

# NEW VERSE

---

No 24

6d. every two months Feb.-March 1937

---

## IN THIS NUMBER

### POETIC DESCRIPTION AND MASS-OBSERVATION.

Any Point on the Circumference. End of A Year, by KENNETH ALLOTT. Several Poems, by PHILIP O'CONNOR. Temptation, by K. J. RAINE. Four Poems, by BERNARD SPENCER. A Leja, or Love Song from Bastar State, translated by W. V. GRIGSON. Book Reviews. Notes, etc., etc.

## POETIC DESCRIPTION AND MASS-OBSERVATION

Read the three following statements:

1. *Bram went up cautiously to old Mrs. Fuller's room. She was seventy now, but still able to hate fiercely her octogenarian husband, who was for ever browsing among dusty commentaries on the Old Testament nowadays, and extracting from the tortuous fretwork of bookworms such indications of the Divine purpose as the exact date and hour of the Day of Judgment. He was usually clad in a moth-eaten velveteen dressing-gown and a smoking cap of quilted black silk, with a draggled crimson tassel. The latter must have been worn as a protection to his bald and scaly head, because not a puff of tobacco smoke had ever been allowed to contend with the odour of stale food that permeated Lebanon House from cellar to garret.*

2. *Humphrey Potter, a mere lad, who was occupied in attending to the cocks of an atmospheric engine, becoming anxious to escape from the monotonous drudgery imposed upon him, ingeniously con-*

*trived the adjustment of a number of strings, which, being attached to the beam of the engine, opened and closed the cocks with the most perfect regularity and certainty as the beam moved upwards and downwards, thus rendering the machine totally independent of manual superintendence. The contrivance of Potter was soon improved upon, and the whole apparatus was subsequently, about the year 1718, brought into complete working order by an engineer named Beighton.*

*3. Coming home on a Midland Red 'Bus from Birmingham (a distance of approx. 6 miles) I was sitting on the front seat, near the large sliding door. There was a cold easterly wind blowing through the door, and after having some cigarette ash blown in my eyes, I touched the Conductor on the sleeve to attract his attention, and said ' May we have the door closed, Conductor?' He turned round and leant towards me in a confidential way, and then said in a most insolent manner ' Yes, when I'm ready to shut it!' I was too surprised to make any reply. The door remained open until I left the 'bus.*

In these three passages, the description has three different relations to actual fact. The first, from a contemporary novel, attempts to be realistic, though the things it describes are not real. The second is a historical account of certain events that actually took place, though the narrator had no direct relation to them. The third is a piece of observation by a Mass Observer. There is no need for her to try to make the events real: the observer has simply been a recording instrument of the facts.

The interest of the third passage is (i) scientific, (ii) human, and therefore, by implication, (iii) poetic. It might equally well have been told by the 'bus conductor or a third person. It is about human beings, but they are in a mechanical environment, which conditions their actions. There is something of the same kind in the second passage, but here the interaction of man and machine is imagined, or reconstructed.

Such a phrase as this, from the second passage, "becoming anxious to escape from the monotonous drudgery imposed upon him," has a degree of objectivity less than that of the Mass Observer: "I was too surprised to make any reply." Such

observations as the insolent or "confidential" manner of the "bus conductor, though subjective, become objective because the subjectivity of the observer is one of the facts under observation. In the second passage, objectivity is only attained in the description of the machine. In the first passage, there is no unalloyed objectivity. The elements "velveteen dressing-gown," "odour of stale food," may have been taken from real life, but the story has been invented. The first passage is the only one that attempts to create *atmosphere*. Its method is to combine fragments of reality with fragments of poetry: "the tortuous fretwork of book-worms." But the poetry makes the real fragments unreal, and the real fragments give to the poetry an air of artifice which is the reverse of the poetic effect produced in the descriptive poetry of Homer, Shakespeare, Tolstoy.

MASS-OBSERVATION is a technique for obtaining objective statements about human behaviour. The primary use of these statements is to the other observers: an interchange of observations being the foundation of social consciousness. The statements are useful also to scientists who can each utilize them in his own way. The number of scientific interpretations of a given body of material is only limited by the number of scientific interpreters. Poetically, the statements are also useful. They produce a poetry which is not, as at present, restricted to a handful of esoteric performers. The immediate effect of MASS-OBSERVATION is to de-value considerably the status of the "poet." It makes the term "poet" apply, not to his performance, but to his profession, like "footballer."

