness  
Like a star?*

*Ah, the old homesickness of youth  
For the long wash of stranger seas  
Has led you questing in the teeth  
Of perils that you dare not lose,  
Of perils that you dare not miss . . .  
O voyager, we too are young;  
And you shall find all roads in us  
For your unended venturing.*  
DEBORAH C. JONES.

## THE END OF THE WORLD

*Long, long ago men thought 'twould  
come with crash  
Of thunder from a black and angry  
sky;  
And then a jagged, blinding lightning  
flash,  
Rentling the darkness like a fearful  
cry,  
Would split old earth wide open to  
ignite  
Her smouldering fires within to roar-  
ing flame.  
Then,—blazing fragments plunging  
through the night.  
The Candle's out, and over is the  
Game.*

*They could not know how, by slow,  
slow degrees  
Earth's sunny warmth grew less and  
less, until  
No sun could warm her now, so white  
and old.  
We know no Spring. We only know  
we freeze  
Unless we can find something warm  
to kill.  
Have pity, God! We perish in the  
cold.*

FRANCES H. GAINES.

## RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—type-written if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

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# The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, 2 Bramerton Street, Chelsea, S. W., London, England.

THIS department is rapidly becoming the stone-cutter's friend. The new library building of the North Carolina State College at Raleigh, N. C., wishes these readers to find some quotations suitable for use in panels on its wall. Two quotations that occur to the President and Editor of *The Progressive Farmer*, Clarence Poe, who sends the request, are Carlyle's "The true university these days is a collection of books," and the sentence beginning "Read not to contradict or confute," etc., from Lord Bacon, and quotations of about this length would be most welcome. The country-school quotations are not coming in well; who knows of a good motto to be graven over the door of one? The reference librarian of a Western library came upon the second reference to the quotation for a library wall, in which but two lines were given, beginning "O turne thy rudder hetherward awhile," and wrote to me in high anxiety to find the rest of it, and its source; this beautiful verse is in Edmund Spenser's "Faery Queene," and it has been on my bookshelves ever since it was sent in to the Guide neatly typed by one of its correspondents. It stood all the shocks and strains of my late moving, but when the last of some thousands of books had been stowed into boxes and I straightened up to see the words "This is the port of rest . . . the world's sweet In . . ." confronting me, I gave a long sigh and the stanza had the grace to flutter down and hide its face amid the wreckage. Books are a port of rest so long as you don't try to leave the place where you are, but for transport purposes they are the most solid and unyielding of substances, giving rise to problems that agitate the nervous system.

T. A., University of Florida, asks for books on the technique of dancing, both folk, and drawing-room.

A. S. BARNES 67 West 44th Street, N. Y., publishes a number of standard text-books on dancing, of which one of the most important is Elsa Pohl's "Dance Technique and Rhythms," a large book with manual of steps and music. Another large and valuable work is "The Dance in Education," by Agnes and Lucile Marsh (Barnes), which also has all music given in full, with excellent pictures.

For stage dancing we have the "Chalif Text Book of Dancing," published by the Chalif School, five volumes: "Clog and Character Dances," by H. Frost (Barnes); "Private and Stage Dancing," a pamphlet published by Samuel French; "Dancing with Helen Moller" (Dodd, Mead), which has many photographs; "The American Ballet," by Ted Shawn (Holt), beautifully illustrated, and "The Art of Stage Dancing," another large book published by the Ned Wayburn Studios. There is a volume, "Dancing Made Easy," by Call and Rosiere, in the series of "Made Easy" books published by Clode—a disheartening list it looks, with all exhilarating difficulties taken from every path of human endeavor; letter-writing, lovemaking, shorthand, will-power. Sometime I must take three hours off and get all the arts and graces at my fingertips.

My present onlooking interest in the dance is through the English Folk Dance Society, 107 Great Russell Street, W.C.1, who arrange country dance parties throughout the summer in Hyde Park or in Hampstead Heath to which practitioners of this charming art come flocking for as thorough-going enjoyment as ever I witnessed and, in witnessing, experienced. They get such tremendous fun out of this complicated yet apparently spontaneous exercises, this ancient youthful art; to see a set of small boys, recruiting their number with one hastily admitted big girl to make the set, dancing the Black Nag or Ruffy Tufty, is to have had an experience in joy. I have longed to see one of these dance competitions since I read Oliver Onions's priceless satire, "Grey Youth"—it was published by Doran on the eve of the war, and is now out of print, but I read it every year regularly—in which Ruffy Tufty figures, and my interest was sharpened by the account of one of the country dance parties in Ethel Sidgwick's delightful novel of youth in London, "When I Grow Rich" (Harper). A Summer School for English Country Dance will be held in Amherst, Mass., from August 19 to 31 of this year, as there are three branches of the society in the United States.

