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NO. 7

The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Edward H. Pfeiffer | Louise Stedman Bostick

Eleanor Hammond | Winifred M. Heath

Virginia Burton Bradley and others

GATHERING FIGS

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The Lyric West

No. 7

A Magazine Of Verse

November, 1921

Edited by Grace Atherton Dennen

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CONTENTS

<u>She Dreams of Autumn</u>	<i>Edward H. Pfeiffer</i>	1
<u>The Gift of Beauty</u>	<i>John R. McCarthy</i>	3
<u>Greasewood</u>	<i>Gertrude Crank</i>	3
<u>Music</u>	<i>Beulah Bay</i>	4
<u>Snatches of Song</u>	<i>Rosamond Eddy</i>	4
<u>The Lifted Cup</u>	<i>Jessie Rittenhouse</i>	6
<u>Song of a Mountain Flower</u>	<i>Louise Stedman Bostick</i>	7
<u>Deferred</u>	<i>Dorothea Myrto Childs</i>	7
<u>The Northwestern Wheat Field</u>	<i>Mary Graham Lund</i>	8
<u>Mountain Water Song</u>	<i>Glenn Ward Dresbach</i>	10
<u>Los Angeles</u>	<i>Pauline Barrington</i>	10
<u>Sky Scape</u>	<i>Eleanor Hammond</i>	13
<u>The Visitor</u>	<i>Louise Stedman Bostick</i>	13
<u>Purity</u>	<i>W. H. Lench</i>	14
<u>Gladness</u>	<i>W. H. Lench</i>	14
<u>Loneliness</u>	<i>W. H. Lench</i>	14
<u>Twilight</u>	<i>Power Dalton</i>	15
<u>My Thoughts</u>	<i>Power Dalton</i>	15
<u>Leaves</u>	<i>Mary Brent Whiteside</i>	16
<u>Ars Immortalis</u>	<i>William Foster Elliot</i>	17
<u>Life</u>	<i>Winifred M. Heath</i>	18
<u>Emptiness</u>	<i>David Grokowsky</i>	18
<u>Phantoms</u>	<i>Eleanor Hammond</i>	19
<u>Chinatown</u>	<i>Edna Goit Brinrnall</i>	19
<u>The Old Pueblo</u>	<i>Lillian White Spencer</i>	20
<u>Consolation</u>	<i>Mary Brent Whiteside</i>	20
<u>Mount Hamilton</u>	<i>Anna Rozilla Crever</i>	21
<u>Truancy</u>	<i>Charles Wharton Stork</i>	21
<u>Half-Light Happiness</u>	<i>Charles Wharton Stork</i>	22
<u>To Heifetz</u>	<i>Charles Wharton Stork</i>	23

Gathering Figs

Virginia Burton Bradley 23

Notes

24

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Edward H. Pfeiffer

She Dreams of Autumn

I dreamed that the children were gathering leaves
In our old town.

Autumn was shaking them from the trees,

Down....

down....

down....

(The children sing :)

“Autumn, autumn, fling us down your golden leaves.

Send the maples’ arms a-shaking, make their
fingers fling

Right and left and all about, high and low and under
them,

Coins of gold that jingle while we dance and sing!

“Autumn, autumn, see us children gathering

Leaves with golden points that gleam like
sunbeams overhead.

We are sweeping, we are heaping leaves and leaves
and more of them.

They are skipping down the street—who says that
they are dead?”

“Children! Children!” “Mothers, we are listening.”

“Pile the leaves up neatly now, and we shall make a
fire.”

“Are they really dead, mother, all these golden
running leaves ?”)

“We shall do as we are told and pile them higher,
higher.”

“Mother!” “Mother!” “Look, the heaps are ready now!”

“All right! Sing again. We’ll bring the matches
soon.”

“Autumn, autumn, here are all your golden leaves!

“See their golden fingers that go fumbling for the
moon!

“Autumn, autumn, see, we light the golden fires;

Carefully we hold the matches, watch the busy
flame

Pour among the golden leaves like silent golden
waterstreams.

Just now, a blue smoke from out the gold-heap
came!

“Autumn, autumn! Smell the leaves, the burning
leaves.

They are golden flowers now. Their perfume fills the
air!

See, the curling smoke of them! See, the sky-blue
breath of them!

Every pile is singing as we dance around the glare.

“Autumn, autumn! Thank you for your golden leaves.