In taking up the rôle of observer, each person becomes like Courbet at his easel, Cuvier with his cadaver, and Humboldt with his continent. The process of observing raises him from subjectivity to objectivity. What has become unnoticed through familiarity is raised into consciousness again. The observer becomes, in his own streets, like Catlin's Indians when they visited Paris:

*The thing which as yet amused the Doctor [one of the Indians] the most was the great number of women they saw in the streets leading dogs with ribbons and strings. He said he thought they liked their dogs better than they did their little children. In London, he said he had seen some little dogs leading their masters, who were blind, and in Paris they began to think the first day they rode out that one*

half of the Paris women were blind, but that they had a great laugh when they found that their eyes were wide open, and that instead of their dogs leading them, they were leading their dogs. . . .

On one of their drives, the Doctor and Jim, supplied with a pencil and a piece of paper, had amused themselves by counting, from both sides of the omnibus, the number of women they passed, leading dogs in the street. They had been absent near an hour, and driving through many of the principal streets of the city, and their list stood thus :

Women leading one little dog .. .. .	432
Women leading two little dogs .. .. .	71
Women leading three little dogs .. .. .	5
Women with big dogs following (no string) .. .. .	80
Women carrying little dogs .. .. .	20
Women with little dogs in carriages .. .. .	31

The Indians observed the behaviour of women in Paris in relation to their habit of keeping pet dogs. Each observation, each inquiry, is in relation to some piece of social behaviour, and each piece of social behaviour is the result of the adaptation of human beings to their environment: in this case the modification of a once useful adaptation (use of dogs for the chase) to a changed environment. The Indians were puzzled by the *superstitious* element in the behaviour of the women with dogs. When there is failure on the part of human individuals or groups to modify their adaptations, tragic situations arrive—such situations as are portrayed in *The Iliad*, in *Hamlet*, in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, and *Anna Karenina*. The greatest novelists and dramatists present their observation of this failure in a form so comprehensive, and yet so precise, that although the final history may be unreal, the description is scientific. The poet also may, like Hardy, select one moment, one circumstance, on which to make his observation, as in the *Satires of Circumstance* :

## A THUNDERSTORM IN TOWN

(A Reminiscence : 1893)

*She wore a new " terra-cotta " dress,  
And we stayed, because of the pelting storm,  
Within the hansom's dry recess,*

*Though the horse had stopped ; yea, motionless  
We sat on, snug and warm.*

*Then the downpour ceased, to my sharp sad pain  
And the glass that had screened our forms before  
Flew up, and out she sprang to her door :  
I should have kissed her, if the rain  
Had lasted a minute more.*

The place, the date, the environment within which the human beings were reacting, are all accurately and concisely noted, as in a piece of scientific description. The period—that of the new “terra-cotta” dress—and the climate—the typical dampness of England—are indicated without hesitation and without impressionism or atmosphere. As in the third of the statements given above, the human behaviour has as its background a means of transport—this time not a motor-bus but a horse-cab. The total poetic form of the utterance is such that one might be disposed to ask why it was not written in prose. But here Hardy was faced with the difficulty that the prose anecdote was not supposed to be serious, while the poetic anecdote—under the name of lyric, ‘*Moment of Vision*,’ or ‘*Satire of Circumstance*’—would by its metre and rhyme focus the serious attention of his reader. Perhaps at the present time this advantage of the poetic form has become a disadvantage and prevents some people from appreciating Hardy’s poetry. Besides metre and rhyme, Hardy’s *A Thunderstorm in Town* contains other conventionally poetic elements, such as the phrases “yea, motionless” and “sharp sad pain” which both sound as if borrowed, like the remembered events, from 1893. They contrast however with the unconvincing quality of the poetic phrases in Statement 1 (by Compton Mackenzie). It is also notable that the bulk of Hardy’s observations relate to one category of human behaviour—that of people in love. This topic is traditionally suitable for poetic treatment, and it is not surprising that the most poetic descriptions of human behaviour are concerned with it. The category of human behaviour which the Mass Observer who wrote Statement 3 was asked to observe was “the relation of superiors to subordinates and subordinates to superiors.” It is one of many similar categories, each with

universal applications, which the newly developed technique of Mass-Observation is now exploring. I have attempted briefly to suggest the relevance of these explorations to poets and all who are interested in poetry.

EXAMPLES COLLECTED BY H. J.    WRITE-UP BY C.M.

