

All of the authors are young men of modern taste and lack of illusion, but their work illustrates three ages of poetry. It goes to show the enormous width of the field of poetic art, even for those who appreciate the enduring values of clean form and recognizably clear concepts, as do all of these men. None of them writes free verse, and each finds in form an individual and characteristic expression.

"Gypsy Gold" by Charles Divine is all of light, gay or wistful singing to plucked strings — plucked sometimes too often in the same key, so that the ear tires of the repeated gentle harmonies. Deep emotions do not occur in them. The gypsy of this book, roaming carelessly through town and countryside of France, Spain, and North Africa, makes songs about the highways and stars and chimney pots, carnivals in Paris, dreams of love and romance, and his own casual and unhurried progress through fair lands in fine weather. He knows sorrow only as a delicate shadow in his path — a soft minor note or two in his continual singing timed to the unobtrusive beat of footsteps. His heart is full of sentiment and laughter, and the humor of life gets the better of his sentiment time and again, especially when he tries to contemplate death. Everything moves by him in a colorful procession worth weaving into a brief song, but not worth very much more of thought.

LYRIC ROMANCE AND REALITY

By Bernice L. Kenyon

ATROUBADOUR, a pessimistic philosopher, and a harsh realist are names to characterize the authors of three small books of poems published at the close of the year 1923.

This kind of poetry seems to spring from the upper levels of the mind, for it never reveals the poet himself underneath. He might be anybody. One never knows him, any more than one knows what's behind the unlifted gay mask of the strolling reveler. His verse is exactly like the description we find in "La Rue des Belles Lunettes":

Its width sufficient unto two
 Who walk along as lovers do;
 A troubadour with narrow tones
 Might serenade the ancient stones,
 But he could never sally far
 For fear of smashing his guitar.

George Brandon Saul, in his first volume of poems, "The Cup of Sand", takes the world very hard and pessimistically, and philosophizes sagely if sadly about it. His concern rests on the vision of life as shaped by aspiration, and as realized by a lesser actuality. The phenomenon of change — the passing of all things — the smallness of man and his sorrows — color all of his book with tragedy. His outlook on life recalls Young's "Night Thoughts". The work is poetry rather than verse, partly because of his rich conceptions, the darkness of his colors, his almost Greek cadences and the striking quality of his best lines, but more because he deals in fundamentals. He sees the world too narrowly, but what he sees of it is true enough. A great deal of the sort of poetry he writes has been done before, but Mr. Saul handles his material more artistically than most. He escapes sentimentality where others have fallen into it, and the best of his poems are very good indeed. His philosophy is that of "Irony" in the book:

Many have sought the Long-Desired
 Untired,
 And found:
 Few reach the rose's plot
 Discovering not
 Some petals on the ground.

The distinct modernist of this group of poets is Robert L. Wolf, who in the twenty three poems of "After Disillusion" shows himself original, daring, and ruthless. Strong headed people will not protest at his themes, though others will. They have been characterized as erratic and erotic, and

they are both. The poet says exactly what he pleases and luckily is allowed to do so. No one has heard of a recent book of poems being suppressed.

There's not a bit of chaff in the volume. The subjects range all the way from "Eve" to "The First Law of Thermo-Dynamics". They never fall flat and they wholly escape being trivial, either in substance or execution. They have much beauty, sharp finish, strength, and a thrilling sort of aptness of phrase all too rare today, which at times makes their meaning go over with the suddenness and inescapability of a slap in the face. They reveal the mind of a realist who is a good enough poet to be able to rule his technique with his idea.

The modern reader likes, as his final impression from any book, a clever and well turned *mot* by way of conclusion, like the curtain lines of a play. Each of these three authors supplies one, in the shape of a final poem, setting in tense, ironic, or satiric style the exact keynote of the volume. It's a good device, especially when expertly used, as it is in all of these books.

Gypsy Gold. By Charles Divine. Thomas Seltzer.
 The Cup of Sand. By George Brandon Saul. Harold Vinal.
 After Disillusion. By Robert L. Wolf. Thomas Seltzer.