Thank you for the golden flames—the burning
golden hours!
Autumn, autumn! Thank you for the golden sun!
Thank you for the golden leaves that swell to golden
flowers !

“And see us, see us! dancing round the golden heaps,
Singing, hand in hand, a-whirl, a mist before us
spread.
Fling us down your golden leaves, your children that
have drunk the sun,
Whose golden light turns golden flame, who never
can be dead!”

I have wakened The children are dancing still
In our old town....
The dream is over, and life comes fluttering
Down....
down....

John R. McCarthy

The Gift of Beauty

“There is no glory like the glory of autumn.
The earliest promises of fresh-lipped April,
The budding, blooming and bearing are all fulfilled;;
The summer has spent herself in mighty deeds,
Feeding the hungry world and feeding
The eager builders of new worlds to be;
The summer is weary and happy with labors done
And wears her autumnal guerdon of purple and gold,
The gift of beauty for the days that were.

Gertrude Crank

Greasewood

When I smell greasewood
After rain,
I think the desert's talking.
It's saying something,
Very plain,
That I somehow never can,
Though I try and try and try,
Understand.

Beulah May

Music

The quiet of an island sheltered sea,
Hush of the woods at even, or a pool
In some dark cavern where blind fishes flee,
A marble Venus dreamy eyed and cool,
The tiger's grace, the serpent's deviltry.

The fire of polished opals burning clear
At some dim Buddha's shrine, or on a waste
A sculptured king, long dead, now guarding here
With stern set eyes, his kingdom of the past.
The lure of Indian music that doth send
The venom'd cobra in a mystic dance,
The rush of waters, falling without end
Down some dark cavern, mystery and romance.

The chime of far-off bells, and shadows playing
Among the branches of a wind-tossed tree,
Myths and illusions, haunted spectres straying
— In twilight lands, till music sets them free.

Rosamond Eddy

Snatches of Song

AT EVENING

Eyes of the dusk, lips of the dark;
Voices of trees and mountains,—hark!
Song of the sky, tune of the night,
Tender and joyful, sweet and slight;
Over the streets, over the town,
Fluttering gently down and down.
Glimmer and flicker, gleam and start,—
Songs there are in my inmost heart.

REGRET

The silences that loved this place are gone.
Only the murmuring grasses desolate
In the wind remain.
The silences that were content are fled,
And the restlessness of the wind goes on forever.

THY NAME

Why did the joy of thee burst up
Into this great flame?
Would I could call thy beauty
By its high name.

Sometimes the stars can speak it,
Sometimes the breeze.
Murmuring have I heard it
Through sleepy trees.

Often it sings and thunders
Along the sea,
Wrapped in a great unearthly
Ecstasy.

Oh, how I love thy beauty
Of white, white flame,
Longing to know, and utter
Thy mighty name.

Jessie Rittenhouse

The Lifted Cup

THE SECRET

I go in vesture spun by hands
 Upon no loom of earth,
I dwell within a shining house
 That has no walls nor hearth;

I live on food more exquisite
 Than honey of the bee,
More delicate than manna,
 It fails to nourish me;

But none may see my shining house,
 Nor taste my food so rare,
And none may see my moon-spun robe
 Nor my star-powdered hair.

UNSUNG

The songs I have not sung to you
Will wake me in the night
And hover in the dark like birds
Whose wings are tipped with light.

Like birds with restless, eager wings
That quiver for their fight,
The songs I have not sung to you
Will wake me in the night.

THE MIRACLE

“They told me miracles had gone
The way of childish tales,
And that to call them back again
Not any dream avails.

It may be so to duller folk
Who do not know like me
How cold gray skies may break to rose
And thrill with prophecy.

Louise Stedman Bostick

Song of a Mountain Flower

Little soft wind of the south,
 Why don't you come to me?
For the harvest moon rises tonight,
 And pinion nuts drop from the tree.
Little gray wind of the south,
 Shall I be faithless to you?
For the west wind sings of the reddening sky,
 And the cold north wind is blue.

Little soft wind of the south,
 In what lonely hills do you fly?
For my heart is streaked crimson by you,
 And my soul is a butterfly.
Little soft wind of the south,
 Come back, come back to me,
For my petals are dripping like rain,
 Under the tamarisk tree.

And when you pass this way at dawn,
 In the Apriltime,
Will you carry my ashes close to your heart,
 Little soft wind of mine?

Dorothea Myrto Childs

Deferred

AFTER Spring had fled ...
Came rain—a little late:
Awakening tender shoots
Among the dead grasses.

