RECENT POETRY.*

When a poet has "climbed to the snows of age," his voice may lose something of its warmth and richness, but acquire in their place the note of prophecy.

> "From labours through the night, outworn,
> Above the hills the front of morn,
> We see, whose eyes to heights are raised,
> And the world's wise may deem us crazed.
> While yet her lord lies under seas,
> She takes us as the wind the trees'
> Delighted leafage; all in song
> We mount to her, to her belong."

There is little need to name George Meredith as the author of these lines, or of the following equally characteristic quatrains:

> "Once I was part of the music I heard
> On the boughs or sweet between earth and sky,
> For joy of the beating of wings on high
> My heart shot into the breast of the bird.
>
> "I hear it now and I see it fly
> And a life in wrinkles again is stirred,
> My heart shoots into the breast of the bird,
> As it will for sheer love till the last long sigh."

These examples from the precious sheaf of Meredith's "Last Poems" vividly recall the brave free spirit that winged its flight a few months ago. Several of the poems offer retrospective pictures of the Napoleonic days at which Meredith's imagination always took fire.

> "Their facts are going headlong on the tides,
> Like commas on a line of History's page;
> Nor that which once they took for Truth abides,
> Save in the form of youth enlarged from age.
>
> "Meantime give ear to woodland notes around,
> Look on our Earth full-breasted to the sun:
> So was it when their poets heard the sound,
> Beheld the scene: in them our days are one."

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*LAST POEMS. By George Meredith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

SONGS AND POEMS OLD AND NEW. By William Sharp (Fiona Macleod). New York: Duffield & Co.

MIMMA BELLA. By Eugene Lee-Hamilton. New York: Duffield & Co.

NEW POEMS. By William Watson. New York: The John Lane Co.

NEW POEMS. By Richard Le Gallienne. New York: The John Lane Co.

DRAKE. An English Epic. Book I.-XII. By Alfred Noyes. New York: The Frederick A. Stokes Co.

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF ARTHUR UPSON. Edited, with an Introduction, by Richard Burton. Two volumes. Minneapolis: Edmund D. Brooks.

THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WINTER. Author's Edition. New York: Moffat, Yard & Co.

THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE, and Other Poems. By George Cabot Lodge. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

THE WHITE BEES, and Other Poems. By Henry van Dyke. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE GIANT AND THE STAR. Little Annals in Rhyme. By Madison Cawein. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.

NEW POEMS. By Madison Cawein. London: Grant Richards.

SONG FOR THE TER-CENTENARY OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN. By Clinton Scollard. Clinton: George William Browning.

PRO PATRIA. Verses Chiefly Patriotic. By Clinton Scollard. Clinton: George William Browning.

Nelson and Trafalgar are the subjects of two noble poems, and the moral drawn from these historical musings is thus convincingly put:

"Our cry for cradled Peace, while men are still
The three-parts brute which smothers the divine,
Heaven answers: Guard it with forethoughtful will,
Or buy it; all your gains from War resign.

"A land, not indefensibly alarmed,
May see, unwarned by hint of friendly gods,
Between a hermit crab at all points armed,
And one without a shell, decisive odds."

Ireland, Russia, and Italy receive generous tributes in this volume. The stanzas upon "The Centenary of Garibaldi" come to this splendid close:

"Down the long roll of History will run
The story of these deeds, and speed his race
Beneath defeat more hotly to embrace
The noble cause and trust to another sun.

"And lo, that sun is in Italia's skies
This day, by grace of his good sword in part.
It beckons her to keep a warrior heart
For guard of beauty, all too sweet a prize.

"Earth gave him: blessèd be the Earth that gave.
Earth Master crowned his honest work on earth:
Proudly Italia names his place of birth;
The bosom of Humanity his grave."

The stately lines for the Milton terceptenary also call for thankful mention, and we reluctantly refrain from quoting a part of them. Enough has been said to show that these new poems are much more than crumbs swept from the Meredithian board; they constitute indeed a substantial addition to the poet's finer work.