[*Those who wish to co-operate with MASS-OBSERVATION should write to CHARLES MADGE, 6 GROTES BUILDINGS, BLACKHEATH, S.E. 3.*]

## ANY POINT ON THE CIRCUMFERENCE

Let the tide lap your feet,  
the moon hang upside down in the caves of sleep;  
the cool horizon is ringed with hanging eyes,  
and white with your immoderate thirst for love  
your smoky wishes pour into the grave.

Move to the cloudy coven of the night.  
The wistful dead await the commonplace  
to kiss them to their feet;  
the sea-time engine roars  
to leave the miles of weed, drying round our supple shores.

Cut down the mistletoe,  
guess at the cloven foot,  
cross swords with the plural world; the rainbow  
buries its conjuring root;  
the moonlight on the lined hand of the floor  
climbs to the milky zenith of the year.

Patience and prayer have done.  
The sun is lost in the perfunctory west,  
and the false stars come out  
to ice the evil of the midnight feast:  
so many ways to turn away from heaven  
before a new temper burns in the prodigal east.

Acres and temperatures  
of formidable flowers,  
the golden voice of every ravished season;  
the head turns on the handsome neck  
and where the wall is weak  
hears the proud waters at their crumbling treason.

Between the desert and the classic grove  
our mortal seasons waver,  
blowing hot or cold forever;  
but the thin river from the side of love  
grieves for the faithless weather.

O angel of any fire  
warm my slow worm of blood  
so that I may forget to brood,  
walking the waves of the future as on air  
with fair and foul and furious understood.

Let moon and night be kind,  
the giant in the wind  
hold his prodigious breath;  
in the short prism of day  
still let the children play;  
the smiles breaking as foam on the groaning earth.

But in this polar night  
the gruesome furies lead  
to torture the staunch guardsman of the brow;  
the whole hill aches with unaccustomed light,  
like the Red Sea to left and right  
the sulky fair and swart divide  
and to their humorous honours and prisons go.

And he who looks behind  
sees the dead wolf pad from his shadow of pine,  
the tide withdraw its hem;  
the I of stilted dream  
runs on a rim, discovers in the end  
the window of a jelly in the sand.

While the long figures of the years  
drum into the vexed ears  
their waven certainties:  
that trees must fall and waters freeze  
and truth seduce all promises,  
and men never write home about their fears.

KENNETH ALLOTT

## A COLD NIGHT

Thick wool is muslin tonight, and the wire  
Wind scorches stone-cold colder. Boys  
Tremble at counters of shops. The world  
Gets lopped at the radius of my fire.

Only for a moment I think of those  
Whom the weather leans on under the sky;  
Newsmen with placards by the river's skirt,  
Stamping, or with their crouching pose,

The whores; the soldiery who lie  
Round wounded Madrid; those of less hurt  
Who cross that bridge I crossed today  
Where the waves snap white as broken plates

And the criss-cross girders hammer a grill  
Through which, instead of flames, wind hates.

I turn back to my fire. Which I must.  
I am not God or a crazed woman.  
And one needs time too to sit in peace  
Opposite one's girl, with food, fire, light,

And do the work one's own blood heats,  
Or talk, and forget about the winter  
—This season, this century—and not be always  
Opening one's doors on the pitiful streets

Of Europe, not always think of winter, winter, like a hammering  
rhyme  
For then everything is drowned by the rising wind, everything is  
done against Time.

BERNARD SPENCER

## GOING TO THE COUNTRY

Now ranging cracker-brilliant areas  
Where the higgledy shops shout each other down  
And cinemas carved as mosques sell to the humbled  
An evening as the hero who breaks all bars,  
Our bus rolled towards country wood and down :  
Now less lighted stretches; residences whose  
Stony outside—porches for knees, severe  
Shuttered windows under eyebrows of stone  
Suggested councillors, business men of mark,  
Or seated Egyptian dead. Through these we were  
A horn of light butting through straits of twilight. . . .  
Now wealth, now the market. At last, open and dear  
To drivers a world made simply of road, and stark,  
Where sky and earth were one coalmine of dark.  
Fingers jabbed North and to the coastal towns.  
In Town we had many friends, and of confidence,  
Who didn't need us to reckon or be stilted,  
Good company at drinks, enquiring and witty  
At the play or in the street. They would have lent their sense  
To explore or ignore a public life disordered  
As a photograph from a war with a steeple tilted.  
They would be up. Country was early to bed.  
But far from them, with colder air to breathe,  
Lying under a country roof we are content

To hear—we would have given each other voice  
—One trudging step which crossed the yard beneath:  
And because nothing else moved, that one noise spread  
At least to the cirrus cloudlets overhead,  
That top of ceilings. We were pleased with our choice.