E. A., East Liverpool, Ohio, asks for a list of the best books on mental hygiene.

THE Problem Child at Home," by Mary Buell Sayles, published by the Commonwealth Fund, Division of Publications, 578 Madison Avenue, N. Y., is an excellent work for parents not above taking advice on the subject of forming normal and satisfactory family relationships, such as promote healthful emotional development on the part of the children. "Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child," by Douglas A. Thom (Appleton), is for those problems that so constantly occur as to seldom find sensible treatment in books; it was awarded a medal as the best book for parents, in 1927, by the magazine *Children*, and I do not wonder. "Psychology of Insanity," by Bernard Hart (Macmillan), is an explanation of some of the forms of mental disease, but its usefulness is not confined to those who have to do with the mental machinery of the really insane. "Outwitting Our Nerves," by Josephine A. Jackson and Helen M. Salisbury (Century), is a very popular work on the management of worries, fears, and suchlike handicaps; it has helped many to make better adjustments. "Social Aspects of Mental Hygiene," by Frankwood E. Williams and others (Yale University Press), is a set of six addresses in non-technical language, given to students at Yale as a résumé of the field of mental hygiene; it is thus an excellent survey of the subject; it costs \$1.60, I may say, as from the description one might think it a large book. I take these titles—though not without previous acquaintance—from one of the little "Reading with a Purpose" booklets, "Mental Hygiene," by Frankwood E. Williams, M.D., an eminent authority, whose introductory remarks are of high interest.

A. L., Cody, Wyo., wishes to know of books similar to these: McCourtie, "Where and How to Sell Manuscripts"; Kennedy and Gordon, "Free-lance Writer's Handbook"; Brazelton "Writing and Editing for Women"; Woolley, "Free-lancing for Forty Magazines," and Johnson, comp., "Earning a Living by the Pen." This last was compiled from the experiences of Vassar graduates, who found opportunities in journalism. Is there anything similar, covering other branches of writing, put out by any other college? A. L. is interested in the commercial side of literature, rather than in technique. He does not care for such books as Hoffman's "Fiction Writers on Fiction Writing," or "The Writer's Art," by Brown.

THE handbook "1001 Places to Sell Manuscript," by J. K. Reeve, published by the author at Franklin, Ohio, would be a good addition to this equipment, which should also have "The Business Side of Writing," by Robert Cortes Holliday and Alexander Van Rensselaer (Doubleday, Doran), which goes from the preparation of manuscript to the appearance of the finished work, with various side-lines of earning money by writing. "What Editors and Publishers Want," by Mark Meredith (Bowker), is a list of British, Canadian, Australian, South African, and American periodicals, with short notes of the type of material accepted by each and the amount paid.

G. W. S., Sioux City, Iowa, asks for an autobiography, a book on music, and one on art, to be included in the book-reviews of a study-club.

THE autobiography of the season that has given me the most light on American life is E. W. Howe's "Plain People" (Dodd, Mead), honest as a Russian "true confession" and not so discursive. "Evolution of Art," by Ruth de Rochemont (Macmillan), seems to have been prepared with home students in mind, "to furnish a substantial background into which you may fit the gleanings of your own search for beauty." It is substantial in size, a large volume with wide pages, and there is plenty of substance in this outline of painting, sculpture, and print-making; the judgments expressed are definite but not dogmatic, and while the reader needs no knowledge of technical terms, an opening chapter on "ways and means of the painter" gives him this vocabulary. The trilogy of musical novels by Guy de Pourtales—"Franz Liszt," "Polonaise: the Life of Chopin," and "The Mad King," which brings Wagner and Ludwig of Bavaria into the picture—is published by Holt, and would make a most interesting collective review.