Mrs. William Sharp has made a selection from the poems of her late husband, drawing upon the five volumes published under his own name, for the purpose of supplying a companion to the volume which he published under the assumed name of "Fiona Macleod." A few poems never before brought into book form are added to the closing section. One of these later poems, "On a Nightingale in April," may be taken for our illustration of a poet whose sweet and wistful song has qualities that repay a close examination.

"The yellow moon is a dancing phantom
Down secret ways of the flowing shade;
And the waveless stream has a murmuring whisper
Where the alders wave.

"Not a breath, not a sigh, save the slow stream's whisper:
Only the moon is a dancing blade
That leads a host of the Crescent warriors
To a phantom raid.

"Out of the Lands of Faerie a summons,
A long, strange cry that thrills through the glade:—
The grey-green glooms of the elm are stirring,
Newly afraid.

"Last heard, white music, under the olives
Where once Theocritus sang and played —
Thy Thracian song is the old new wonder
O moon-white maid!"

Since several of Sharp's volumes are now out of print, this selection of the best in all of them is highly acceptable, coming, as it does, from the hands of the person most competent to make it.

The last work done by Eugene Lee-Hamilton took the form of a cycle of twenty-nine sonnets consecrated to the memory of his lost child who died when but two years old. "Mimma Bella" he caressingly called her, and that is the title given to the poems in which she is enshrined. The one which we quote, beautiful and impressive as it is, offers only a fair average example of the extraordinary series to which it belongs.

"Mantled in purple dusk, Imperial Death,
Thy throne Time's mist, thy crown the clustered stars,
Thy orb the world; — did Nature's countless wars
Yield insufficient incense for thy breath?

"Hadst not enough with all who troop beneath
Thy inward-opening gates, whose shadowy bars
Give back nor kings in their triumphal cars,
Nor the worn throngs that old age hurrieth?

"O sateless Death, most surely it was thou,
(A thousand ages, yea, and longer still,
Before the words were heard in Galilee)

"That saidst with dark contraction of thy brow,
While through all Nature ran an icy chill:
'Now let the little children come to me?'"

The pathos of these poems is almost intolerable, but it is redeemed and sanctified by their loveliness. The cycle is a worthy pendant to those "Sonnets of the Wingless Hours" which first revealed to the world the full stature of this poet. The present volume is edited by his widow, who contributes a few pages of biographical notes.

Mr. Watson's "New Poems" include the stinging and indiscreet verses to "The Woman with a Serpent's Tongue" that recently provided the journalism of two nations with a nine days' sensation. The volume contains much other matter far worthier of attention, and notably — since the author is now a visitor to these shores — a stately invocation "To the Invincible Republic," from which we take pleasure in producing the central passage.

"And as thou art vast,
So are thy perils vast, that evermore
In thine own house are bred; nor least of these
That fair and fell Delilah, Luxury,
That shears the hero's strength away, and brings
Palsy on nations. Flee her loveliness,
For in the end her kisses are a sword.
Strong sons hast thou begotten, natures rich
In scorn of riches, greatly simple minds:
No land in all the world hath memories
Of nobler children: let it not be said
That if the peerless and the stainless one,
The man of Yorktown and of Valley Forge, —
Or he of tragic doom, thy later born,
He of the short plain word that thrilled the world
And freed the bondman, — let it not be said
That if to-day these radiant ones returned,
They would behold thee changed beyond all thought
From that austerity wherein thy youth
Was nurtured, those large habitudes of soul."

These lines will illustrate Mr. Watson's chief poetic gift — an aptitude for the fitting characterization of significant men and events. When he attempts

this task, he is always restrained and dignified, provided only his theme is far enough removed from the passions of his own time and environment. His "Purple East" sonnets, and his denunciation of the war in South Africa, were marred by over-vehemence and cloudiness of judgment. Probably this should be said also of the present lines upon the late King of Belgium, although their effectiveness is not to be denied.

