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NO. 9

The LYRIC WEST

A Magazine of American Verse



IN THIS ISSUE

Mary Carolyn Davies | Eleanor Mary Titus

Edna Davis Romig | Neeta Marquis

Elizabeth Axtell and others

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The Lyric West

Vol. VI, No. 9

A Magazine Of American Verse

June, 1927

Edited by Allison Gaw and Ethelean Tyson Gaw

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>The Laughter of the Sea</u>	<i>Mary Carolyn Davies</i>	241
<u>The Price</u>	<i>Ethel Brooks Stillwell</i>	242
<u>Cerebral</u>	<i>Lilian White Spencer</i>	248
<u>Orientele</u>	<i>Joan Dareth Prosper</i>	249
<u>Inheritance</u>	<i>Alberta Bancroft</i>	250
<u>Smoke</u>	<i>Eleanor Mary Titus</i>	250
<u>The Pool of the Dryads</u>	<i>Alaine B. Boswell</i>	251
<u>Words</u>	<i>Hellene Seaman</i>	251
<u>Song of the Summer Stars</u>	<i>Clinton Scollard</i>	252
<u>"Who Consorts with Wisdom —"</u>	<i>J. Corson Miller</i>	253
<u>"Ay, but to Lose our Bottles in the Pool"</u>	<i>Edna Davis Romig</i>	253
<u>Jubal</u>	<i>Charles Ballard</i>	254
<u>The Soul of Cleopatra</u>	<i>B. Y. Williams</i>	255
<u>Bees in the Honeysuckle</u>	<i>Ethel Brodt Wilson</i>	256
<u>Dawn</u>	<i>Noel Stearn</i>	257
<u>A Believer</u>	<i>Snow Longley</i>	258
<u>Crickets</u>	<i>Neeta Marquis</i>	259
<u>Shadow of Night</u>	<i>Eleanor Mary Titus</i>	259
<u>The Summer Rain</u>	<i>Anna Catherine Markham</i>	260
<u>Morning and Evening</u>	<i>Lilian Lewis</i>	260
<u>In Memoriam — Grace Atherton Dennen</u>		261
<u>The Artistry of the Stanza, XVIII</u>	<i>A.B.</i>	261
<u>Review—Cyclops' Eye by Joseph Auslander</u>	<i>L.B.M.</i>	268
<u>Review—High Passage by T. H. Ferril</u>	<i>Elizabeth Axtell</i>	269

The Lyric West

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With Our Contributors

J. Corson Miller is the author of *Veils of Samite*, published in 1921 with an introduction by William Stanley Braithwaite. He is also a well known contributor of verse and prose to the *Nation*, *Forum*, *Bookman*, and *Vanity Fair*, and to practically all of the poetry magazines.

Mrs. Anna Catherine Markham is the Secretary of the Poetry Society of America and the wife of Edwin Markham, "the dean of American poets."

Charles Ballard, of the faculty of the Morris High School, New York City, has published *God's Bird and Other Poems*. He appears frequently in *Poet Lore*, the *English Journal*, the *Educational Review*, *Musical Advance*, and the *Christian Register*, as well as the various verse journals.

Edna Davis Romig, of the English faculty of the University of Colorado, has contributed articles to the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Outlook*, the *Yale Review*, and other magazines, while her contributions to Shakespearean research appear in the official *Series* of her University. Her verse may be found in the *Poetry Review* of London, the *Buccaneer*, and, as she says, "other obscure but decent periodicals."

Clinton Scollard, Mary Carolyn Davies, Joan Dareth Prosper, Albert Bancroft, Ethel Brodt Wilson, Lilian White Spencer, and Noel Stearn we number among the most valued of our regular contributors.

Ethel Brooks Stillwell, Neeta Marquis, and Snow Longley are three Los Angeles women whose past work has received much favorable comment.

Of the nineteen contributors to this issue six come from New York, one from Ohio, one from Wisconsin, one from Colorado, two from Washington, one from Oregon, and seven from California.

Mary Carolyn Davies

The Laughter of the Sea

Where moons upon the fern lie white,
 Beneath the forest's arm sleep we,
Where, waking, we can hear at night
 The lovely laughter of the sea.

The faces of the stars alone
 Peer down and watch you turn to me;
And past your laughter and my own
 Sounds the great laughter of the sea.

We kiss and laugh at all that earth
 Can do to us, and suddenly,
An ally to our little mirth,
 Comes the deep laughter of the sea.

And our defiance, in a breath,
 Strikes fire from yours, O strong of will —
Dear Sea, who laughs with us at Death,
 And makes our laughter surer still.

