

pages, with an expository and autobiographical introduction. And George Sterling, an older name than Mr. Lindsay's, but a writer still in the country of midcareer, appears with a book of "Selected Poems".

The new Masefield volume is modest in physical proportions and contents. It runs but a trifle in excess of 250 pages, and contains approximately fifty selections from previous books, with one additional narrative, five sonnets, and a lyric not previously published. The selections are made by the author himself and are drawn from his narratives and sonnets and lyrics. The selections, on the whole, are fortunate. In Mr. Masefield's narratives, certain passages rise to rememberable excellence and, moreover, are susceptible of use apart from context. These are printed here, along with some of the sonnets to Beauty and some of the more popular of early lyrics. The new narrative, "Nireus", the story of a friend of Paris who also was in love with Helen, is direct and simple in treatment, with Masefield's characteristic touches of sudden and lighting beauty and the usual passages of awkward, uninspired speech. The poem moves through several changes of rhythm, but for the most part quietly, in moods regretful and remorseful, to a close of happy peace. It has nothing of the interest or the passion or the breathless rush of incident that characterize the author's better known narratives, such as "Dauber" and "The Everlasting Mercy" and "Reynard the Fox". Nor has it the spiritual richness of the more contemplative sonnets. It will not contribute a great deal to the poet's reputation. The new sonnets and the lyric have aspects of Beauty for their themes, with the characteristic Masefieldian approach of frank adoration and faith

## POEMS COLLECTED AND SELECTED

By David Morton

"COLLECTED" poems and "selected" poems come to us, in these days, frequently with a start of surprise. The poets grow to proportions sooner than we expect. Perhaps it is all a part of the familiar phenomenon of years and events going by more rapidly than we realize, until suddenly our attention is wrenched to a neglected perspective. It seems so little while ago that Masefield was a new planet. Yet his volume of "Collected Poems" has been on the shelf, now, long enough to warrant — in the opinion of his publishers — a book of "Selected Poems" also. Vachel Lindsay is even yet regarded, in certain remote and inner chambers, as "one of the young men". Yet here is a volume of "Collected Poems", running to nearly 400

in the divine ministry of his adored.

Vachel Lindsay, in a brief but full and spectacular career, has rarely failed of being both interesting and stimulating. No poet in America has spoken with such emphatic accents and such unhushed assertiveness the faith that is in him. In another particular, also, he stands almost alone. It would be difficult to name another poet whose thought and life and poetry are so much at one. His poetry is not to be thought of apart from his life. It is the accent and music and rhythm of his days, and the nonsense and beauty and vision of his mind and spirit, become articulate. The "Collected Poems" affords an interesting perspective of this life and spirit and their articulation. There is scarcely anyone who will like every poem in the book. The range of subject matter and quality alike reaches from pole to pole. Yet, even where the poetic values are nowhere discoverable — and there are such passages — there is a genuine effort at realities. Much poetry of a high and moving and inspirational quality is here — and much that is none of these things. But the book justifies its large proportions, and will do much to win to the author some who needed this long view of his work for an appreciation of his peculiar power.

All who are interested in the conservation of authentic poetry written in this country will welcome the publication at this time of the "Selected Poems" of George Sterling. Mr. Sterling, during the past quarter century, has made valuable contributions to the body of American poetry. He has written, within that period, poems that have the pose of permanency upon them as they appear in their niches in the anthologies from year to year. As a conscientious artist, with a cer-

tain large way of seeing the world and of feeling about life, he has won a respected place for himself in American letters. His poetry is in "the grand manner", no longer the fashion of the day; but changing fashions do not lastingly affect the enduring and fundamental poetic values, and much of Mr. Sterling's work possesses these in rich endowment. His muse is concerned with the larger aspects of life and destiny, and these themes he approaches with a language of appropriate proportions. The poems in this volume are selected by the author from six previous collections of verse and three dramatic poems. The book is attractively and substantially made.