"No zeal, no Faith inspired this Leopold,
Nor any madness of half-splendid birth,
Merely he loosed the hounds that rend and slay
That he might have his fill of loathsome gold.
Embalm him, Time! Forget him not, O Earth!
Trumpet his name, and flood his deeds with day!"

A group of seventeen "Sonnets to Miranda," clearly of the nature of a personal confession, forms a conspicuous feature of this volume. Mr. Watson is not so happy when he affects playfulness, for his gambols are rather like those of a dancing bear. Vivacity is not his affair, and his efforts to be sprightly do not exactly come off. But, despite his misguided experiments, he remains one of the noblest of our living poets — a fact strangely forgotten by those who have recently been overwhelming him with vituperation.

The "New Poems" of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne seem to be the product of about ten years — at least they go back to the war in South Africa. Most of them are pretty futilities, although now and then a simple, sincere strain appeals to us in the deeper fashion. Such a strain is heard in "The Cry of the Little Peoples."

"The Cry of the Little Peoples went up to God in vain;
The Czech, and the Pole, and the Finn, and the Schleswig Dane.

"We ask but a little portion of the green, ambitious earth;
Only to sow and sing and reap in the land of our birth."

A rather striking story (with a moral) is told in the "Ballad of the Sinful Lover."

"Four years he sinned, because she died —
With base corroding anodyne
He numbed the noble pain in him,
Four years he herded with the swine.

"And then at last he died, and went,
With hurry of immortal feet,
To seek in the Eternal Life
The face that he had died to meet.

"Up all the stairways of the sky
Laughing he ran, at every door
Of the long corridors of heaven
He knocked, and cried out 'Heliodore!'

"In shining rooms sat the sweet saints,
Each at her little task of joy;
Old eyes, all young again with heaven,
Watched angel girl and angel boy.

"And o'er the fields of Paradise,
Scattered like flowers, the lovers passed
All rainbows — saying each to each
Heaven's two words: 'At last! At last!'"

But Heliodore would have nothing of the sinner, which is the moral already referred to.

It takes courage to write an epic nowadays, but Mr. Alfred Noyes, greatly daring, has essayed no less a task, and carried it to triumphant success. His subject is "Drake," probably the greatest epic theme that English history can offer, and his poem is a full-blooded composition of such high and sustained interest that it makes breathless reading, and causes us almost to forget that we are dealing with a supposedly outworn literary form. It culminates, of course, in the defeat of the Armada, and its heightened diction may be adequately illustrated by this passage:

"None but the everlasting voice
Of him who fought at Salamis might sing
The fight of that dread Sabbath. Not mankind
Waged it alone. War waged in heaven that day,
Where Michael and his angels drave once more
The hosts of darkness ruining down the abyss
Of Chaos. Light against darkness, Liberty
Against all dark old despotism, unsheathed
The sword in that great hour. Behind the strife
Of men embattled deeps beyond all thought
Moved in their awful panoply, as move
Silent, invisible, swift, under the clash
Of waves and flash of foam, huge ocean glooms
And vast reserves of inappellable power.
The bowsprits ranked on either fore-front seemed
But spear-heads of those dread antagonists
Invisible: the shuddering sails of Spain
Dusk with the shadow of death, the sunward sails
Of England full-fraught with the breath of God."

This noble poem is almost worthy to be named in the same breath with Swinburne's magnificent ode upon the same subject, and it was, indeed, completed just in time to greet the eye of the master now dead, and to win his unstinted praise.

The "Collected Poems of the late Arthur Upson" are published in two dignified and almost sumptuous volumes, with an editorial introduction by Professor Richard Burton. From this introduction we learn that the poet was born in Camden, N. Y., in 1877, that he was busily writing at the tender age of nine, that in 1894 he removed to St. Paul and entered the University of Minnesota, that his college life was suspended from 1896 to 1900 on account of ill health, that it was finally resumed and all but completed, that in 1906 he was appointed an instructor in the University, and that in 1908, at the age of thirty-one, he was drowned from his boat in a Minnesota lake. We may hardly say of him, in view of the volume and value of his accomplished performance, that he is to be classed with "the inheritors of unfilled renown;" but we may express a more than perfunctory regret that the springs of a fountain of beauty should have been sealed in such untimely and tragic fashion. The evidence is clear in these two volumes that their author was a poet of the kind that can transmute all experience into beauty, and that our literature suffered no ordinary loss in his death. He had not become widely known, although no less than seven volumes of his verse were published before he died, and he had won the esteem of those whose business it is to keep themselves informed concerning the poetic movement. Aldrich, for example, once wrote: "I am afraid he is too fine for imme-