Ethel Brooks Stillwell

The Price

The first clear sunshine gleams along the peaks
And strikes across the chasm to the line
Of higher, rougher, whiter peaks beyond,
Where century-built snowdrifts hang and shine,
And ancient glaciers wind their laggard ways,
Sparkling, toward the chasm. All below
Is dark and silent, wrapped in winter night.

Three hours only, when the day's at noon,
Shall gray light pierce the brooding darkness there
And see what it shall see: a silver fall;
A narrow fiord, frost-locked and hoary-walled;
A tiny village, like a swallow's nest,
Close-hung along the cliff below a rock,
A single pinnacle as bare and cold,
As gray and sinister, as death itself;
And, toiling up a steep and perilous path,
Three pygmy figures, specks against the snow.

The night was long — too long. The village folk,
To while their tedious darkling hours away,
Made merry half the night in Dagmar's house
And Severin's. With sprightly song and dance,
With wine and laughter and rough boisterous play,
The sluggard hours grew wings. The mountain walls
Rang with the echoes of old drinking songs,

With sounds of music and of revelry.

Wearied at last and insolent with wine,
Great Severin grew sullen as his eyes
Followed where Dagmar danced and danced again
With Lars, his cousin — Dagmar, whose blue eyes
Were bluer than the waters of the fiord
When June smiles on them; Dagmar, whose bright hair
Was golden as the line of sunset gold
Along the peaks when noon has passed them by;
Dagmar, whose skin was whiter than the snows
But bloomed in roses on the smooth round cheek
As soft as rose-bloom petals to the touch;

Dagmar the Beautiful.

Great Severin,

His anger mounting to a sudden flame
Forgot his hostship's debt of courtesy
And, crazed with passion, flung the two apart.
The dancing ceased. The music crashed and died.
A sudden hush fell on the house as Lars,
Still reeling from the unexpected blow,
Smiled scornfully and closed with Severin —
Great Severin, whose will was seldom crossed,
And never happily; whose Jotun frame,
Tree-trunked, bull-shouldered, rose a head above
The tallest of the little company;
Red Severin, whose great Thor-hammered arms
Were wisely feared throughout the little town.

But now — a miracle! The stripling Lars,

Fresh from the sport of Trondhjem's boxing clubs,
Wine-flushed to courage, agile, smiling, cool,
Had lightning in his fists. Great Severin,
His heavy wits the worse for too much wine,
Measured his clumsy length along the floor,
Defeated by the skill of swifter hands.

Silence, faint cheers, and silence. All agape,
Half pleased to see their giant lying low,
Yet piqued that this smooth city youth had turned
The trick themselves had failed, the startled guests
Turned doubting looks on Dagmar, whose sweet eyes
Stared, dazed and pitiful, on Severin,
Then wavered back in dumb appeal to Lars.
"She loves him!" Gathering by twos and threes
The guests found tongues in corners. "Severin
Perhaps — had reason — " So the whispers ran,
And Dagmar heard them.

"Lars, I am afraid,"

She sought him, trembling. "What am I to do?
For Severin will kill me — with his hands.
In all the village none will interfere.
I am his wife — his woman; and you know
What everyone believes and dares to say
Beneath my very roof. And Severin —
They fear him — greatly. Lars, what shall I do?"

"Fear not, sweet cousin." Even as he spoke
Lars saw the hulking form upon the floor
Shudder and curl and shake itself to life,
And knew his words were futile.

“Get your furs,
Your skates, your *skis*, and make a pack of food.”
He spoke with quick decision. “Severin
Is sober now, and I must fight again.
See what black Berserk rage is in his face!
If I win now, which I must more than doubt,
Together we will chance the mountain pass
And hope for Bergen — London. If I fail,
Then Severin will kill us both, no doubt.
And fair enough at that perhaps,” his voice
Dropped softly, “since my cousin may have cause —
A little, Dagmar?”

Dagmar’s blue eyes fell,
Her bright head bowed, and summer’s richest rose
Bloomed on her cheek and brow.

A warning shout!
Great Severin came charging. Swiftly Lars
Sprang to position, wary arm at guard,
And Dagmar’s answer singing in his ears,
“A little — *ja* — a little!”

Severin
Lunged madly, missed, and lunged and lunged again,
His deadly purpose plain upon his face
And in his bloodshot eyes; but ever Lars
Avoided, guarded, parried, swerved aside,
Conserved his lesser strength, and so at last
By sheer persistence wore his cousin down.
Great Severin, quite mad with thwarted rage,
His bull strength wasted by his futile blows,

Let lift his clumsy guard, and once again
Stretched out his Jotun length along the floor.