After youth had fled...
Came love—a little late:
Awakening tender memories
Within the sealed heart.

Mary Graham Lund

The Northwestern Wheat Field

I am young! I am young!
Lastborn of the fertile sea!
Dank and dripping stale sea odors,
I rose from the inland sea.
Desolate and shamed, I lay,
Till the Great White Glacier came
Bearing fresh breezes from the Northern sea,
Covering, smothering, burying
The dank, the foul—
Shutting out the unkind sun.

Long and sweet the restful dreaming,
Wonderful was the waking!
All the dank sea odors gone!
Fresh and sweet were all the breezes;
Crystal clear the little pools;
Brightly green the newborn grasses.
Shy at first, but growing bolder,
Came land creatures to my borders.
Feathered flocks here made their home,
Shining gray and gleaming blue,
Darting birds that in their feathers
Caught the rainbow as they flew.

Life was glad and life was gay
On the day the buffalo came—

Giant herds that with their bellowing
Roused sea-memories long forgot.
After them the stealthy Indian,
Stern of face and grave of thought.
Him my prairies gladly gave
What he asked and all he sought.

Till the white man came, impatient,
Grasping all my meager treasure.
Asking gifts I had not ready.
Fled the glad free life I knew,
Desolate, again, I lay—
My virginal prairies lay,
Kissed by the sun in hot passion
Pampered by frosts,
Piling high the blankets of snow;
Yielding at last to Science,
Yielding to steam-plow and disc,
Bearing the prince of grains—
The favorite grain of man.

Oh, Bold Science,
Swift Ravisher of prairies,
Leave it not to vagrant winds
To caress,
To flirtatious snows
To pamper and coddle
Thy prairie!
Be not ravisher,

But husband !
So shall the youthful prairie
Be glad mother forever !

Glenn Ward Dresbach

Mountain Water Song

What western starlight caught in some vast sweep
Of rock and ice surged down on inland seas
Was run in streams that now such waters leap
To flash and ripple in the mountain breeze!

Here is an Age-old draught to cool the lips. . .
Thrilled senses urge to it and hands would stay
The slender flow that through cooled fingers slips
With wonder, but no wonder takes away.

O, I have drained such draughts in early dawn
And there was understanding with the trees
And grass was good to rest the head upon
And earth was murmurous with verities.

My heart was dancer with the leaves that swayed
Upon a bough that almost touched the brook,
And it was singer with a thrush that made
A song from drops of water that he took.

Pauline Barrington

Los Angeles

About a mission it began to grow,
The City of the Angels long ago;
A Spanish mission, red-tiled,
Whose palm-fringed plaza smiled
Near the desert's rim;
Built by the Fathers to the Cross,
Built by the Fathers to the Virgin.

Cars—cars—cars—
Steam cars, electric cars and gasoline cars
Overrun the city, crowding
The long roads to the sea and mountains.

Silver ribbon roads cut through
The orange and the lemon groves
The gray-green olive trees,
Dust-coated by the desert breeze
Blowing and spraying
The artesian well fountains.
Cars—cars—cars—
They have put out the stars
And filled the silence of the nights
With their horns and big headlights.

The clanging trolley cars blare,
“Watch us grow!”

The half-skyscrapers glare
And crow.
Chinatown with its lotteries and its tongs,
Sonoratown with its vendettas and its songs,
The Indians from the reservations
Watch with stolid grace,
And inscrutable face.
The tourists and their relations
From Papeete and Tokio,
Malay and Singapore,
Calcutta, Cairo,
Paris, London, Rome,
New York, Baltimore,
Chicago, Needles then—
All around and back again
Come looking for a home;
Come searching sanctuary, health,
Reputation, wealth
Or rest.
Men of all sorts
From far ports,
To this City of the Angels,
Where the sun burns in the West.
The City goes on growing,
Piling up houses, in a mad quest
To cover more space
On the earth's broad breast.
There is an ugly hurrying,
A hideous scurrying
Of the rats,
Of crawling vermin in the cellars,

And the bats.
There are the artificial and the stupid
Who do not care;
The old, withered, worn out, done,
Crowds of moving feet,
Up and down the dusty street,
Searching for God
Somewhere in the sun.

The Fathers built the mission long ago;
Around it the City began to grow.
The mission bells still ring against the sky,
Muffled with dust,
Crackled with rust;
Unheard in the crowded streets,
Like an old heart missing beats;
A song of days gone by,
Finding its way deep in the rhythm
Of the struggles and battles of today.