diate popularity; but that does n't matter. It is not the many but the few that give a man his place in literature. The many are engaged canning meat and manipulating pious life insurance companies." Certainly he was not one of the "Failures" characterized in his fine sonnet thus entitled.

"They bear no laurels on their sunless brows,
Nor aught within their pale hands as they go;
They look as men accustomed to the slow
And level onward course 'neath drooping boughs.
Who may these be no trumpet doth arouse,
These of the dark processionals of woe,
Unpraised, unblamed, but whom sad Acheron's flow
Monotously lulls to leaden drowse?
These are the Failures. Clutched by Circumstance,
They were — say not too weak! — too ready prey
To their own fear whose fixèd Gorgon glance
Made them as stone for aught of great essay; —
Or else they nodded when their Master-Chance
Wound his one signal, and went on his way."

Of the thirty-three stanzas that bloom "In an Oxford Garden" we cull two of the fairest.

"Some dust of Eden eddies round us yet.
Some clay o' the Garden, clinging in the breast,
Down near the heart yet bides unmanifest.
Last eve in gardens strange to me I let
The path lead far; and, lo, my vision met
Old, forfeit hopes. I, as on homeward quest,
By recognizing trees was bidden rest,
And pitying leaves looked down and sighed, 'Forget.'"

. . . . . .

"A great nelumbo heavy on the breast
Of heaven's tranquil lake must be the moon
Above this garden in the still night's noon,
Bending the gold of her refulgent crest.
Thus to the surface of these days of rest
Through all my absent idlesse, late and soon,
The thought of you doth blossom and the boon
Of the dear face that waits me down the West."

As an example of the pure lyric, it would not be easy to match the following:

"Flame at the core of the world,
And flame in the red rose-tree;
The one is the fire of the ancient spheres,
The other is Junes to be;
And, oh, there 's a flame that is both their flames
Here at the heart of me!

"As strong as the fires of stars,
As the prophet rose-tree true,
The fire of my life is tender and wild,
Its beauty is old and new;
For out of the infinite past it came
With the love in the eyes of you!"

The range of this poet is wide, and he finds inspiration alike under home and alien skies. Many of his pieces are occasional or tributary, fancies elaborated at sight of some quaint object or compelling monument, at thought of some noble deed or heroic soul. He has the Midas touch that turns everything to gold. And often, when some matter of deep human concern compels his imagination, his utterance becomes prophetic. His fine sonnet on "The Statue of Liberty (New York Harbour, A. D. 2900)" sounds a needed note of warning to an over-complacent nation.

"Here once, the records show, a land whose pride
Abode in Freedom's watchword! And once here
The port of traffic for a hemisphere,
With great gold-piling cities at her side!
Tradition says, superbly once did bide
Their sculptured goddess on an island near,
With hospitable smile and torch kept clear
For all wild hordes that sought her o'er the tide.
'T was centuries ago. But this is true:
Late the fond tyrant who misrules our land,
Bidding his serfs dig deep in marshes old,
Trembled, not knowing wherefore, as they drew
From out this swampy bed of ancient mould
A shattered torch held in a mighty hand."

This is worthy to be set beside Aldrich's no finer sonnet, "Unguarded Gates." The more we delve within this quarry, the more we bring treasure-trove to the surface. Sweetness and light, intelligence and spirituality, are here, and always united with a fluent and admirable technique. Two of the longer poems are dramatic in form, and a third of this kind, "Gauvaine of the Retz," went down with the poet in his Lake Spezzia of Minnesota. We have space only to quote the gnomic lines which end "The Tides of Spring," a dramatic romance of ancient Scotland.