Quiet he lay, well stunned. Victorious Lars,
Panting for breath, his head a dizzy whirl,
Turned to the silent gaping company,
Smiled scornfully, and laid a bloody hand
On Dagmar's shoulder — Dagmar, whose blue eyes
Were bluer than the waters of the fiord
When June smiles on them; Dagmar, whose bright hair
Was golden as the line of sunset gold
Along the peaks when noon has passed them by;
Dagmar, whose skin was whiter than the snows
And soft as rose-bloom petals to the touch;
Dagmar the Beautiful.

II

The mid-morn gray
With dusky silver touched the icy fall,
Lifted the lighter shadows, sifted through
The denser blackness of the inner fiord,
And high upon the ancient glaciers hung
A thousand mirrors.

Up the perilous steep
Three toiling figures, useless skates and *skis*
Across their shoulders, struggled toward the pass —
Three pygmy figures, specks against the snow.

“Come, Dagmar!” Ever Lars would urge her on.

“The way grows smoother. Once we scale the cliff,
Our *skis* will make us wings.”

“No!” Dagmar stood,
A mold of stricken terror on her face.
“Stop, Lars, and listen!”

Through her shaken voice
Lars caught the crunch and scrape of climbing feet.
“God help us now!” he cried. “Stand back!” He sprang
To face the nearing menace. Weak and spent,
His back against the icy wall, his feet,
Numb with their unaccustomed climbing, braced
Precariously upon the slanting ledge
Narrow and treacherous with ice and snow,
He waited, desperate.

Great Severin
Came striding heavily, his mighty arms
Tensed, bulging, terrible; his crimson face
A ghastly mask of rage and deadly hate.
“God help us now!” breathed Lars. “Dagmar, stand
back!”

But Dagmar smiled, flashed past him, knelt, and
thrust
A slender *ski* between the striding thighs,
Great Severin, his arm upraised to strike,
Slipped, stumbled, fell — half rose — and fell again
As Dagmar, thrusting at the moment’s chance,
Laid all her strength against the snapping *ski*
And sent him spinning — outward.

With a roar
That shook the very mountain Severin
Clutched, toppled, tumbled — down — and down —
and down —
A spot of something on the rock below,
As motionless and gray as rock itself.

“Come, Dagmar — *Dagmar!*” Dazed and shaken, Lars
Entreated vainly. Dagmar shook her head.
With staring eyes and pitiful pale face,
Too tragic now for tears, she set a step
Along the downward path. “I was his wife.
I killed him. I must pay. Lars, let me go.”

“No, Dagmar, no! Right well you know his life
Meant ours as forfeit. You were justified,
And more than justified, for Severin
Meant death to both of us. He earned it well.
Now Bergen, London, Paris — all the world
Lies wide before us, waiting. Dagmar, come!”

But Dagmar set another downward step.
“I was his wife,” she said; “I can not go.
I killed him.”

Slowly Lars let fall his hand
From Dagmar’s shoulder — Dagmar, whose blue eyes
Were bluer than the waters of the fiord
When June smiles on them; Dagmar, whose bright hair
Was golden as the line of sunset gold

Along the peaks when noon has passed them by;
Dagmar, whose skin was whiter than the snows
And soft as rose-bloom petals to the touch;
Dagmar the Beautiful.

The morning light
Dimmed coldly, and his voice came strange and thin.
“You . . . loved him, Dagmar?”

Dagmar’s blue eyes rose,
Filled with grave wonder. “No, I hated him.
He was so hard, so cruel in his strength,
So unforgiving. But I was his wife.
I killed him. Lars, I love you. Let me go.”

Once more the blood went singing in his ears,
Pounding his temples, catching at his breath.
“*I love you. Lars, I love you.*” Peak on peak
Flashed back the music, and the bitter word
That echoed through it. Death — *a price to pay!*

“Dagmar,” he touched her gently, “since you choose,
Shall we — together — so — ?”

His stubborn tongue
Refused the bitter word, but Dagmar read
The meaning in his smile, his lifted brow,
His outflung tragic gesture.

“*Ja!*” she cried.
Her eyes aflame with sudden blue-white fires

That warmed like wine, she raised her arms to Lars.
“Together — *ja* — together!”

* * *

Noon's gray light
Hangs silver pale along the frozen fiord
And sees what all may see: an icy fall;
A tiny village, like a swallow's nest,
Close-hung along the cliff; a pinnacle
Of rock below, from which a bit of blue
Lifts fitfully and flutters in the wind,
The dress that Dagmar wore to dance last night.

