

his, until it becomes a trademark, a monotony, a hurt. We gasp at the twilight loveliness of lines like:

There is a memory stays upon old ships,  
A weightless cargo in the musty hold,  
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,  
Of stormy midnights,—and a tale untold.

They have remembered islands in the dawn,  
And windy capes that tried their slender  
spars,  
The tortuous channels where their keels have  
gone,  
And calm, blue nights of stillness and the  
stars.

He is most at home in his imaginative voyagings with land-locked ships; few of the other lyrics attain the dreamy splendor of these vistas of sea-voyagers in haven. "Transfiguration" and too many of its brothers are exquisite retellings of ideas and attitudes ancient as man's wonder at the Pleiades. There is no imitation; the old voices have been heard reverently, and their message altered. Only once or twice the rude jostle, the sudden darkness of the squall, the crash of the snapping spars, the horrid keen stab of unglossed reality tears through the delicate fabric, and we have:

But here: "Reported missing"...the type  
fails,  
The column breaks for white and angry seas,  
The jagged spars thrust through, and flapping  
sails,  
Flagging farewells to wind and sky and shore,  
Arrive at silent ports, and leave no more.

There is fresh human vision in "The Schoolboy Reads His Iliad" and "In a Girls' School", but the Olympic serenity is still here. The poet, to put it another way, thinks best of life today when it seems to him to be kin to what he thinks life was in ancient Troy,—the illusion of the "golden past". The reality of ancient cities was a blend of adulteries, meannesses, filth; today has bettered this. Mr. Morton's rank as a lyricist is high indeed; but too much unsuffering is insufferable. If

## LAND-LOCKED SHIPS

By Clement Wood

IT did not need this volume to make David Morton one of the old familiar voices in the poetic chorus. The unpublished collection won one of the three 1919 Lyric Society prizes; individual poems have received the annual awards of the Poetry Society of America and of "Contemporary Verse", have starred the anthologies, and stirred the lovers of poetry to cordial admiration. Mr. Morton is surely one of the leading sonnetteers writing today. He steers clear between the stagnant sargasso sea of stale verbiage, precious to the amaranth-asphodel tribe of poetlings, and the treacherous breakers of rough-hewed modernisms, painful in more adventurous lyric sufferers.

His fault is an innate limitation in poetic attitude. His work is fragile, unemotional, dehumanized: life seen at dusk through a rose-window. Exquisite placidity of phrasing is always

only his soul could meet a discourteous  
tornado! He looks through magic  
casements; but they open on the foam  
of seas more placid than life grants.

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**Ships in Harbour. By David Morton. G. P.  
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