Eleanor Hammond

Sky Scape

The moon
Was a yellow toy balloon
Caught among the tree branches.

But before I could climb and capture it
The string broke,
It floated upward
And bumped against the zenith.

I hope
None of the star points there
Will puncture it.

Louise Stedman Bostick

The Visitor

This time
Love came to my heart
A transient, amiable guest,
Striving to please.
He pulled the weeds
In the ragged old garden,
And planted a whole row
Of pale blue larkspur.
He polished the tarnished brasses
Of the door plate,
And hung portieres
As crimson as blood
In the empty hallway.
Then he departed,
With his hat in his manicured hand,
Smiling like a gentleman.

W. H. Lench

Purity

As an iceberg floating in a sea
Of green and purple, whose
Turrets sparkle white in midday sun
I would be pure.

W. H. Lench

Gladness

As a tiny bird darts
Among pale yellow flowers
Gathering perfumed dew:
So, I, gather all life's joys
While constantly within my heart
There is a soft low humming.

W. H. Lench

Loneliness

I was lonely—
Lonely as the moths attracted by
The glare of street lights just after dusk
Dancing in utter weariness
Until the dawn.

Lonely as the waves
That dash their souls to pieces
On barren shores.

Lonely as the silence of the desert
At summer's midnight—
Lonely as a garden-loving moonbeam
In the uncanny vastness of Polar seas.

So I was lonely—
While the cheap laughter of men and women fell
 around me
And they held their naked hearts
In the palms of their fat, sweaty hands.

Power Dalton

Twilight

I sit within my lonely room,
A book upon my knee—
Oh, I shall soon be happy,
Reading cheerfully.

I fear that I should draw the shade
To shut the twilight out,
The thrushes in the ilex tree
Are raising such a rout.

I cannot keep my thoughts in peace;
No blade of grass is still,
The poplar trees are crying,
The south wind on the hill

Whispers of moon petals
Scattered on the sea.
O God, quench all your beauty—
Love has gone from me.

Power Dalton

My Thoughts

By day, my thoughts are pretty things,
Very sweet to see,
Lovely as pale rose candlelight,
Like ladies at a tea.

At night, they go in tatters
Under a darkling sky
Their faces writhe like bleeding hearts—
And oh, they wail and cry!

Mary Brent Whiteside

Leaves

*Why must she stir again—she that was sleeping;
Shiver and tremble, and shaken with weeping,
Hear a lost voice where no voice can be calling?
Only the sound of leaves—yellow leaves falling;
Only the voice of leaves and the wind sighing,
Out of the north, where the spent year is dying.*

Once April flung a challenge, and then, flower shod,
Ran silent as her own new leaves across the sod,—
Bright April from some long lost primrose place,
When there was light of morning in that face.
And young love called her with enchanted breath—
Young love, that deathless, has gone down to death.

*Why must she grieve again—she that is dying;
Call, with no voice but the wind's voice, replying?
Requiem winds from earth's desolate places,
Where the leaves fall, with their tired gold faces?
Why, for that spirit of passion and fire,
Must the wild dirges rise higher and higher?*
Once there were dreams, but now her cup of dreams is
done
Drained like a shaken flower chalice by the sun;
For she had missed the spell that April weaves

Into the living fabric of her leaves,
That, with all patience and unfaltering breath,
Yield to the arms of one true lover—Death.

William Foster Elliot

Ars Immortalis

BEHOLD her plight of whom old singers wooed
Bright births of song:
Her body men hale forth on ways bestrewed
With scourge and thong;

Her terrible wan grace and famished mouth
New faiths esteem
Profit of lust, and her importunate drouth
A harlot's dream.

Tear-marred and grey, her limbs worn sharp with pain,
Silent she stands
Before men's councils, pleading for their slain
With empty hands.

Naked her sides against the bitter flame
Of wars to come;
Her salutation scorn, her pathways shame,
Her prophets dumb.

Yet do her bosom's fresh young fruits belie
Each scar and bruise
With blush of that more perilous coquetry
Free maidens use.

And where soiled hair to drooping shoulder clings

The hot glints run
Into a dream of arched and golden wings,
Strong in the sun.

Dream of man's soul which is imperious still,
Strong to replace
Life's broken fame with her desirous will,
Love with her face,—

Sole face of love to which our youth may cry
With man's belief,
When all gods else have skulked behind the sky,
Or died of grief!