Issue p. 248 · Scan p. 12

Lilian White Spencer

Cerebral

My aeroplane soul
Brings down a ragged bit of rosy cloud
With a star clinging to its edge,
Which my housewife mind brushes off —
And hems the rest into a neat pink square.
Very useful!
Before, it was only a poem.

Joan Dareth Prosper

Orientale

This be my song:

I am the white body that rippled your pool at
daybreak;
The daring one that leapt your stone walls,
laughing.
I am joy — I am joy!
My ecstasy shrills to your stupid turrets.
I spill petals in your courtyard. . . white petals that
cannot last the hour.

This be my need:

I am the endless caravan that winds under
relentless suns;
The turgid fever scorching the twisted brain;
The bowed drummer whose tears are long since
dry.

This be my prayer:

To One who sees the spent runner fall
I pray. . . let night cover me.
To One who pities the tongue of a liar
I pray. . . silence me.
Darken the candle of my thinking,

Strip me of rags that cling,
And let my parched breasts drink peace of Your
stars.

Holder of atoms,
Merciful One,
Let me slip again through your fingers
To the good earth,
To the seeping of rains,
To the calmness of sands —
And forget me soon!

Alberta Bancroft

Inheritance

Within my heart they still live on,
Revered and dear,
Sweet presences who make the house to bloom
And leave the halls all fragrant as they pass;
Half-seen beside the hearth at eventime;
Dim-gliding on the stair
Or down some lonely passageway,
Intent upon the spinning and the flax
And all the household doings,
Guardians of thrift and high tranquility —
The little gods of home.

Within my heart they live
Whom lonely shepherds meet
On far-off hillsides at the close of day,
Helpful to guard the flocks throughout the night;
And she who in procession
Blesses all the fields at dead of winter;
She who leads the little children
Through the dark with care;
And those slim ones who guard the grain
All summer long —
Gods of the harvest and the homestead and the byre.

They live. And I build altars in my heart
To them in deep content.

Eleanor Titus

Smoke

White smoke is misting the trees.
The pale gold fingers of the sun
Slip through its vague white hair.

Alaine B. Boswell

The Pool of the Dryads

I have found the spot where the dryads dance.
Cool and damp 'neath the laurel tree,
A still little pool with a shining face
Looks up from its wreath of greenery.

The leaves above bend close and dark
And never a bird repeats his tune;
The sky scarce dares to show its blue
Where the dryads dance in the summer noon.

Let Apollo dance as close as he may,
Yet he will miss this hidden nook.
'Tis only Pan who knows the way
And he — the rascal! — dare not look.

The dryads dance in the summer noon,
Their laughter floats in the golden air,
Their lithe bare bodies flash white and rose,
And the water drips from their silken hair.

Actæon was punished for like offense,
And yet I crave of the gods one boon —
To see the dryads lightly dance
Once in the drowse of a summer noon!

Hellene Seaman

Words

Words are bright but cruel things
That bruise a dreamer's wings;
“How beautiful!” was all I said,
And lo, my dream was dead.

Clinton Scollard

Song of the Summer Stars

Night took me by the hand
And led me where
I saw the heavens expand
Through the sapphire air.

No cloud the vault made dim
In any place;
I watched the planets swim
In boundless space.

There was a zone of light
That radiance shed,
With Lyra at the height
Sheer overhead;

And toward the north the Swan —
Cygnus the fair;
And to the south withdrawn
The sharp Altair;

Westward Arcturus bold
Of amber hue,
Antares rosy-gold,
And Vega blue;

And spanning the vast arch

In broad display,
On its eternal march
The Milky Way.

Viewing them, each and all,
'Twas borne to me —
How infinitely small
Mortality!

J. Corson Miller

“Who Consorts with Wisdom”

Who consorts with wisdom
In the hush of his heart's house
Need never expect to revel
With song in a mad carouse;
But, sitting silent night and day, alone,
He shall grow solemn as an owl — be dumb as stone.

For wisdom is a mistress
Stern and cold and grim;
Who consorts with her shall see
Life's merry tapers dim.
The camera that was his mind
To Spring-flushed films must go stark blind.
O, wisdom is, with every breath,
Song's enemy to bitter death!

Edna Davis Romig

“Ay, but to Lose our Bottles in the Pool”

— *The Tempest.*

A fearsome crew our halting aspirations,
Timorous of adventure, timorous of the new,
Weighted by dull luggage — goods and gear and tool;
Sighting from the distance shores of rich creations,
Cloud-capped towers and splendors, solemn temples
 reared;
Hearing sounds and sweet airs — still to be afeard;
Still the laggard ever, all our fearsome crew,
Seeing not horizons, only gear and tool;
Seeing not, but fearing to lose our bottles in the pool.

