

Pan in Broadway! Is this not what William Griffith is trying to make us believe in *City Pastorals*? We recall that John Myers O'Hara had once a similar illusion and almost convinced us that he had seen *A Faun in Wall Street*. Who shall challenge the inner sight of poets or deny that presences unseen to rushing traffickers in trade sit before them up and down the cañons of these gloomy streets? Wordsworth declared that two lines in his work were sure of immortality, the lines

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,—

and wisely did he declare it, for these two lines hold the secret of much of the poetry of the world. If poets could not re-vision with the inward eye the beauty they had seen, if they could not go farther and by the magic of that inward eye create a solitude, even in throngs and turmoil—what a song-famine would come upon the earth!

City Pastorals is a book of green fields, running water and blowing flowers, a book of haunting country moods that come to Brown and Gray and Green, prisoners of Broadway. It is a new type of eclogue, put for the sake of charm and novelty into a lyrical dialogue, although Brown and Gray and Green are little more than voices projecting the poet's thought. Brown is the fatalist, who indulges in Omar-Khayyám moods and incidentally makes poetry out of them. Green constantly breaks in upon these negative broodings with tidings of beauty yet to be found in the great out-of-doors, while Gray soberly balances the two extremes. The dialogue is carried through the four seasons, the speeches of the pro-

tagonists being sometimes complete lyrics and sometimes a line or a couplet which goes to the making of a stanza. The effect of the dialogue is that of a continuous lyric, and in merging one mood into another, as it does, it lacks the sharp and definite crystallisation which would come with individual poems. In reading it, I am reminded of that exquisite story from the Eastern literature where a child is bidden to carry a basket to the stream and bring it home full of water. After long effort the child returns and tells how the water kept flowing away. "Yes," rejoins the elder, "but see how white and beautiful the basket is!" We know that we shall not hold all the beautiful thoughts but we shall have the white soul, and something of this effect is induced by Mr. Griffith's pastorals. They keep flowing away by reason of their liquid music, yet they leave an impression of beauty and charm, a general sense of lovely things, and so help to induce the white soul.

Only part of the book is made up of the dialogue, but it is the more important part, and when one remembers certain themes in Mr. Griffith's first book, *The Loves and Losses of Pierrot*, which took to themselves a most charming lyric embodiment, he is inclined to regret that the eclogue was not put into separate poems. The reader will recall *Pierrette in Memory*,

Pierrette has gone, but it was not
Exactly that she died,
So much as vanished and forgot
To say where she would hide.

To keep a sudden rendezvous,
It came into her mind
That she was late. What could she do
But leave distress behind?

Afraid of being in disgrace,
And hurrying to dress,
She heard there was another place
In need of loveliness.

She went so softly and so soon,
She hardly made a stir,
But going took the stars and moon
And sun away with her.

From the new book it will perhaps
be more satisfactory to quote one of
Mr. Griffith's complete lyrics than
to dismember the eclogue. *The Mak-
ing of Spring* befits the season and is
characteristic of Mr. Griffith's deli-
cate touch:

Upon a day in April
There came a sudden hush—
The silence of the forest,
Expectant of a thrush.

Hardly an aspen quivered,
Until a breeze and rill
Were startled by the rumour
Of daisies on the hill.

Sudden—a gust of passion
Developed in the air,
As though the Little People
Were thronging everywhere.

And lo! the spell that deepened
On larch and pine and fir,
Was broken. In the maple
The sap began to stir.

Softly the doors of silence
Were opened; and set free
Were voices full of wilding,
Prophetic mystery.

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The thrush came with a question,
Adventurous to find
Some remnants of the wonder
That God had left behind.