

An American Poet

In his *Poems and Ballads* Hermann Hagedorn strikes a true note in a wide variety of song.* From the opening poem, "The Infidel," where the old theme, become so common to-day, between a faith dead and a faith alive, is treated in the light of a master passion, down to the sharp rebuke of "The Senate's Repudiation of an Honorable Compact," is a wide stretch for the imagination. Between "Laneer" and "The Cobbler of Glamorgan" is an equally wide march of dramatic action. 'How vivid the picture of the wreck in "Laneer":—

Like a frightened hound the craft shivered.
A crashing sea
Broke on the plunging rudder, wrenched it,
and wrenched it free.
Into the swirling waters thundered the
boom a-lee.

Like straws the hungry deluge swept up
over the side.
Fiercely up through the surf we fought.
"Laneer?" I cried
Sputtering, gasping, laughing. "Aye, aye,
sir!" Laneer replied.

We clung to the knife-like keel. The waters
were biting cold,
And up from the windward combers and
ever new combers rolled,
And pounded us, tore at us, wrenched us,
fighting to loose our hold.

Laneer's flushed cheeks were pale. But she
laughed and her eyes were light.
"Why this is a lark to boast of for many a
day and night!"

This is dramatic play of passion,
with its light and shadow well concentrated. A poem even more to our fancy is that exquisitely graceful "Monna Vita," which carries the French lightness of touch to the treatment of woman as she is treated in America—of woman as she is found in America,—a bit of the

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coquette and a bit of the "perfect woman nobly planned." With her lover sitting where,

In ancient thickets wonderfully sings
The holy nurse of hearts, the nightingale,
She lends him her hand. "Tell me your
guess."

'Tis a Minerva's hand, a woman, hand,
Though from a helmet sprung. Your sire
was Jove—

King, wizard, slipper-serf, philanderer, god.
He's dead. *Nous avons changé tout cela*—
And we have better wizards, better gods;
You only stay unchanging. Quiet, now!
Twitch not your hand. Now that I hold it
thus

I'll not release it till it tells me all
A hand can tell. A hand! Could I but see
Your eyes! Booh! Hide them, then, who-
cares? Coquette!

* * * * *
Somewhat you love your lovers; give, with-
hold,
As gods and sovereigns may, as women
must,
Or lovers will grow bold, and spurn the
love.—

Is it to keep the aging ardor warm
You save sometimes your kiss for funerals?
* * * * *

You love him most who comes
Eager and passionate from the peaks of
youth,
Demanding, where the frail one plead; and
loves
Though you withhold, undaunted by your
scorn,
Knowing that deathless love at last wakes
love,
And love awakened will come forth with
gifts.
* * * * *

For him you have no anger and no spite.
You chide, you twinge his ear for some rash
word;

For some too hot "I will" you give him
tears,
Crush him to raise him higher. And ever yet
He loves, and loves more nobly. For you
teach,

As women do, your lovers how to love.
The lust dies in their eyes, the love is born
You wake desire for music in his heart
And answer the desire
I love you thus! Madonna, kiss me now!"

Could there be a prettier wooing,
of a finer maid, to a nobler end?