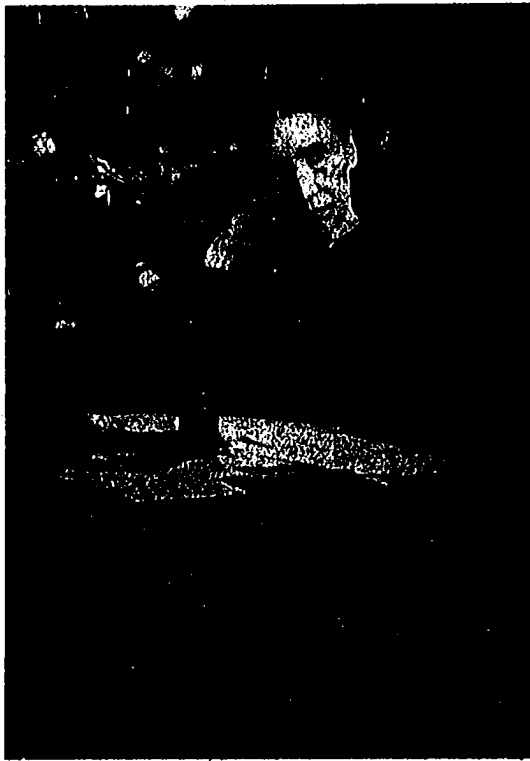


### Johanna Ambrosius in English

Poems by Johanna Ambrosius. Transl. by Mary J. Safford,  
Roberts Bros.

ON FEBRUARY 8 *The Critic* gave a review of Johanna Ambrosius's "Gedichte," with a short sketch of her life. A translation of these poems has now been published, together with Prof. Schrattenthal's introduction to the German edition, and with the addition of a criticism by Herman Grimm and a description, by an

one language to another would permit, retaining not only the thought, but the alternations of rhyme, the number of syllables in each line, etc." The result is certainly as good as could reasonably be expected; therefore it causes us to repeat here what we said but a few weeks ago apropos of another "literal" translation of German poetry:—"At their best, translations are unsatisfactory. The nearer a translator succeeds in licking a poem into the semblance of the original, the more artificial and lifeless does it become." Had this translator only held the thought and let the form go, she might have wrought much better; as it is, the reader gets the thought, but it is cold and lifeless: the inspiration is gone that moulded it into its original form, because it was the most appropriate one; and in its stead there are counterfeits of rhyme and meter that refuse to be welded together into the appeal to soul and heart that has made the original poems part of the world's literature.



American journalist, of the visit of a messenger from the German Empress conveying donations and honors to the peasant poet. Herr Grimm says in the course of his review:—"Petöfy, Mistral, Goethe, Shakespeare and Homer sometimes seem to me the recurring embodiment of a single poet. This is the great primeval poet of mankind, who gives vent to his grief in words whose melody enchants him. Amidst the despair which almost breaks his heart, he is utterly unable to grieve. An unknown feeling of happiness in mere existence never leaves him. This is the secret of the poetry of Ada Negri and Johanna Ambrosius. As soon as they begin to poetize, that which afflicts them becomes a fountain of joy. Johanna's life is set before us, from her youth down to the latest day; her verse contains a compensation for the worst experiences. They are formulæ for turning lumps of coal into pure gold. Who could venture to call this poor peasant, in her poverty almost beyond our comprehension, poor? We are the paupers, and she bestows upon us alms. The wounds from which her blood flows, as Shakespeare says, become lips to whisper to her sweet comfort. \* \* \* This woman, with her hand roughened by work, strikes the chords of the human heart, as if they were touched by fairy fingers. And how are we to explain this almost incomprehensible literary discretion? She offers us none but mature, perfectly formed fruits."

As to this translation, it has been the translator's aim "to reproduce the work of the author as faithfully as the transfer from