

Entre Nous.

New Poetry.

Wilfrid Blair.

Mr. Blackwell of Oxford has published 'A Chronicle Play in Two Scenes,' by Mr. Wilfrid Blair, the subject of which is *The Death of Shakespeare* (1s. net). Is it good acting? We cannot tell. It is good reading. Greatly daring, Mr. Blair represents Shakespeare as recalling the outstanding experiences of his life in his last unconsciousness. Is it not enough to say that the words he is made to utter are not utterly ridiculous?

Shakes. [*wildly*]. O punishment!
Never turns summer's sky so swift from a
 laugh
To thunderous menace as the soul from glut
Of headlong passion vomits up despair,
Self-loathing, and abhorrence! . . .

Nay, Master Sandells!

The shame I grant, but this is not the
 way.
Shame, by your leave, cannot be so tricked
 out
To pass as honour, virtue, and respect.
Amends? I say that here is no amends!
Will you constrain me to't—and let her know
 it!—
Better be saddled with an unsired babe
Than a forced husband! . . .

That is *not* ridiculous. And the rest is just as acceptable.

Grace Hazard Conkling and Paul Shivell.

Messrs. Constable are the publishers in this country of 'The New Poetry Series.' Two volumes are issued together. They have no outward and little inward connexion. They represent two spheres of poetic impulse, Miss Conkling being more drawn by the love of children and home life, Mr. Shivell by the love of winds and flowers and nature. But one passion of regret and indignation has seized both. It is regret for the ruined city of Rheims; it is indignation at its ruthless destroyers. We shall quote both poems. Miss Conkling's book is *Afternoons of April* (2s. net). This is her

RHEIMS CATHEDRAL—1914.

A wingèd death has smitten dumb thy bells,
And poured them molten from thy tragic
 towers:

Now are the windows dust that were thy flowers
Patterned like frost, petaled like asphodels.
Gone are the angels and the archangels,
The saints, the little lamb above thy door,
The shepherd Christ! They are not, any more
Save in the soul where exiled beauty dwells.
But who has heard within thy vaulted gloom
That old divine insistence of the sea,
When music flows along the sculptured stone
In tides of prayer, for him thy windows bloom
Like faithful sunset, warm immortally!
Thy bells live on, and Heaven is in their tone!

Mr. Shivell's book is entitled *Stillwater Pastorals* (2s. net). His poem is called simply

RHEIMS.

In rapt imagination many times
I've stood and watch'd and worship'd in thy
 streets,
Where bursting steel shrieks death, and loud
 hoofbeats
Of cavalry instead of evening chimes
Are heard, O burnt and desecrated Rheims!
Christ's fairest monument no longer greets
The beauty-loving eye, nor proudly meets
Man's highest expectation! The soul climbs
To heights like this in carved stone no more.
Imperious and irreverent is man;
Busy with armies and material schemes,
Kings have their dark way with him as of yore
He spares to God what little time he can
From building mortal power on Love's de-
 molish'd dreams.

Joseph Campbell.

In *Studies of Contemporary Poets*, by Mary C. Sturgeon (Harrap; 5s. net), we have a criticism, fresh and fair and not too 'informing' of many of the best known living poets. One or two also are included whom we do not know well. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, for example. She is named as one of two Indian poets, who within the last few years have produced remarkable English poetry.

The second of the two is, of course, Rabindranath Tagore. Mrs. Naidu has published several volumes of poetry, one of which has been introduced to us by Mr. Edmund Gosse, and another by Mr. Arthur Symons. Still she is not well known. This book will do something for her. Not much is quoted. This is quoted, however :

THE POET TO DEATH.

Tarry a while, till I am satisfied
Of love and grief, of earth and altring sky ;
Till all my human hungers are fulfilled,
O Death, I cannot die !

Besides the greater names there is an Irish group more briefly described. In that group is found Mr. Joseph Campbell, and from Mr. Campbell's volume called 'Irishry' is taken this poem :

As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an agèd face.

As the spent radiance
Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
When her travail done.

Her brood gone from her,
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill.

Mary E. Boyle.

The little volume of sonnets called *Aftermath* (Heffer ; 1s. net), which Mary E. Boyle has published, is the outcome and perpetuation of a most beautiful bond between a brother and a sister. The bond was sharply severed by his death 'at the front.' But death has been love's consecration. We shall quote two of the sonnets :

I.

Being a woman, I have heard men praise
My face, my hair, my tricks of voice, my mind,
Compare me with the rest of womankind,
And in my honour word-built altars raise,
And having humour, smiled at their dear ways
Of hailing the ideal, knew them blind
But to their inward vision, watched them find

Flaws in my workmanship, and hush their lays.
But you had just one look which sprang to life,
In your blue eyes, a starry look intent,
When something in me touched your inmost
heart,
Its very sweetness stabbed me like a knife,
We smiled, and then to commonplaces bent,
Yet in some holy place had walked apart.