E. D. D., who conducts the travel section of the book department in Macy's, New York City, tells me to add to the list for travellers making a literary tour of England the "Booklover's Map of the British Isles," edited by Paul Paine, librarian of Syracuse University, and published by Bowker. "It gives the authors' names and homes as well as the characters and places in fiction from centuries of English novels, poetry, and drama; the printing is clear and the colors make it decidedly decorative. With the map comes a small folder containing an index of author, title, and characters." I have had this map on my study wall for the past year, and planned more than one excursion by it for this summer, but I had not thought of taking it along; this reader says it would not be a burden, considering its qualities.

I. M. S., Easton, Maryland, asks for readings on the Minnesingers.

ONE of the volumes of the "History of Civilization" series (Knopf) is a selection of studies of knighthood and the civilization of which it was part, "Chivalry," edited by Edgar Prestage. This has the best brief account of the minnesingers, meistersingers, troubadours, and their music that I have found. The authors are members of King's College, London; the articles are all interestingly written. Jethro Bithell's "The Minnesingers" (Longmans, Green), is out of print, but may no doubt be found in public libraries. R. de L. Jameson's "Trails of the Troubadours" (Century); "Trouveres and Troubadours," by P. Aubrey (Scribner), are of interest in this connection; "Old German Love Songs," by F. C. Nicholson (University of Chicago Press), are translated from the minnesingers of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.

C. M. K., Caldwell, Kansas, asks for books helpful to a stamp collector who is on the way to become a professional stamp fiend.

THE Stamp Collector," by Stanley C. Johnson (Dodd, Mead), is a guide to the world's postage stamps, widely praised; the "Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue," issued by the Scott Stamp and Coin Company, 1 West 47th Street, N. Y., is a universally used annual, giving all particulars of every postage stamp, with prices at which most of them can be purchased. It costs a dollar and a half and the "Collector" three dollars. A. D., Lansdowne, Pa., asks if a sequel was ever published to "The Chronicles of a Great Prince," by Marguerite Bryant and George McAnnally (Duffield). I have told him there was not; if anyone knows better I should be glad of the news, for this curiously exciting work is one that stays in the mind. R. L., Prescott, Arizona, saying that this will convict him of being out of sympathy with present-day ideals, offers as inscription over the entrance of a modest country school (as asked for) a line from Hazlitt: "We can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth," to be found in the essay "On Going a Journey." Oh, well, I may be far from the land of my birth at this present, but the *Saturday Review* comes out every week in Forty-fifth Street, a stone's throw from the spot where I was born, and my destiny seems to be going on nicely in absentia.

THE first suggestion for a book with a fine boy in it, to make part of the equipment of a memorial library, has been received from E. R. N., Stamford, Conn.: "Hornung's 'Children of Men' (Scribner), for the book gift. I read it years ago and have always remembered the splendid character of the boy."

## a CLAIM versus ACCLAIM

WERE *The Inner Sanctum* to state, however moderately, that WILL DURANT's new book *The Mansions of Philosophy* is as notable as its internationally famous predecessor *The Story of Philosophy*. . . . that would be simply a claim.

But when a teeming volume of critical tributes is brought forward, quoting critics, educators, ministers, booksellers, and representative readers . . . that is clearly acclaim.

"WILL DURANT has again achieved a miracle," says Dr. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES. "The task he set for himself in *The Mansions of Philosophy* was much more difficult than the one he set himself in *The Story of Philosophy*, as ideas are always more difficult to handle than persons, but he has brought off a great and memorable triumph."

"Not the least of the delights in this unwearying tome of 700 lusty pages is the care that the author lavishes upon his style," says the reviewer of *The New York World*. "We admire the cadence of his prose, the harmony of his thought. These chapters are so many palatial halls in *The Mansions*

of Philosophy. Not only the winds of doctrine blow through these pages, there is the sweet breath of fields and streams and the laughter of children. Here is wisdom."

To DR. STEPHEN S. WISE, this new book by WILL DURANT is "massive, tremendously stimulating" . . . . To *The Philadelphia Ledger* it is "finer than *The Story of Philosophy*, its appeal more intimate and more general" . . . . "To the average American (according to *The Chicago Tribune*) it will prove a revelation, opening a window on life where he never knew one existed . . . ."

To a million readers who found "that noblest pleasure—the joy of understanding" in WILL DURANT's earlier book, his new one truly brings *The Mansions of Philosophy* . . . . topless towers for surveying the totality of things . . . . To the booksellers of America this means another \$5.00 bestseller, based not on a claim . . . . but, acclaim.

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