

## **New Books of Verse †**

MR. SWINBURNE'S latest volume, 'Poems and Ballads : Third Series' (1), contains much that is fine and very little that is trivial. It is free from the sensuousness and exuberance of epithet which characterized some of his earlier works, and the facility which is shown throughout the book is not that facility which has been termed fatal, but is almost invariably felicitous. All the music of words, rhymes, and metres, of which he is so great a master, rings clearly and sweetly; and if his alliterations be frequent, they are nevertheless an artful aid, and lend to the lines a definite grace and charm. The poems exhibit great seriousness of thought and dignity of expression blended with exquisite melody. There are two subjects upon which Mr. Swinburne can write better than any other poet; and whenever we discover a title that hints of the

† 1. *Poems and Ballads: Third Series.* By Algernon Charles Swinburne. New York: Worthington Co. 2. *Selections from the Greek Anthology.* Edited by Graham R. Tomson. New York: W. J. Gage & Co. 3. *Selections from Burns.* Edited by J. Logie Robertson. \$1.50. New York: Macmillan & Co. 4. *Ad Lucem.* Selected by Mary Lloyd. \$1. New York: Thos. Y. Crowell & Co. 5. *The New Pandora. A Drama.* By Harriet H. Robinson. \$1. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 6. *Divine Philosophy: A Poem.* By John Waddie. London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

winds or the waves, we are sure to find a poem as invigorating as the one or as melodious as the other. About them he has always a fine thing to say, and he says it in such a manner as to make himself seem their very voices singing in our ears. Here are a few extracts from the poems, which will show what we mean. The first is from 'March: An Ode':

For the breath of thy lips is freedom, and freedom's the sense of thy spirit, the sound of thy song,  
Glad god of the north-east wind, whose heart is as high as the hands of thy kingdom are strong,  
Thy kingdom whose empire is terror and joy, twin-featured and fruitful of births divine,  
Days lit with the flame of the lamps of the flowers, and nights that are drunken with dew for wine,  
And sleep not for joy of the stars that deepen and quicken, a denser and fierier throng,  
And the world that thy breath bade whiten and tremble rejoices at heart as they strengthen and shine,  
And earth gives thanks for the glory bequeathed her; and knows of thy reign that it wrought not wrong.

From 'A Word with the Wind' we take these stanzas:

Lord of days and nights that hear thy word of wintry warning,  
Wind, whose feet are set on ways that none may tread,  
Change the nest wherein thy wings are fledged for flight by morning,  
Change the harbor whence at dawn thy sails are spread.

Change thy note, and give the waves their will, and all the measure,  
Full and perfect, of the music of their might,  
Let it fill the bays with thunderous notes and throbs of pleasure,  
Shake the shores with passion, sound at once and smite.

Sweeter fields and brighter woods and lordlier hills than waken  
Here at sunrise never hailed the sun and thee:  
Turn thee then, and give them comfort, shed like rain and shaken  
Far as foam that laughs and leaps along the sea.

In the poem entitled 'The Commonweal,' written for the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee, we find the following quotable things:

Hope, wide of eye and wild of wing,  
Rose with the sundawn of a reign  
Whose grace should make the rough ways plain,  
And fill the worn old world with spring.  
And heal its heart of pain.

Such sons are hers, such radiant hands  
Have borne abroad her lamp of old,  
Such mouths of honey-dropping gold  
Have sent across all seas and lands  
Her fame as music rolled.

As music made of rolling thunder  
That hurls through heaven its heart sublime,  
Its heart of joy, in charging chime,  
So ring the songs that round and under  
Her temple surge and climb.

We hardly know when to stop quoting, so tempting are the things offered to us. There are many among the dialect ballads which we should be glad to give here, particularly the one called 'A Reiver's Neck-Verse'; but we shall have to be satisfied with these few lines from 'The Armada,' which, if they impress our readers as they impressed us, will let them know that they belong to the best poem in the volume:

'They that ride over ocean wide with hempen bridle and horse of tree,'  
How shall they in the darkening day of wrath and anguish and fear go free?

How shall these that have curbed the seas not feel his bridle who made the sea?

God shall bow them and break them now; for what is man in the Lord God's sight?

Fear shall shake them, and shame shall break, and all the noon of their pride be night:

These that sinned shall the ravening wind of doom bring under, and judgment smite.

