much the poem owes, in its selection for this distinction, to the novelty and freshness of theme. The subject, of course, is epic in proportions, and susceptible of stark and moving tragedy. But neither the epic breadth of the theme nor the grandeur of the tragedy survives in "The Box of God". In the conflict between the fine and moving pantheism of the Indian and the somewhat arbitrarily restricted religion of the white man, the argument is not convincing and the intended feeling does not transpire. Passion is not felt in the poem as the author plainly meant it to be felt, and what passion is there is dissipated and rendered less effective by lack of restraint and discipline. The language of the poem strains for exalted speech, but rarely achieves genuine poetry.

In contrast with these inadequacies, and surmounting them in the resultant impression from a reading of the entire volume, is the distinct feeling of the presence of authentic poetry in such pieces as "The Maple Sugar Chant", "To a Dead Pembina Warrior", and some of the slender lyrics. The dances and songs in the third division of the book are marked by the strong, elemental rhythms of primitive, emotional speech. Sound and sense conspire to effective ends. And in "The Maple Sugar Chant", the author has achieved the trembling and half unconscious beauty that is poetry. Here is simple and direct utterance, exalted beyond self-consciousness by a fine and stirring passion.

Among the shorter lyrics, in the division entitled "Green Altars", there is freshness of phrase and poignancy of feeling — in such poems as "Wind in the Pine", "Dust", and "Timberline Cedar".

Achievement — such as Mr. Sarett's — is one occasion for rejoicing. Prom-

PROMISE AND ACHIEVEMENT

By David Morton[1]

A PRIZE poem, of course, encounters the handicap of great expectations. The poet is compelled to forego any possibility of the happy and sudden surprise of unexpected excellence. No doubt that explains in part, though not altogether, why one turns from the title poem of Lew Sarett's "The Box of God" with a feeling of inadequacy, and comes upon his "Maple Sugar Chant" and other poems in the book with a sense of surprised delight.

The title poem, it should be explained, was awarded the Helen Haire Levinson Prize as the best contribution by an American to "Poetry" in 1921. One is tempted to wonder how

ise, of the kind to be found in the volumes from the various university presses during the past three or four years, is another. In more than a few instances, names first emerging modestly from these quarters have become luminaries of distinguished achievement. This is not universally true; but it has been true in a sufficient number of instances to justify the Yale University Press, for example, in its stated purpose to offer "such verse as seems to give the fairest promise for the future of American poetry". In any such undertaking some disappointments are inevitable, and the output, of course, is uneven. "Lyra Levis", by Edward Bliss Reed, who has already three volumes to his name, is not compelling humor. His rhyming is dexterous, but his wit is neither agile nor surprising.

Bernard Raymund, on the other hand, in "Hidden Waters" has gone beyond the purpose of his publishers, as quoted above. Here are sharp and surprising turns of thought and feeling transpiring in poetry whose accent is authentic. A gift for the delineation of emotion in portraiture, performed with the artist's detachment and restraint, marks many of the poems. A delicate and regretful and smiling irony pervades the book. The distinct contours of an individual mind are imprinted upon such poems as "Ægea", "The Quickening", "Drama", and "The Tower". To say that "Hidden Waters" is a book of high promise is to do it something less than justice.

Another volume issuing from a university press — Princeton, in this instance — is by just such a writer as these publishers mean to serve. There is evidence of genuine poetic feeling, there is an occasional successful verse, there is sometimes a gleam of the light that never was on land and sea. There is, in short, promise — there is scarcely achievement — in "Mauna Roa" by Ames Brooks.

Charles L. O'Donnell's ability to write graceful and sometimes moving lyrics is evidenced again in "Cloister". A passionate religious mysticism characterizes many of the verses, and in nearly all of them the imagery and metaphor are from religious thought and history. Father O'Donnell's is a quiet, reflective muse who moves pensively among the established sanctions of English poetry.

The Box of God. By Lew Sarett. Henry Holt and Co.
Lyra Levis. By Edward Bliss Reed. Yale University Press.
Hidden Waters. By Bernard Raymund. Yale University Press.
Mauna Roa. By Ames Brooks. Princeton University Press.
Cloister. By Charles L. O'Donnell, C. S. S. The Macmillan Co.