II.

Could I have been with you that August day,
And seen you stooping o'er your wounded friend,
Could I have seen you when they asked to
send

An officer, to train the guns the way
They needed training. Been near you to pray
God speed you, at your young life's glorious end.
And when you fell, had I been there to bend
Above you, kiss your brow, hold hands and
stay

Beside you, till you passed Death's gate—ah me !
To think, that Love is powerless over space,
No, that's not true. In that wild day's alarms,
Perhaps through dust of battle you did see
Glimpses of home, a vision of my face,
And dying, felt me clasp you in my arms.

James Lyons.

Sons of the Empire (Heywood ; 1s. net) is the title given to a volume of poems by James Lyons, who is now serving at the front. There is so much variety, and so much maturity, in the poetry, that one needs the assurance of the Headmaster to believe that the author only a year ago was a boy in Manchester Grammar School. There is even the smile of indulgent humour, as in this :

JE NE COMPRENDS PAS !

[Somewhere in France.]

Tommy Atkins on a day
Met a little maiden—
Somewhere in an old French town,
With her basket laden.
Two such pretty eyes of brown,
Lips like crimson cherry,
Dainty nose—oh, just a tilt,
Laugh so bright and merry.
Tommy gaily smiled at her,
Marie said, 'Goot mornin', Sair !'

Tommy vowed he'd never seen
 Maiden half so charming—
 Marie's smile was most demure,
 Also most disarming.
 'May I walk with you?' he said,
 She—no comprehended!
 Till he boldly crooked his arm,
 Meaning clear intended.
 Tripping off with roguish air,
 Marie said, 'Goot mornin', Sair!'

Once again they chanced to meet,
 Tommy and the maiden—
 Walked together down the lane,
 He with basket laden.
 Parting from her by the gate,
 'Twas in April weather,
 Tommy cried, 'I love you, dear,
 Always shall for ever.'
 She—with big brown eyes a-stare—
 Coily said, 'Goot mornin', Sair!'

Not a word could Marie speak,
 Every time he pleaded—
 Only shook her curly head,
 Though she must have heeded.
 Could not understand a word,
 No—not one he'd spoken,
 Once again, 'No comprehend,'
 Was her only token.
 All the English known to her,
 Just three words, 'Goot mornin', Sair!'

Tommy felt in deep despair,
 Marie deemed it funny—
 Couldn't understand, of course,
 But her smile was sunny.
 Tommy spoke just once again,
 Words his whole heart carry,
 'Sweetheart, tell me, do,' he cried,
 'Shall we quickly marry?'
 Little Rogue, I blush for her,
 'Yes,' she laughed—'this mornin', Sair!'

Lady Margaret Sackville.

Here and there—in the *Nation*, the *Sphere*, the *Times*—have been discovered short poems by Lady Sackville, and the discovery has always been with a sense of vital influence. They are now to be found conveniently gathered into a cheap volume entitled *The Pageant of War* (Simpkin). This is one of them :

RECONCILIATION.

When all the stress and all the toil is over,
 And my lover lies sleeping by your lover,
 With alien earth on hands and brows and feet,
 Then we may meet.

Moving sorrowfully with uneven paces,
 The bright sun shining on our ravaged faces,
 There, very quietly, without sound or speech,
 Each shall greet each.

We who are bound by the same grief for ever,
 When all our sons are dead may talk together,
 Each asking pardon from the other one
 For her dead son.

With such low, tender words the heart may fashion,
 Broken and few, of pity and compassion,
 Knowing that we disturb at every tread
 Our mutual dead.

Joseph Lee.

Lance-Corporal Joseph Lee of the Black Watch has published a volume of *Ballads of Battle* which he has himself illustrated (Murray; 2s. 6d. net). The ballads are light and almost airy; all the cheerfulness attributed to the trenches is reflected in them and all the friendliness. Here is the opinion which Thomas Atkins has formed of his French fellow-fighter :

PIOU-PIOU.

Your trousers is a funny red,
 Your tunic is a funny blue,
 Your cap sets curious on your 'ead—
 And yet, by Gawd, your 'eart sits true,
 Piou-piou!

Your menu's even worse nor mine,
 Your pay a day is but a sou;
 But still, you blokes have broke the line—
 I'm proud to fight along o' you,
 Piou-piou!

Your lingo I do not compr-ee—
 A necessary word or two—
 But, 'deux bier's' enough for me,
 And here's the best o' health to you,
 Piou-piou!

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