It is well to be in a state of lively awareness when reading "Black Armour" by Elinor Wylie. Indeed, that is true of all Mrs. Wylie's poetry. It will not do to come to it in a dreamy mood of mental weariness and surrender. It is not poetry of relief and escape from the world of sharp edges and brittle realities. On the contrary, it is the same world, with each sharp edge and each reality — of the mind and spirit — caught up and sharpened to a point of telling intensity. Both in "Nets to Catch the Wind," Mrs. Wylie's first book, and in "Black Armour" are poems to open many little doors upon the individual and peculiar chambers of the author's mind. Here, revealed in a steady, concentrated light, are the transmuted fruits of experience and reflection. It comes to be a poetry, primarily, of exploration in that interesting though necessarily narrow and special precinct. What it does not do is to open wide windows on an ample world of universal habitation and experience. Mrs. Wylie's gift for new yet strikingly apt symbols, metaphors, and epithets is manifest here, as in "Nets to Catch the

Wind", to contribute freshness and to war upon somnolence. And here and there—notably in the last section of the book—are poems that are Beauty's own distillation. In this last section, also, are poems in which feeling transpires more freely and clearly, with less of the tortuous intellectual obstruction that characterizes much of Mrs. Wylie's work. On the whole, "Black Armour" is a highly distinctive contribution to the poetry of the period.

Willa Cather, author of the 1923 Pulitzer Prize novel, has an individual gift for achieving the simple clarity of classic song. "April Twilights", a book of poems running to less than seventy pages, and embracing selections from an earlier volume of the same name, with about a dozen new poems, is chiefly interesting for its examples of this medium for the communication of delicate feeling. Her titles betray an interest in classical themes and countries, and her method and language have the gesture and accent that suit. The western prairie country, in landscape and mood and history, is a theme which divides attention with the Old World in the author's subjects, and is the occasion of poetry less artistically satisfying, but sometimes moving. "April Twilights" is not verse of large proportions nor of profound movement, but many of the poems in the volume are pleasing, and some are wrought in a fineness and sureness, both of feeling and execution, that recommend them for rereading and preservation. "Grandmither, Think Not I Forget" and "Paradox" and "Thou Art the Pearl" lack the distinction of feeling and treatment that mark some of the poems, and are out of place in the company of such excellent pieces as "Lament For Marsyas", "A Likeness",

and "The Poor Minstrel". "Macon Prairie", a combination narrative and character study, paints a vivid picture that is tragic, heroic—and memorable.

A freer movement, with more pronounced feeling, and a wider range of both theme and treatment are to be found in "Songs of Unrest" by Bernice Lesbia Kenyon. Miss Kenyon's work was well known to readers of American periodicals before it was collected between covers. The poems are in the conventional forms—forms so far from cramping to the author that the dexterous and facile use of them, and their perfection within themselves, constitute additional delights for the studiously minded among poetry readers. "Futility", with its conspiracy of form and matter, of sound and sense, is an example. Intimate, personal emotion runs through the greater number of the poems, but emotion disciplined, acutely observed and finely intellectualized. The spirit is one of fragile and heroic rigidity, standing, a little defiantly, in a world of storm. In workmanship, the poems leave nothing to be desired. Miss Kenyon is master of her medium. Two of the finest sonnets that have appeared in recent publications—in my opinion, at least—are printed here under the titles "Homecoming in Storm" and "Renewal". "Interim", a sequence in a somewhat freer form, is finely conceived and finely written, and carries the authentic accent of genuine feeling. Most of the poems are thoughtful and slow moving, but an occasional lyric, such as "September", which is nearly pure melody, is testimony to Miss Kenyon's singing quality. The collection is one of distinction, in thought, in feeling, in workmanship.

There is a good deal of pleasant—and some very excellent—reading in

Amanda Benjamin Hall's first book of verse, "The Dancer in the Shrine". There is robust good sense in many of the poems, which makes the more surprising a note of religious sentimentality that is heard now and again in the book — notably in such poems as "A Dancer Dies". A sharp feeling for character is apparent in several instances, and throughout the collection, a lyric quality and a gift for illuminative epithet and phrase. Much ingenuity of conceit is here, but a more authentic imaginative quality is to be found in the poems of character delineation through the medium of brief narrative or steady and revealing gaze. Miss Hall is at her best in these, and in the crisp, epigrammatic lyrics where beauty and wisdom are hardly compressed.

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- Selected Poems. By John Masefield. The Macmillan Co.  
Collected Poems. By Vachel Lindsay. The Macmillan Co.  
Selected Poems. By George Sterling. Henry Holt and Co.  
Black Armour. By Elinor Wylie. George H. Doran Company.  
April Twilights. By Willa Cather. Alfred A. Knopf.  
Songs of Unrest. By Bernice Lesbia Kenyon. Charles Scribner's Sons.  
The Dancer in the Shrine. By Amanda Benjamin Hall. George H. Doran Company.