Charles Ballard

Jubal

Jubal of Nod made the first flute
From a wand of the willow-tree.
The world had then no viol or lute
Or harp of minstrelsy.

Jubal with his flute! —
The sun on his glossy jet beard and hair,
As he sat on a lava stone,
And the birds all silent, watching him there,
As he tried for the first clear tone!

A peering brown cedar-bird
Seized the first sound he heard —
A faint hissing, nothing more.
With joy he rehearsed it o'er and o'er —
Silly bird!

The bluebird better knew:
He caught the first clear, warbled note
From the green willow throat,
Tried numberless times till the tone was true;
Then off he flew.

Then flocking round came robin and wren,
All the warblers, the soulful thrush,
And the whole light-winged throng,

From every bough and bush
Singing after the flute again and again
Some captured shred of song.

Harsh birds of prey —
These too learned bars of liquid melody;
But on the wild heights far away,
And over the screaming surges of the sea,
Where wind-fiends yell at their savage play,
Soft wood-notes fled from memory.

But one there was who gathered them all,
Piping to every strain he heard;
So today men marvel at songs that fall
From the mocking-bird.

* * *

And all that time, at the edge of the wood
Where was found the willow rod,
Was one in a misty robe, who stood
To listen to Jubal of Nod!

B. Y. Williams

The Soul of Cleopatra

The soul of Cleopatra
With all the ancient flame
Inhabits now a squatty little frame,
Nor charm can claim.

The soul of Cleopatra
Looks out through crooked eyes —
Ah, who could Egypt's proud queen recognize
In such strange guise!

The soul of Cleopatra
For lovers makes demand —
So critics mark her with a hideous brand,
Nor understand.

The soul of Cleopatra
Has come again, to dwell
Within a common, coarse, unlovely shell —
This is her Hell.

Bees in the Honeysuckle

The bees in the honeysuckle
Outside my open door
Waken me at dawn,
Gold-beaters of the morning.

Bees in the honeysuckle
Waken me with droning —
Waken me at dawn —
Fill every crevice of my room
With beaten gold,
With golden sound —
With gold-dust sound
Of dust-of-gold —
With golden tune,
With loud, loud drone.

Drone, drone, drone,
Down the corridor
Of my dreaming
Comes a blaring —
The blare of golden sound —
The sound of gold-dust
Shimmering all through my room,
Golden, golden sound,
Gold-dust sound —
I breathe the sound

As shining particles
Of dust are breathed,
Revealed in a shaft of sunlight
In a darkened room.
I breathe the golden sound —
I breathe the sound,
The golden tune.

Gold-dust, gold-dust sound,
Drone, drone, drone,
Sounding on my eardrums,
Pounding through my veins,
Penetrating, penetrating sound,
Penetrating to my consciousness —
Sound of dust-of-gold,
All about me where I lie,
All through the room.
Covering me like golden sands,
Over me and under me —
Golden bed and golden canopy —
On my hair, my lips,
Covering my hands, my eyes,
With golden warmth and drowse,
With sound-of-gold,
With golden drone,
With golden tune —
Gold fills my room.

Bees in the honeysuckle,
Gold-beaters of the morning.

Noel Stearn

Dawn

Pale yellow fingers
Have slipped into the canyon crevices
And gripped.

Soon the pale sun
Will clamber from the dungeon of night
And, panting on the parapet,
Send a crimson cry
To the far clouds.

Snow Longley

A Believer

“Down in the hollow by the swamp today
I see Satan and his imps at play.”

“Aw, you’re kiddin’ us! Go ’long!”

“Well,
I did see the fires risin’ out of Hell.
First a squeak when he raked the coals,
Then out rushed the embers from the burnin’ souls —
Great black embers like birds in the sky,
And the blast from the fires kept ’em floatin’ high.”

“They *was* birds! I’ve seen ’em rise,
Flocks o’ blackbirds, thick as flies —
Whir of wings and the reeds aquiver,
And a dark sky trail clean ’cross the river.”

“Say they *was* blackbirds if you will,
But most of them embers was flamin’ still —
Flamin’ red where Satan’s fires
Was consumin’ the dross of their fleshly desires.
The gray moss hung from the limbs of trees,
And the fog floated in on the dawnin’ breeze
Till the fog and the moss was tangled so
That the fog seemed to hang an’ the moss to blow;
And watchin’ the eastern sky turn red

And the swamp grass green, while overhead
The sky was lined with light like a shell,
And the mornin' star a great pearl — well,
I almost lost my grip on Hell!

