

**THE WRITING AND READING OF VERSE.** By C. E. Andrews. 327 pages. Appleton.

**HOW TO READ POETRY.** By Ethel M. Colson. 179 pages. McClurg; Chicago.

Since the laws that Pope laid down in his *Essay on Criticism* were definitely and successfully broken by the Romanticists, the science of poetry has been hazy and fragmentary. Most people, in fact, have refused even to think of it as a science, and have viewed poets with much the same awe that they would show whales, and have considered them as fortuitous as ambergris. Lately however, a more exact curiosity has grown up. Mr. Patterson and Miss Lowell with their phonographic experiments, and a certain M. Verrier with a metronome, have been doing important foundation work in what is perhaps the oldest of the arts. In *The Writing and Reading of Verse* Lieutenant Andrews tries always to keep these researches in view. One notes with interest that this somewhat elementary essay into poetical exactitudes tends rather to break up the old, fast theories than to confirm them. Especially is this fact apparent in the chapter on free verse, and in the stimulating treatment of the meters (one may safely use the word in the plural) of blank verse. Yet as a work of science the volume is not an entire success. It is confused in its attitudes, propounds vague theories, and lays much more stress on the *a priori*isms of Lanier than on the sound thinking of Professor Gummere. Only when considered as a compendium of hitherto uncompiled facts, as a textbook in a course on writing poetry that still remains to be given, does the book gain undisputed value. Lieutenant Andrews has furnished that much-needed article, a new saddle for Pegasus.

Miss Colson's book is of a quite different category. An indiscriminate enthusiast, she belongs, no doubt, to Hermione's Little Group of Serious Thinkers. Her motive in writing is to convert the quarter-educated into the half-educated—indeed a praiseworthy aim. As for her conclusions, she gives them best in her own words:

Everybody should read poetry.

Why?

Because everybody loves it. (For particulars see Chapter I)

Again why?

Because everybody loves, needs, desires, seeks enjoyment, and the reading of poetry, properly performed and pursued, makes for universal enjoyment of a high, rich, rare, inexpensive, highly diversified, never-ending and ever-vernal order. (For further particulars see Chapter II)

How then to extract this enjoyment from poetry, to cause poetry to yield its rare treasure in plain and painless manner, in a word, "How to Read Poetry?"

Why, good sir or madam, perfectly simple and easy. Read poetry just as you would bathe or dress or write a letter or eat your dinner or play golf or take a car down town.