

Selected Poetry

THE LARK.

I saw a lark within the dawn,
Rise, joyful, from his watery nest;
The sunshine glittering on his breast,
As swift he sped to hail the morn;
And higher, higher, to the skies
I watched the tender warbler rise
Till in a blaze of living light
He vanished from my clouded sight.
If midst the cares that circle me,
My soul might spread her languid wing,
And into Heavenly grace should spring;
And like the bird, whose radiant flight
Had led him far from earthly sight,
Thus soar above earth's sinful sod
And journey closer to my God.
—G. THOMAS in the *Irish World*.

TO ROBERT BROWNING.

A Japanese Appreciation.

You are a smoking-room story-teller of the
pageant of life seen by senses,
Your gusto in speech turns your art into
obscurity,
Again from the obscurity into a valedictory:
You are a provincialism endorsed by eccentric
pride.
You are sometimes riotous to escape from
anarchism.
Your great thirst for expression makes you
a soul-wounding romancer,
You often play the mystagogue, and appear
cruel.
You are a glutton of colorful adventures.
You are a troubadour serenading between
the stars and Life,
Your love song on a guitar torments us even
physically:
You are a realist who under the darkness
purifies himself into the light of opti-
mism;
You are a griffin wildly dancing on human
laughter.
—YONE NOGUCHI in the *English Review*.

THE OLD WOMAN.

She keeps her nook, sitting with folded
hands
And looking abroad with dim unquestioning
gaze.
Her heart grown strangely quiet and toler-
ant.
She has learned patience: those she loved
are gone,
And youth is gone, and all the dreams of
youth,
And grief itself hath found its natural end-
ing.
And now she feels there is no more to learn.
Pleasant she sits in gnarled simplicity,
Not hills nor rocks more tranquil, and even
as they
She bears Time's marks upon her patiently.
Here is the sober wisdom of the years,
And now she waits for what she knows will
come

Breathing the calmness of all quiet things,
Twilight and silence and a heart at peace.
—JOHN BUNKER in the *Commonwealth* (New
York).

THE LISTENERS.

"Is there anybody there?" said the Trav-
eller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the
grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret
Above the Traveller's head.
And he smote upon the door again a second
time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwell in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moon-
light
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the
dark stair
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark
turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the
still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.
—WALTER DE LA MARE in *An Anthology of
Modern Verse*.

EARTH MAGIC

Fernando's eyes stare past you gray as rain,
His body's limber as a bough and straight.
You speak to him, he never seems to hear,
And then he answers you a minute late.
His gift—his father had the trick before
him—
Makes him a person in the country-side.
Give him a forked stick, cherry or sweet
apple,
And he can show you where ground waters
hide.
He lurches over our green hills and holds
A fresh branch in his grimy, vise-shut fists,
The fork straight up until the water's near,
Then in his grasp its very fibre twists.

The high point swoops—Fernando stops and
waits,
Turns his stick up again and holds it fast!
And when it answers to the water's call,
He nods and grins his weasel grin at last.

"Your spring's right here," he says, "some
eight foot down,
I make it, though I ain't so good on knowin'
The depth as father. He could always tell,
But you dig here, and keep right on a-goin'."

Magic so old, so simple, and so strange!
To be the medium between a spring
Deep underground and a bough's love of it—
Truth has sometimes an odd and pagan ring.

And why Fernando? Scarce articulate
As brooks and windy branches, one with
these
He speaks an older language when he tells
The secrets he and earth know and the trees.
—HELEN IVES GILCHRIST in the *New York
Sun*.

"WHAT PORRIDGE HAD JOHN KEATS"

Shaper of gold, in what mine of amazement
Dug you the metal Time's acid eats not?
Whence were the tests of your cunning ap-
praisalment—
Whispered from darkness and never forgot?
What was the mystery hid in the flame?
Had you your greatness in real prevision?
Spread you your wings for the pundits'
derision—
Babbling that beauty and truth are the
same?
Some, supercilious, grant, as in pity,
Gaze to your treasure-house, blinking to
see
Starry great chalices, saying, "They're
pretty."
What had they said when the fluster was
free?—
Gold of the vein without trace of alloy!
Some of us agonise, some of us fake it:
Is it a wonder we never quite make it?
What was your secret, incredible boy?

Silversmith, casting the nymphs and the
dragons,—
Artisan clever in gilding or glass,
Hark to the tinkle of delicate flagons!
Hark to the roar of the vessels of brass!
Potter, with hands on your requisite clay,
Tell of its uses, and we shall believe you;
Still shall the custom of patrons deceive
you,
Dreaming your wares are for more than to-
day.

We that are given to problems alchemic,
When the brain's crucible glows at the core,
Frown to find genius is non-epidemic,
Grieve that its riddle is not in the ore.
Wanton of rule flows infinity's rhyme:
Whose shall protest when he sees the con-
clusion?—
Gold of the ingot and slag of the fusion!
Gold of your star on the heavens of Time!
—GEORGE STERLING, in the *New Republic*.