England broke from her neck the yoke, and rent the fetter, and mocked the rod:

Shrines of old that she decked with gold she turned to dust, to dust she trod:

What is she, that the wind and sea should fight beside her, and war with God?

England, none that is born thy son, and lives, by grace and thy glory, free,

Lives and yearns not at heart and burns with hope to serve as he worships thee;

None may sing thee: the sea-wind's wing beats down our songs as it hails the sea.

Nowhere in the poem, which is made up of a variety of stanzaic forms, each adapted to the theme in hand, do we find any falling-off from the majestic sweep of these lines; and the manner in which the sea-fight is described is as poetical as it is perfect.

A choice addition to the *Canterbury Poets Series*, edited by Mr. William Sharp, is 'Selections from the Greek Anthology' (2), edited by Graham R. Tomson. The translations are principally by modern authors: Dr. Richard Garnett furnishes 70; Miss Alma Strettell, 45; Mr. Andrew Lang, 43; Mr. W. M. Hardinge, 26; and Mr. Goldwin Smith, 7. Among other names we find those of Addison, Cowper, Shelley, Moore, Merivale, Gosse, Meyers, Symonds, and Sir Edwin Arnold. The editor's contribution consists of a very readable introductory note giving, among other things, an account of the four anthologies that have existed—namely, that of Meleager, of Philip of Thessalonica, of Agathias, and of Constantine Cephalas. With this collection of admirable translations before us we could not help recalling a little book of songs from the Greek anthology, rendered into English verse by Mr. Alfred J. Butler, entitled 'Amaranth and Asphodel,' and published eight years ago by Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co. It does not seem possible that Mrs. Tomson could have known of Mr. Butler's volume and then failed to include any of his translations in her Anthology. It is a pity that anyone who has this volume should not know of Mr. Butler's, and we gladly take this opportunity to direct them where to find it.

Ably edited, with an excellent introduction clearly outlining the poet's life, copious notes, and a complete glossary, is Mr. J. Logie Robertson's 'Selections from Burns' (3), recently published by the Clarendon Press. The editor has made such a selection as is representative of Burns's best work, dividing the verses into 'Poems' and 'Songs,' and arranging each series chronologically. Mr. Robertson's work has been given an attractive setting, which it merits, and the volume is a very desirable one to have, containing, as it does, about everything of Burns one wishes.—'Ad Lucem' (4) is the title of a beautiful little book made up of brief poems, prose extracts, and Bible verses, selected by Mary Lloyd 'for the consolation of all who are "afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate."' The selections evince excellent taste and literary judgment on the part of the compiler, and are calculated to fulfil the purpose for which they have been made.

'The New Pandora' (5), by Harriet H. Robinson, is a drama in five acts, the scene of which is Greece in the primæval age. Vulcan and a couple of Cyclops manufacture Pandora and send her to earth for the purpose of disturbing the peace and quiet of a primitive gentleman yclept Æetes. She behaves very well considering the fact that she is given to retrospective dreams of her former home on Olympus, while Æetes, unlike Adam, conducts himself in a boorish manner, doubtless because his primitive companions persist in taunting him of his matrimonial fetters. However, towards the end of the drama they 'kiss and make up,' and in Act V. finally 'enter a gate of clouds, which closes after them,' leaving their children in a primitive hut, while they stroll about Olympus listening to the choruses of the Immortals. We prefer the Old Pandora to the New.

Mr. John Waddie has written a long and laborious poem in seven books, plus an envoy, which he calls 'Divine Philosophy' (6). We are fond of philosophy and of poems inspired by philosophical questions, but when it comes to digging our philosophy and poetry out of one hundred and ninety pages of such prosaic and difficult verse as Mr. Waddie manufactures, we rebel. There is rhyme in his mystical seven books, and perhaps there is reason; but who, so brave, will try to find them in such 'poetry' as this:

By evolution of primordial parts  
The various creatures grew, and those prevailed  
That with protective limbs, or hues, or arts,  
Could best maintain their kind, where none are left  
In the vast striking concourse unassailed;  
Where every power is to the utmost pressed,  
And those that fall of being are bereft.

In all, there are about four thousand lines of this thing. If Mr. Waddie is a philosopher, he should write in prose; if he is a poet, he should not try to write of philosophy. Life is too short for an art which is so long.