For the love of God seemed so deep and wide
There wasn't any space outside;
And my mind was so full of heavenly things
I thought I heard stirrin' of angel wings —
Till I saw them embers. Grace Divine!
God showed me the blazin' pit for a sign!
Red-winged blackbirds? Glory be!
That was ashes of souls I see,
And you can't take my faith away from me."

Neeta Marquis

Crickets

Night after night as the hours grow long,
I measure the beat of the crickets' song.
In classic spondees the calm syllables move —
A stately progression all poets approve.

“Rest — rest!” — Ah, cool and austere
That delicate phrasing of sound on my ear! —
A cadence more subtly reposeful than rhyme,
As simple and smoothly unbroken as Time.

Scholarly crickets, majestic and terse,
Scorning the freedom of nondescript verse!
Who taught you the art of that lyrical beat —
That metrical competence clear and complete?

Masters of prosody, school me to phrase
Harmonious thoughts in melodious ways!
Ah, bring me your boon of a spirit at ease
In the measured repose of your stately spondees!

Issue p. 259 · Scan p. 23

Eleanor Mary Titus

Shadow of Night

Give me the soft warm dark to hold me,
With the breath of lilac and grasses
And its pale shadow of lilies.
Bear me in your arms, O Mother of Stars,
Lay me in your cool deep pool.

Anna Catherine Markham

The Summer Rain

Always, at first surprise of the summer rain,
In the satisfied, tender quiet that stills
The world, gallant and young you come riding again
From fragrant, far, dim redwoods, down sun-burnt
hills,
Through bending wheat in the valley's long golden
lane,
Straight to my door where the blown oleander spills.
Again we meet as the mists take the fields of grain,
Again live that glad hour only a dream fulfills.

Here on our roads I still watch old rains fall;
But how long ago you left these dear earth-ways!
O passionate heart, so quick, so in love with all
Of life, why were you called from deeds and days?
What was the dare importunate death could bring
To match your spirit's keen adventuring?

Lilian Lewis

Morning and Evening

Morning walks on the mountain
With tremulous warm rosy feet.
The silver of dawn is her girdle,
The breeze is the breath of her, sweet;
With topaz and pearl is she sandaled,
The on-coming Lord Day to greet.

Evening walks on the mountain
With silent and shadowy tread.
Two stars are the wells of her vision;
In violet is swathed her dark head;
In tenderness walks she, in sorrow.
Before goes the Lord Day — dead.

In Memoriam

As this number goes to press comes the news of the passing, on June 9, in Pasadena, of Grace Atherton Dennen, the founder and first editor of THE LYRIC WEST. Born at Woburn, Massachusetts; holder of the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from Smith College; for a year and a half a graduate student at Stanford University; a lecturer before literary clubs, schools, and Chautauquas; and for thirty-four years head of the Department of English of the Girl's Collegiate School of Los Angeles; — she exercised a wide influence affecting many lives. Gifted in no small measure with the power of leadership, in 1894 she became one of the founders and first officers of the influential Ebell Club of Los Angeles, now the largest organization in the National Federation of Women's Clubs; and in 1916 she founded and for six years served as President of the Verse Writers Club of Southern California, the first association of its kind in the Southwest. Her artistic excellence was recognized as early as 1901, when Edmund Clarence Stedman included her GOLD-OF-OPHIR ROSES in his AMERICAN ANTHOLOGY. She was the author of a novel, THE DAWN MEADOW, and her short stories and poems appeared in many periodicals and verse collections. In April, 1921, she founded this magazine, and during the ensuing three years of her editorship by her independence of thought and action, her high literary ideals, and her practical wisdom she contributed in no small degree to establishing its present admittedly high position among the verse magazines of the country. The present editors honored and loved her, and grieve her departure as a personal loss. May the darkness vanish for her as she has herself described it:

A sudden flush on the face of night,
A veil from my soul withdrawn,
A bird-note, thrilling the silence through,
And after that — the dawn!

The Artistry of the Stanza

XVIII

Stanzaic Variety

The principle of Balance, fundamental to the construction of most stanzas, must in practice, as we have seen, be supplemented by the principle of Variety, otherwise the work becomes monotonous and vapid. This was the great formal danger confronting the Popeian school of the balanced decasyllabic couplet in the eighteenth century. The danger Pope himself generally avoided with amazing skill. Note the varying music, even within its narrow technical limitations, of his opening of *The Rape of the Lock*.

What dire offence from amorous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing. — This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due;
This, even Belinda may vouchsafe to view.
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

Here no two lines place the cesura identically; and the rhymes ring out in clear diversified contrast. Occasionally in the work Pope employs the variation of imperfect rhyme and, still more rarely, of dissyllabic rhyme. Here and there in other poems he transforms the couplet to a triplet, and sometimes even extends the pentameter into an alexandrine. His followers imitated his self-imposed limitations without always possessing his adroitness in dealing with them.