Winifred M. Heath

Life

Sing not to me the lovely things of earth.
I hate your linkéd numbers, sickly sweet.
I who have been to Hell!
What are these things to me?
This pallid, pinkish thing ye have called love,
What should it be to me?
I who have seen the hungry lust of man,
The mark of the brute beast,
The scathing flame,
Burn all to ashes countless woman souls.

Sing not to me the moon upon the sea.
I who have seen the stricken souls of men
Beat out their agony on jagged rocks.
Nor sing the beauty of the distant stars.
Have I not held out anguished hands to them,
And gathered nothing but mine own despair?

If you must sing—then sing me deep and low,
In minor key, the anguish of this earth,
This changing misery men have called life,
The outer darkness I have known so well.
Make me a song to match my shadowed soul.
A song of Hell!

David Grokowsky

Emptiness

Little people
Are weeping
Bitterly . . . piteously
In far Kyoto.

Hiroshito Michimomiya
Has left:—

It is cold . . . cold
And the trees are bare.

A great emptiness
Has gripped the world:

He has left ..

Eleanor Hammond

Phantoms

My heart is an old, old house,
Deserted and long sealed up,
Tenanted by ghosts of dead desires.

And as I wander through the long grey halls
Or linger on the crumbling stairs
Always their footfalls whisper through the dust behind
 me
From empty room to room
Of my dead heart.

Edna Goit Brintnall

Chinatown

A low narrow doorway—indistinct stair
A long narrow passage—ending—where ?
A blue tipped gaslight's steady flare,
A rodent that ventures, but does not dare,
A silent figure, with vacant stare,
A thin reed pipe, tip-tilted chair
A bright carved balcony high in the air—
A scarlet geranium—who put it there?

Lillian White Spencer

The Old Pueblo

Tesuque, waiting in her russet field,
Peers gaunt and brown through frowzy veils of trees.
Green were her ages; now, old leaf, she flees
Before the winds of time and will not yield
While autumn glows upon her battered shield,
But sits, remembering far jubilees,
In scarlet rags mid gaudy potteries,
And prays that withering be long concealed—

While, from the dreadful acre where her dead
Lie in earth's barren womb, oblivion,
With gray breath, wanders near a gleam of red,
The Christian chapel's lamp, yet, still would shun
An altar hill. Though evening shadows spread,
There, Aztec chants salute the rising sun.

Mary Brent Whiteside

Consolation

“They came to tell me that you were dead—
You who could never die,
And straightway you waved your hand to me,
When a little breeze went by.

They told me your heart of love was still,
But lo! for our love’s sake,
You let me hear its throb in the grass,
Before my heart could break.

They told me your singing lips were closed,
So not a sigh came through,
But love and beauty are in the world,
And these are part of you.

Anna Roxzilla Crever

Mount Hamilton

Mount Hamilton, pride of the valley,
Mount Hamilton, king of the range,
Stands robed in the purple of distance,
His massive crown jeweled with domes
Far-famed in the reading of stars.

But now in the crystalline ether
He changes, our king of the range—
He is penitent priest, whose gray cassock
Is rent with dark canyon and gorge,
Breast scarred with the smiting of boulders,
Face hooded and gaunt with the fast.

And after the storm he is prophet
Snow-wrapt and holy with dream,
Rebuking the frivolous foot-hills
So silken with sunset, and gay
With garments of crimson and carmine—
Bright gala-day garments of rose.

Mount Hamilton, regal and far-famed,
Mount Hamilton, pride of the vale,
Now king, and now priest, and now prophet
By the varying will of the air,
The whim of the wandering storm.

Charles Wharton Stork

Truancy

WHEN I think of the sea,
My soul is a ship,
And through the green waves
I wondrously slip.

When I think of the sky,
My soul is a white
And fleecy-fair cloud
That swims in the light.

When I think of the woods,
My soul is a maze
Of whispering green
That flutters and sways.

My soul through the world
May wander alone;
My body leans back
As still as a stone.

Charles Wharton Stork

Half-Light Happiness

My happiness now is a lamp too frail
To sparkle in smiles of glee,
Its taper of joy so tiny-pale
You may think it a tear maybe.

But mine is the gladness the dark woods hold
Leaf-hid from the laughing blue,
The rapture of fern and moss and mould
Where a spent beam touches the dew.

And mine is the bliss of the evening trance,
When the ardors of sunset die,
When a star-knight levels his silver lance
And pierces the purpling sky.

“A poem is a moment of vision caught in a net of beauty.” Many of us have the moment of vision. It is divinely vouchsafed far oftener than we realize or acknowledge. The beneficence of sunlight on the hills, the grace of nodding roses, and straightway the vision comes. When we have caught it, we are blinded with it. Pencil can hardly pass over paper quickly enough to catch the gleam and joy of it. At last it is down in black and white, we rest satisfied, we have achieved, we do not wish to change our written words. But we have accomplished only half our task. It must be a beautiful net that imprisons our captive vision. Here should begin faithful, careful revision, until beautiful words, fresh and convincing, are caught and woven into the right net to hold the struggling thought. Is not that a partial explanation of what is wrong with some of our modern poetry? The vision is there, but the net is ragged, unfinished, without beauty.

Charles Wharton Stork

To Heifetz

You cease. We clap and clamor;
Your wine has made us mad!
But lo! your lips unsmiling,
Your eyes aloof and sad.

Perhaps those eyes are gazing
On lonely leagues of snow,
Grim forests, gray horizons
They knew once long ago.

Perhaps they look on battles
Where men are crushed like flies,
Perhaps on blazing cities
Where hate-born factions rise.

Your glance is fixed and sombre
As by some dread control.
You that have shown such wondrous things,
You have not shown your soul.

Virginia Burton Bradley

Gathering Figs

High in the tree-top a-gathering figs,
I rifle the wealth of the unwilling twigs,
Stealing the treasures from leafy retreat,—
Purple-green beauties bursting with sweet.
Sunshine and shower, each filtering through,
Rendered them essence of honey and dew.

Up with my neighbors, the birds and the bees,
Mingling their music in different keys,
Filling my basket again and again,—
Food for the gods is still better for men.
Rich my reward and I whistle and dream
Of figs that are floating in honey and cream.

Notes

Each month brings to The Lyric West new friends and new contributors. In this November issue we greet with especial pleasure Jessie Rittenhouse, well known singer of sweet lyrics, and Charles Wharton Stork, the editor of Contemporary Verse. The poems of Miss Rittenhouse, published here, will appear next month in her new volume, to be called "The Lifted Cup." Those of Mr. Stork will be included in his forthcoming volume. Power Dalton and Mary Brent Whiteside are new to our pages, but familiar names in eastern magazines. It is the great privilege of The Lyric West to bring each month before its readers the sterling work of new or less known writers. Such verses as those of William Foster Elliott and W. H. Lynch can not fail to win for them friends and appreciation. The names of the judges for the Esther Yarnell prize will be announced in the December issue.

Beginning with the January issue the subscription price of The Lyric West will be raised to \$2.00 per year.

More poems especially enjoyed: August number, The Shadow Trail by Harry Noyes Pratt; September number, The Alien by Neeta Marquis; October number, The Believer by Ted Oson; Lonely Street by Caroline Ainslie; The Dancer; The Moon by Dorothy S. Lyndall; Pastels by Grace Atherton Dennen; The Sand Devil by Thomas T. Calkins; Two Men by Paul Tanaquil; Thunderdrums by Lew Sarett; Sorrow by Virginia McCormick; The Japanese Cycle by Alice Roger Hager.

Current Opinion for October reprinted, among poems of distinction, Evening in the West by John Drury in the July-August Lyric West, and the Literary Digest for October reprinted The Little Road by Ellen Morrill Mills.

Statement of Ownership, Management,
Circulation,
Etc., Required by the Act of Congress
of August 24, 1912,

Of The Lyric West, published monthly at Los Angeles, Calif., for October 1st, 1921. State of California,) ss. County of Los Angeles. § Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Grace Atherton Dennen, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the owner of The Lyric West, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Grace Atherton Dennen, 1139 W. 27th St. Los Angeles. Editor, Grace Atherton Dennen, 1139 W, 27th St., Los Angeles. ‘ Associate Editor, Esther Yarnell. ‘ Business Managers: Grace Atherton Dennen, Los Angeles; Wm. C. Garner, 1607 Humboldt Bank Bldg., San Francisco, Calif. 2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of the total amount of stock.) Grace Atherton Dennen, 1139 W. 27th St., Los Angeles. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the

names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

GRACE ATHERTON DENNEN.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this first day of October, 1921. (SEAL) HENRY P. CAIN. (My commission expires May 24th, 1924.)