BERNARD SPENCER

## ILL

Expectant at the country gate the lantern. On the night  
Its silks of light strained. Lighted upper window.  
“Is it you who sent for me?” The two go in  
To where the woman lies ill, upstairs, out of sight.

I hear sky softly smother to earth in rain,  
As I sit by the controls and the car's burning dials.  
And always the main-road traffic searching, searching the horizons.  
Then those sounds knifed by the woman's Ah! of pain.

Who dreamed this; the dark folding murderer's hands round the  
lamps?  
The rain blowing growth to rot? Lives passed beneath a ritual  
That tears men's ghosts and bodies; the few healers  
With their weak charms, moving here and there among the lamps?

BERNARD SPENCER

## PART OF PLENTY

When she carries food to the table and stoops down  
—Doing this out of love—and lays soup with its good  
Tickling smell, or fry winking from the fire  
And I look up, perhaps from a book I am reading  
Or other work: there is an importance of beauty  
Which can't be accounted for by there and then,

And attacks me, but not separately from the welcome  
Of the food, or the grace of her arms.

When she puts a sheaf of tulips in a jug  
And pours in water and presses to one side  
The upright stems and leaves that you hear creak,  
Or loosens them, or holds them up to show me,  
So that I see the tangle of their necks and cups  
With the curls of her hair, and the body they are held  
Against, and the stalk of the small waist rising  
And flowering in the shape of breasts;

Whether in the bringing of the flowers or the food  
She offers plenty, and is part of plenty,  
And whether I see her stooping, or leaning with the flowers,  
What she does is ages old, and she is not simply,  
No, but lovely in that way.

BERNARD SPENCER

## POEMS

### 1.

1780 a.d. in the street they flung foam about and a young funny  
gentleman poured the juices of a ton of blood oranges down upon  
the people

the iron cockerel on St. Dunstan's spun round after hens of the air  
and worried the frosty smoke with his dark alarrums

they rushed down the lane without breaking glass or digging  
mounds then thundered into the midst of the newly unleashed  
Sunday Express very red after a long night journey and crowded  
with gesticulating poetesses

### 2.

1066 a.d. the saxon put his foot upon the ground the five women  
fell upon him but he put his foot upon the ground

Norman William put his boats upon the sea to take him to England where he put his foot upon the ground once landed and his multitudinous strong and skilled men shew sufficient to take Britain which they did

3.

the high man faced the London crowd from the plinth of Nelson's Column wagged his mighty finger at six hundred thousand white faces grouped in a posy of living humanity

I am he howled

you are they whispered like the knocking of clouds

handsome Nelson swayed in the gale and the cold pigeons rested upon his shoulder

4.

gravely the assembled chimney-stacks walked into the high street where the various wombs were displaying unborn children in Midnight Market

5.

Captain Busby put his beard in his mouth and sucked it, then took it out and spat on it then put it in and sucked it then walked on down the street thinking hard.

Suddenly he put his wedding-ring in his trilby hat and put the hat on a passing kitten. Then he carefully calculated the width of the pavement with a pair of adjustable sugar-tongs. This done he knitted his brows. Then he walked on

thinking hard

6.

Captain Busted Busby frowned hard at a passing ceiling and fixed his eye upon a pair of stationary taxies. Suddenly he went up to one of them and addressed himself to the driver. He discharged his socks and continued whistling. The taxi saluted but he put up with it, and puckered a resigned mouth and knitted a pair of thoughtful eyebrows.

7.

M. looking out of his window with purple curtains saw Captain Busby thoughtfully chewing a less impatient portion of his walking-stick unostentatiously against a lamp-post. The road was blue but Captain Busby seemed a very dark green with ivory face (for it was night time). He frowned. He looked up to the top of the rapidly emptying street. He cut his hair slowly. He looked at the bottom of the street. He made rapid measurements with a pair of adjustable sugar-tongs. These he afterwards secreted in his trousers. He then flew into his friend's apartment through the willingly opened window.

8.

Marcella waited for her lover outside a public house known to both of them. Immediately Captain Busby appeared holding a woman in his arms. This wasn't true thought Marcella carefully, and was relieved to see that God had thrown a lamp-post at the Captain, temporarily disabling him.

9.

He arranged himself in sugar and put himself in his bath  
and prepared to breathe his last

his four bottles lay grouped around him

do your duty in this world and gather dividends from the dog  
thrown at you

goodbye my children

and he died and they huskily nailed down his coffin  
and put it in ten feet of sod  
and grouped around him reading the will

for indeed and forever would he be  
to them  
just dad

10.

Mother lay crying in the withdrawing room  
bitterly bewailing cruel fate who with a flick of his pen  
had so completely shattered the even tenour of her ways

sobbed upon the brick platform shaking her fist at every porter  
who passed  
declaring cruel fate who with a flick of his pen  
had so cruelly broken  
the even tenour of her ways

11.

she considered the porter with the cap on the side of his head  
fitfully  
who had squandered his sweet-peas upon her  
who had ridden every train and blown all whistles  
to feast his evil frontal eyes on her to break the even tenour of  
her ways

she shunted her back to him  
she put on her large black hat with insolent vulgarity  
and deliberately smirked into his face

he was busy  
he was doing his duty  
he rattled the cans  
he gave out composed answers to the backchat following his curt  
commands  
he went on with his duty forgetting  
that he had broken the even tenour of her ways

She walked thoughtfully upon a sugar-box  
and would there and then have harangued the station officials to  
compel the attention of the porter

but he did not  
but he could not  
but he did not  
and could not should as he had broken the even tenour of her ways

she thrust a carrot into his face  
he gravely took it and handed it without moving a muscle of his  
face  
to the dominant personality of the station  
the station master himself

events moved indefatigably to their long-awaited climax  
the station master seized the carrot and conveyed it to a drawer  
reserved for matters of importance  
and seizing a document asserting his credentials and authority  
motored along the platform and alighted at the lady

madam he said coldly  
your carrot is in the drawer  
pray come for it or suitable measures will be taken to enforce  
the union of yourself and the personality  
who broke the even tenour of your ways

lightning juggled above the station portraying its grim battlements  
thunder crashed upon the assembled people  
she threw three flashes of self-possessed rays  
at him from her large radiant eyes  
she ran to the drawer refusing the automobile  
she snatched abruptly at the carrot  
scenting with inexorable female intuition the precise position  
afforded it by reason of its pre-eminent significance  
she ran from the room like a bitten wounded thing  
and fell laughing upon the station master who had broken the even  
tenour of her ways

PHILIP O'CONNOR

## TEMPTATION

Good sir, good sir,  
Answer the question  
Yes or no  
You do not need to understand.  
Tangerines, hold your breath,  
He's choosing between life and death.

Outside the greengrocer's he stands  
And the glare  
Of Christmas fare  
Makes on his nerves severe demands,  
So bright the oranges and other colours.

They were not born to blush in London rain,  
Where hungry people roll them in the dirt  
For the starved Londoners, a forbidden fruit  
With money-value as the angel's sword.

Oh blue Mediterranean, bathed in blood,  
There grow the oranges and lemon trees  
While good and evil fall beneath the sword  
Of masses fighting for their properties.

Balm of hurt minds, food of love and angels  
Musical notes struck from base material  
Having no relation to pianos or flutes,  
Heaven send us more music, more peace.

Bless this falling house,  
This last fastness  
Of the upward driven aborigines,  
Giddy on the inaccessible Andes.

A refuge in the attics and roofs  
For love and repose  
Before we fly again  
Before the tempest of Spain.

K. J. RAINE

## A LÉJĀ, OR LOVE SONG, OF THE MURIAS OF THE AMĀBĀL PARGANA OF BASTAR STATE

Léjā, léjā, O dear vine, take my one-stringed fiddle  
To the flooded river, plunge in and play with it.  
Léjā, léjā, O sliced gourd, in the long days that have passed  
Since I last saw you, you have grown plump and lovely.  
Rain has fallen and fallen, the pond is brimming. But, dear one,  
Do not touch me, for my heart jumps to see you.  
We have been separated long, too long, my darling,  
And now, léjā, O léjā, we must live together.  
Beloved, I'm carried away by the pock-mark on your dark,  
    shining face,  
By the glossy hair on your dear head.  
Throw a fiddle at the plum-tree, and the fruit will fall.  
But who will soften the Englishman to the tale of our love ?  
My tender fern, he is not our own Bastar-born king  
Who would listen to our tale, and you would walk before  
    him  
In your loveliness, and melt him to sympathy !  
Léjā, léjā, O wild berry, would you leave me ?  
Léjā, léjā, though, wealth of my heart, I know  
That you are not mine, nor for me to touch, yet  
Léjā, O léjā, desire will flare in your heart ;  
Will you come then for a while to my house ?  
Léjā, léjā, O wealth of my heart, the summer rains  
Have soaked the fields, the rains of June.  
My heart blazes with passion, my flower  
(Let go my loin-cloth a moment ; the white girl is coming).  
Léjā, léjā, sweet bug of my bed, what have you done to me ?  
I see you, and all our past love leaps to remembrance.  
Why though you snuggle do you struggle, why cry and try  
To keep yourself back, though I've tumbled you down ?  
Léjā, léjā, give in, give in, shining brow,  
Or, by the Mother ! my love will become hate.  
Léjā, léjā, O wealth of my heart, the summer rains  
Have soaked the fields, the rains of June.

My heart blazes with passion, my flower !  
 (Let go my loin-cloth a moment ; the white girl is coming.)  
 Lájā, lájā, sweet saunterer, lájā, O love,  
 Lend me your jewels, for me to go to Jagdalpur fair.  
 Lájā, lájā, O love, you will remember your promise,  
 For as the deer leaves tracks, I have left an itch in your  
 body,  
 And I shall learn how to tell the English ruler about you.  
 The wild beans and berries have dried up under the hill,  
 But your memory came fresh there to me at night,  
 And I could not sleep, lájā, O lájā !  
 Yé, dé, O little goldfish, O, shining brow,  
 Do not cry over what happened last night ;  
 Lájā, lájā, come, dear vine, let us enjoy ourselves first  
 And then, if you will, tell the foreigner  
 The rain is falling, sweet bug of my bed,  
 Why should I listen to your silly pleading ?  
 Why are you striving and crying, pulling and pushing ?  
 You'll be all right, yes, you'll be all right.  
 There, there, sweet bug of my bed, dear wild berry,  
 Lend me your plough and bullocks,  
 And I will sow a crop of maize.  
 Lájā, lájā, ré lájā ré, who will play my one-stringed fiddle ?  
 All night I thought about you. Come and plunge and play in  
 my pool !  
 I will play with you, as a shuttle flashes through the warps of  
 a loom.  
 Listen, O listen to the pouring rain of June.  
 The wild beans and berries have gone dry under the hill,  
 And you tell me to sing to you about God.  
 God is everywhere in the world ; but your singer,  
 Your singer, my flower, is with you in Bastar.  
 Lájā, ré lájā, ré lájā-ré, sweet saunterer, my berry, my plaintain-  
 vine,  
 You know, one who walks on the edge of Gangamoonda lake  
 Is bogged in the mud ; but that mud is the place  
 For sowing rice seeds, lájā, lájā, O lájā !  
 Yé, dé, burn, my berry, burn, my only jewel,  
 And think and long for the night.  
 The tall plaintain-vine bears a fine cluster of fruit.

Be ready for me, dear bug of my bed, comb  
And decorate your hair, my only jewel, for to-morrow  
Desire will fire me and I shall come back to you.

[*Translated from the Halbi by W. V. Grigson.*]

## END OF A YEAR

Beyond the lamp lost in revolving darkness  
the sea, the recalcitrant sea of wind amazes;  
now when the mirror is foil to the mistletoe  
now when the winter holds up his hands of snow  
hold up your head, and at the eleventh hour  
let the fancy feelings, the spiral failings go.

Slugged by ungainly distance you and I  
beneath the same stars separately lie;  
but let our worlds grow singular, and let  
those parts be mapped some do, we would, forget;  
deserts renew as gardens, so the stars  
advise you, who for years were listeners.

Over the two white continents tonight  
the hectic children are asking for more than bread,  
but let us be grown-up, stop gathering wool  
slip with the lyric purpose of the eel  
out of the histrionic hug of evil  
without that accoucheur, the miracle.

And let us throw our weakness on the tide;  
our weakness is an army to decide  
which way the future falls, and all we have  
to open up the hinterland of love.  
O the future flaunts it on the eastern air  
as gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Of any race, colour, tongue, sex, or clime  
caught in this humbling Caudine fork of time,  
both young and old whose hearts lift to the hills  
or lilt through the paper hoops of festivals,  
bear with the spider moment, the crazy dead:  
the generations summer in our stead.

KENNETH ALLOTT

## A LITTLE PIG'S TALE

*Straight or Curly.* By Clifford Dymont. (Dent. 2s. 6d.)

Mr. Clifford Dymont will deserve watching—already deserves watching—as an index to the intellectual and spiritual sleepy sickness of the English middlebrows. He is writing, with some skill, an out of date kind of verse which belongs to the time of books about the Cotswolds and the Icknield Way, and so he is readily published in *Life and Letters*, *The Listener*, *The London Mercury*, *English* (Magazine of the English Association), *The Spectator*, *The Sunday Times*, *Time and Tide*, etc., etc., is inevitably compared to W. H. Davies, and equally admired by middle-aging ‘intellectuals’ of the B.B.C. (b. 1890-1895), Mr. Siegfried Sassoon (probably), Mr. Edmund Blunden (no doubt), Mr. Michael Roberts, and all literary journalists.

There is nothing to stop you in his verses, so they are soothing. There are “reminiscences” in them of the innocent Blake ; though if you do stop, you realise that they say nothing, or nonsense, or what is obvious :

*Every person walking by  
Was born in someone's agony*

There are bits of Emily Dickinson or W. H. D. :

*And conscientious bees  
Convey life to and fro.*

There are bits of Mr. Dymont being alternately God and the least of God's good things. There are bits of being the miniature romantic irrational—not Hopkins' “weeded landslips of the shore,” but

*Now, I admire  
The irrational charm of a little pig's tail ;  
The sparrow's erratic flight.*

There are chunks which would fit absolutely in *Poems of To-day* ; and frequently there are wee mysteries which might, if you did not stop and look, appear to be the white pure excrescences of

uneducated intuition. (Short-sighted people do very often have to pick a horse mushroom to find out if its gills are grey.)

Maybe there is something in Mr. Dymont. But if there is, if he is going to be anything else than a sociological specimen, he must prepare to give up all these elderly patrons who search so pathetically for quiet guinea-pigs to invest with genius. The best way to begin is to nip their wan fingers the moment they push the next weekly carrot into his box. And Mr. Dymont ought to be warned that sleepy sickness often leaves a queer moral effect on the little boys it doesn't kill.

## NEWS

An 'English Number' of *Poetry* edited by W. H. Auden and (principally, we suspect) Michael Roberts was published in January (232 East Erie St., Chicago, 25c.), containing poems by Auden, Dylan Thomas, Stephen Spender, Graham Hough, Ronald Bothall, William Empson, our Michael, T. W. Eason (one of our Michael's Grammar School boys from Newcastle), George Barker, Edwin Muir, Lilian Bowes Lyon (save us !), R. E. Warner, Richard Church, Clifford Dymont (see above), Ll. Wyn Griffith, Roger Roughton, James Reeves, Charles Madge.

As an illustration of the literary game as being played now in England (our Michael batting at the wicket with a Woolworth alpenstock) no doubt it was quite 'representative'—(though where were Humbert Wolfe, the Sitwell triplets, Roy Campbell, Alfred Noyes, Lawrence Whistler, and George Reavey?). As an exhibition of the best poems being written in England it was just as much a farce as J. C. Squire's anthologies or the Poetry Review to which our Michael contributed so long.

\* \* \* \*

Self-exported from Spain : Robert Graves, Laura Riding, Roy Campbell.

Self-imported to Spain : W. H. Auden.

\* \* \* \*

The Group Theatre (of Gt. Newport St., W.C. 2) now issues a very small roneotyped periodical, which goes free to members. Recent numbers have had in them the dialogue on poets and the theatre written by Louis MacNeice.

\* \* \* \*

“When the Poet Laureate writes a prose story he generally finds for it a title which has the essential quality of distinctiveness. The phrase eggs and bacon is familiar at every English breakfast table, but *Eggs and Baker* makes a fresh twist.”

*The Book Window.*

## BOOKS LATELY PUBLISHED

*Obviously a small review such as New Verse cannot give a full report to its readers of all the new books which should interest them. We intend from now on to list the new books of verse, criticism, etc., which seem to have some value, adding more than a note of exposition to those which are virtuously or viciously eminent.*

*Forward from Liberalism.* By Stephen Spender. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.)

*We're Not Going to Do Nothing.* By C. Day Lewis. (Left Review. 6d.)