The application of the esthetic principle of Variety to the stanza is by no means confined to such simple matters, however. In the broader sense, Variety may be defined as the effect obtained by any pleasing departure from some

established norm. Such a departure may arise spontaneously in response to some emotional impulse, as when the line lengthens out metrically to reflect an increase in emotional intensity. Under these circumstances the departure may be said to be *emotionally organic*. Under other conditions it may be *structurally organic*, as in the case of the alexandrine that regularly forms the ninth line of the Spenserian stanza, giving climax and increasing the effect of stanzaic unity. In cases of emotionally organic departures repetition of the stanzaic form is infrequent, inasmuch as a similar emotional rise will rarely take place at the same point in successive stanzas. On the other hand, when the departure is structurally organic, the stanzaic form is usually a set, although generally an unhackneyed, esthetic formula, reiterated constantly throughout the poem.

I cite a number of such cases of *structurally organic variation*.

Striking, because illustrative of the fact that this can occur even within the brief space of an *abab* quatrain, is the instance found in William Habington's *Nox Nocti Indicat Scientiam*.

When I survey the bright
Celestial sphere,
So rich with jewels hung, that night
Doth like an Ethiop bride appear:

My soul her wings doth spread
And heavenward flies,
Th' Almighty's mysteries to read
In the large volumes of the skies.

For the bright firmament

Shoots forth no flame
 So silent, but is eloquent
 In speaking the Creator's name. *Etc.*

$(a_3 b_2 a_4 b_4)$

In each stanza the contrasted trimeter and dimeter of the first two lines is set off by the balanced tetrameters of lines 3 and 4, the respective line-lengths being made unmistakable by the well-marked *abab* rhyme-scheme. In a way this is an exceptional case in that the doubled tetrameter that establishes the norm occurs *after* the two non-uniform lines. The fact is, one does not begin to feel the effect of the contrast strongly until one reaches the second and the following stanzas, when the uneven lines at the beginning of each stand out sharply against the ground-tone that has always been reestablished at the end of the stanza before. By this reversal of the usual order there is obtained a smooth, strong, and euphonious close to an otherwise erratic quatrain. Experiment will show that if the first two and the last two lines change places, the new form will lack sharpness of outline and there will be a tendency to lose the value of the second *a* rhyme.

Most frequently, however, these effects of variety are met with in the composite stanzas of six or more lines built out of the simple forms. Thus, in Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper* an $a_4 b_4 a_4 b_3$ quatrain is followed by two tetrameter couplets, the whole forming a pleasing eight-line unit, $a_4 b_4 a_4 b_3 c_4 c_4 d_4 d_4$. The reaper's song is thus described:

No nightingale did ever chaunt
 More welcome notes to weary bands
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands:
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas

Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

This combination of meditative smoothness with a hint of ballad movement well adapted to the initial suggestion of the poem is a happy invention, springing from one of Wordsworth's unfortunately too rare formal inspirations.

A curious and pleasing effect of somewhat the same composite type occurs in Scott's song, *Soldier, rest thy warfare o'er*, in the *The Lady of the Lake*. This combines the charm of variety of rhyme scheme with that of the repetend, for lines 1-4 are substantially repeated in lines 9-12, but in an order that transforms the music of interlacing rhymes into that of measured couplets. Observe also the graceful effect of alternating masculine and feminine rhymes.

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more;
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,

Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking. *Etc.*

In the composite stanzas variety is sometimes obtained, not merely by differences in the length or order of individual lines, but by differences in the length of line-groups. This is excellently exemplified in the alternation of the four *a*'s and the three *c*'s in the form employed in Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*.

On either side of the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.

Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
 The Lady of Shalott. *Etc.*

(*a₄a₄a₄a₄b₃c₄c₄c₄b₃*)

Here, too, may be mentioned that curious type that depends on what we may, for brevity, call "the drum-beat effect." This follows the common drum-beat order, *tap, pause, tap, pause, tap, tap, tap, pause*. In the metrics of the couplet this has already been illustrated in Browning's

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing,

where, indicating the trisyllabic feet by *full* and the monosyllabic by *cut*, the metrical formula is *full, cut, full, cut, full, full, full, cut*. In stanzaic form the same order of effects occurs, for instance, in Burns's *Duncan Gray*, the *pause* lines being marked both by refrain and by eccentric metre.