"I think each soul spins wisely as he may,
And God, who weaves the garment of this life,
Draws tight the meshes of our crossing threads,
And bleaches in the sunshine of His love."

"The Poems of William Winter" again offer us an example of a poet's collected life-work, in this case, however, of one whose chief distinction is that of the essayist and dramatic critic, and, happily, of one who in advanced age still lives to exemplify unchilled sensibilities and undimmed intellectual vigor. Mr. Winter's poetical output has been considerable, and even this large volume includes only the author's final selection from a much larger mass of material. He is an adept in the facile old-fashioned rhythms, and is most felicitous when paying tribute to some great spirit or mourning the loss of some cherished friend. His feelings "At Shakespeare's Grave" are thus expressed:

"Here the divinest of all thoughts descended:
Here the sweet heavens their sweetest boon let fall:
Upon this hallowed ground began and ended
The life that knew, and felt, and uttered all."

It is a commonplace thought, perhaps, but one made beautiful by sincerity of feeling. From the "Coronal for Stedman" — a fifty years' associate — we take these stanzas:

"Thy soul is music: from its deeps o'erflowing, —
With the glad freedom of the wild-bird's wing,
Where icy gales o 'er sunlit seas are blowing, —
It sings because divinely born to sing.

"No stain is on thy banner: grandly streaming,
Its diamond whiteness leads the tuneful host,
Forever in the front of honor beaming,
And they that knew thee best must love thee most."

This singer's wonted garb is that of a graceful and tender melancholy, and it becomes him well. Possibly a bit too sentimental or lachrymose in his strain, he is nevertheless a warm-hearted and appealing

poet, whose voice we would not willingly miss from the chorus of the now swiftly-dying generation. And it is a voice that has never been raised, either in verse or prose, save for things lovely and of good report.

The poems collected under the title of "The Soul's Inheritance" were prepared for publication by George Cabot Lodge just before his death. They are eight in number, and embody a novel structural plan. In each case, the main body of the poem (usually in heroic verse) is followed by a group of three sonnets, rounding out the thought. Mr. Lodge dwelt in an atmosphere of large abstractions, typified by such lines as these:

"Sun, moon, and stars — inviolate firmament —
Phases of earth's inveterate alchemy
Of life and death — profound tranquillities,
Thunders and trepidations of the sea —
How often have you been to man in spirit
A liberation and an ecstasy!
How often has the soul gone forth with you,
As with the tide, a stranded caravel
Issues by noble estuaries, impelled
By streaming winds and led by the low sun,
Into the light, into the infinite spaces!"

Such verse as this is dignified, but hardly escapes the charge of being turgid also. One of the poems, "Love in Life," is written mostly in octosyllabics, and we quote the concluding sonnet for the sake of the unwonted measure.

"I saw her sandals of grave gold
Move on the marble, soft as light,
Her motion was like birds in flight;
The bountiful, the new, the old
Deep secret that no tongue has told
Was born of her — as is the white
First flame of day-break from the night.
As song-birds wake, as flowers unfold.
And then I kissed her sandals of
Grave gold, and kissed her hands and mouth;
And knew how more serene than song,
How spacious and how strong is Love! —
Spacious as thought is of the truth;
Strong as the conscious soul is strong."

Two of these poems are occasional — one written for the Phi Beta Kappa Society, the other for a Forefather's Day celebration.

Mr. Henry van Dyke is a felicitous writer of occasional and personal verse, and we take pleasure in extracting from his new volume, "The White Bees," two of the four stanzas which he read at the funeral of Mr. Stedman.

"The blue of springtime in your eyes
Was never quenched by pain;
And winter brought your head the crown
Of snow without a stain.
The poet's mind, the prince's heart,
You kept until the end,
Nor ever faltered in your work,
Nor ever failed a friend.