Mr. Spender's book is an intellectual embarrassment. He reconstructs in it the quivering bridge of boats, heaving with the irregular tides and torrents of his emotion, by which he has walked from the liberalism he grew up in as son of Harold Spender and nephew of J. A. Spender, to his present uneasy communism. Frankly, the naked appearance of this author arguing with his past, convincing himself, and bravely damaging the soft soles of idealism on the hard flints of the dictatorship of the proletariat, irritates one like a damp warm day. Some petulant bits of self-righteousness, delivery of observations on Mill from one who writes as though he had read him for the first time for compiling this book, and rather a slobbery flow of sentences turn embarrassment into depression. It does not do to think of the political writings of Wordsworth or Coleridge or Shelley or Patmore. Written by Mr. Beverley Nichols on a star young debutante, this might be a remarkable book; written by a proclaimed young poet, it is deplorable. Chosen by the Left Book Club, it comments destructively on the intellectual and emotional condition of the English Left. Mr. Gollancz needs some injections.

Mr. Day Lewis's pamphlet answers Aldous Huxley on "active pacifism," Mr. Aldous Huxley hand in soft hand with the Rev. Dick Sheppard. It is badly written, badly argued, badly informed, a silliness answering a silliness in dead terms of literature.

## **POLITE ESSAYS**

**EZRA POUND**

Essays on contemporary literary problems by the most fruit-  
ful critic of our times. **7/6**

## **THE ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES**

Translated by DUDLEY FITTS and ROBERT FITZGERALD,  
two of the most interesting of the younger poets. **6/-**

## **ANABASIS**

**ST.-J. PERSE**

Translated, with an introduction by T. S. ELIOT. **5/-**

## **WHITE HORSES OF VIENNA** **KAY BOYLE**

"An event."—*Sunday Times*. "Has in every case not only the exquisite  
surface precision, but, also, the latent potency of poetry."—*Observer*. **7/6**

**24 Russell Square**

**FABER & FABER**

**London, W.C.1**

## **TUITION IN GERMAN**

- Beginners can start by reading selected poems by RILKE without any previous knowledge of the language. The Editor of *New Verse* is ready to recommend this method from personal experience. Advanced students could read HÖLDERLIN, GEORG TRAKL, DER BRENNER (SÖREN KIERKEGAARD, THEODOR HÄCKER; JOSEF LEITGBB), KARL KRAUS, THEODOR DÄUBLER, STEFAN GEORGE.
- Apply for interview by letter only. DR. HERMANN WALDE, 43, GLOUCESTER TERRACE, LANCASTER GATE, W.2.

---

*Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* Edited  
by Humphry House. (Oxford University Press. 25s.)

Nearly all the unpublished extant papers (except for letters which will come separately) of Hopkins are collected here, well edited by a self-effacing editor. It is probably true to say that the notebooks, odd papers, lecture notes, sermons, commentary on the exercises of St. Ignatius, early poems and drafts, and the few much to be admired drawings amplify rather than alter the revealed nature of Hopkins. Yet intrinsically this book has much value, and gives much delight.

*From Anne to Victoria.* Edited by Bonamy Dobrée. (Cassell. 10s. 6d.)

The forty essays in this book contain one on Byron (which is very good indeed) by T. S. Eliot, one on Pope by W. H. Auden, on Keats and Shelley by Stephen Spender, and on Blake by H. G. Porteus.

*Polite Essays.* By Ezra Pound. (Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.)

The slap-dash old Yankee culture-chemist on the trapeze.

*The Poetry of Ezra Pound.* By Alice Steiner Amdur. (Oxford University Press. 5s.)

*The Nonsensibus.* Edited by D. B. Wyndham Lewis. (Methuen. 8s. 6d.)

In many ways an admirable anthology of what we please to call 'nonsense' verse, though the trouble of having a sense of humour is that you have no sense at all of science. Still, too much deliberate nonsense does not spoil the rest of the book, worth buying for (among other things) the poems of that peculiar man, the Rev. Sandys Wason.

---

All communications to 3, WILDWOOD TERRACE, LONDON, N.W. 3. Manuscripts, for loss of which no responsibility can be taken, cannot be returned unless they are accompanied by an addressed envelope, stamped or with an international reply coupon.

The annual subscription to NEW VERSE is 3s. 6d. (or for Canada and America 1 dollar). Single numbers will be sent for 7d. to any part of the world.

---

NEW VERSE is published for the proprietors at No. 3, Wildwood Terrace, N.W. 3, and printed by BILLING AND SONS LTD., Guildford and Esher.