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,

Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

On blythe Yule-Night when we were fou,

Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Maggie coost her head fu high,

Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,

Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;

Ha, ha, the wooin o't! *Etc.*

In none of the cases above quoted has there been a return to the initial effect within the same stanza. In each case the reiteration at the beginning of the following repetition of the form is sufficient. In general, however, when the stanza is not repeated the esthetic sense demands that the original key-note be again struck before ending. See, for instance, the descriptions of Melancholy and Cheerfulness in Collins's *Ode to the Passions*. Another illustration is found in Apelles' song in John Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe*. The latter further illustrates a type of variety hitherto unmentioned, that

appears in connection with the handling of *end-stop* and *run-on effects*.

Cupid and my Campaspe play'd
At cards for kisses — Cupid paid:
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes —
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.

O Love! has she done this for thee?

What shall, alas! become of me?

Here, it will be observed, in the line-endings we find the order: establishment of primary effect, variation, return to primary effect. The first two couplets are end-stopt, each being followed by a heavy pause. The third couplet is run-on, the pause not occurring until the end of line 7. The fourth couplet is likewise run-on, the pause being deferred to the end of line 9. The fifth couplet resumes the end-stop music, which is then continued to the end of the poem.

Finally, we may note that a parallel sequence (primary effect, variant, return to primary effect) may occur within the stanza. This is found exemplified in Allan Ramsay's *Peggy* where *repetition of phrasing* combines with metrical and rhyme devices to produce a very graceful result:

My Peggy is a young thing,
 Just enter'd in her teens,
 Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
 Fair as the day, and always gay:
 My Peggy is a young thing,
 And I'm not very auld,
 Yet well I like to meet her at
 The wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly
 Whene'er we meet alane,
 I wish nae mair to lay my care,
 I wish nae mair of a' that's rare;
 My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
 To a' the lave I'm cauld,
 But she gars a' my spirits glow
 At wauking of the fauld. *Etc.*

To represent this we must have recourse to the very complex formula, $A_3b_3(C_2c_2)_4(C_2c_2)_4A_3d_3e_4d_3$, in which the capital letters indicate lines or parts of lines that are duplicated. The ballad movement of the first two lines is immediately interrupted for a couplet effect in tetrameters complicated not only by internal rhyme but by phrase repetition, after which the opening line is also repeated for a new start and the ballad movement resumed and continued through the concluding quatrain.

These are, I believe, the principal types of variety of which stanzaic structure admits. Within these types, of course, the possibilities of variation are well nigh endless.

A. G.

In Review

Cyclop's Eye. By Joseph Auslander. Harpers, 1926.

Here one finds a volume of widest variety in types and rhythms, yet all of wholly finished work. Beginning with tragic and awful power in *Steel*, the pages unfold hauntingly and magically their lovely poems and memorable lines. *Dragnet* is exquisitely musical poetry with great depth of thought emerging from individual philosophic substance. *Deadlock* and *Nostalgia*, both poems of mood in remarkably successful and apt stanzaic patterns, the sonnet sequence to *Fata Morgana*, that again to *Amy Lowell* (so opposite to Clement Wood's prose study of the late poet), *Diablerie*, *Foam Spray*, *Spilled Flame*, *Ultimatum*, *Web*, *Ulysses in Autumn*, *Medusa*, as well as the title poem, *Cyclops' Eye*, all stand engraved emotionally for the reader. And phrasings such as

Spring had come
Like the silver needle-note of a fife

or

The wind has edges honed on frost

cut too sharply into the wax of memory, that average smooth and unruffled surface of the reading mind, to be later obliterated even there. The title poem very fittingly comes at the end. It is reflective, explanatory of the collection, composed somewhat in the manner of *Renascence*, that friendly model borrowed by nearly all the poets since 1917 as the vehicle of creative rebirth.

I saw with the heart's throbbing centre (an Eye
That did not so much see as feel)

adequately describes in the poet's own phrase his *cyclopean* vision and power.

L. B. M.

High Passage, by Thomas Hornsby Ferril (*Yale Series of Younger Poets*) deserves distinction in the poetry of pioneering. Romance and imagination transfuse the light that filters through canvas-covered wagons, and sympathetic understanding interprets human figures moving westward across a landscape of beauty and hard material facts. Among short narrative and descriptive passages of simplicity and directness, sometimes comparable to the writing of Robert Frost, but by no means sustained at his level, an occasional lilt suggests a versatility which gives promise of development in another direction. Surprising and somewhat inexplicable are a few pleasing imaginative poems inspired by mountains and moonlight, Celtic in quality, original and light of touch.

Elizabeth Axtell

Notice

THE LYRIC WEST is overstocked and will not at present consider any poems for publication. During the months of July and August the office of the magazine will be closed, and the editorial staff will not be available for purposes of correspondence.