"You followed, through the quest of life,
The light that shines above
The tumult and the toil of men,
And shows us what to love.
Right loyal to the best you knew,
Reality or dream,
You ran the race, you fought the fight,
A follower of the Gleam."

From Mr. Madison Cawein we have two new volumes. In "The Giant and the Star" he works a new and charming vein, for the book is a collection of poems which view the world with the eyes of a child.

"Whenever on the windowpane
I hear the fingers of the rain,
And in the old trees, near the door,
The wind that whispers more and more,
Bright in the light made by the lamp
I make myself a hunter's camp.

"The shadows of the desk and chairs
Are trees and woods: the corners, lairs
Where wolves and wildcats lie in wait
For anyone who walks too late;
Upon my knees with my toy-gun
I hunt and slaughter many a one."

This is an excursion into Stevenson's own child garden, and there are others equally awesome in their suggested possibilities. There are also accounts of "Toyland" and "The Land of Candy," which should make any child's eyes and mouth water. We are a little dubious about the pieces in which "The Boy Next Door" figures, for the youth seems to be a graceless iconoclast.

"And he said that Old King Cole
Was a fraud upon the whole;
Never had a fiddler
That could fiddle any where
By the side of him; and joked
While he drank the vilest brew
From a cracked old bowl; and smoked
Worse tobacco; smiling, too.

"Cinderella, too! why, she
Was a slomp; just naturally
Would n't work; and had big feet —
Could have seen them 'cross the street.
Did n't marry a Prince at all,
But the ashman. Never at Court
Or a ball! *She* had her gall
To put that in her report!"

Mr. Cawein's "New Poems" is an English edition, from which we infer than the poems may not all be new for American readers. But many of them certainly are, such as the "North Star" series of sonnets, and the centenary tributes to Poe and Lincoln. We quote one of the sonnets.

"There is a place among the Cape Ann hills
That looks from fir-dark summits on the sea,
Whose surging sapphire changes constantly
Beneath deep heavens, morning windowsills
With golden calm, or sunset citadels
With storm, whose towers the winds' confederacy
And bandit thunder hold in rebel fee,
Swooping upon the fisher's sail that swells.
A place where Sorrow ceases to complain,
And Life's old cares put all their burdens by,
And Weariness forgets itself in rest.
Would that all life were like it; might obtain
Its pure repose, its outlook, strong and high,
That sees, beyond, far Islands of the Blest."

In such work as this, and some other that we have observed of late, Mr. Cawein seems to be acquiring the touch of virility which has hitherto been lacking in his work, — to be no longer satisfied with the rich imagery and melodic loveliness that formerly sufficed him.

Being on the spot, and a poet of approved worth, it was fitting that Mr. Clinton Scollard should write the "Song for the Ter-Centenary of Lake Champlain" to grace the celebration of last July. His poem is in quatrains — numbering thirty-two — and the hero is thus characterized:

"Roland and Bayard! — he was kin to these;
Swerved he no more than magnet from the pole
As forth he sailed upon the uncharted seas
With dreams of high adventure in his soul.

"What foes he faced, what dangers dread he dared, —
Patient in peace, in war unwavering!
Unmoved he toiled, unmurmuring he fared,
Like saintly Louis, the belovèd king.

"Since then the great Recorder of the Days
Thousands has scrolled upon his golden book,
Yet still a sheet of shimmering chrysophrase
The great lake spreads for whomsoe'er may look."

In "Pro Patria," Mr. Scollard gives us a score of pieces, ballads, and lyrics, upon themes belonging to American history. We quote some simple verses upon Lafayette.

"He left the pleasant primrose-bowers,
The paths of ease,
He sought a soldier's arduous hours
Far o'er the seas.

"Within his high, impulsive heart
Burned freedom's flame,
And he espoused the patriots' part
With ardent aim.

"He fought unfaltering till the end, —
The goal, — was won;
The fearless and the faithful friend
Of Washington."

Correct in sentiment, but hardly more than mechanical, Mr. Scollard's verses may be allowed a humble niche in the temple of our patriotic minstrelsy.

WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE.