

... With ... BOOK and VERSE

By "John O'Dreams"

PRIZE POEM COMPETITION

A WELL-KNOWN resident of Wellington, of pronounced literary and Socialistic tendencies, has been attending the I.L.P. National Summer School at Digswell Park, Herts., England, which is a rendezvous for many of the most independent-minded and distinguished students of affairs in Britain. Writing home, the New Zealander, amid much that is of extreme interest at the present juncture in world economics, says: "This school was quite the most remarkable experience of my life. The moment you enter the doors you become one of the Socialist community. There are no introductions, but you wear your name pinned on you on a little ticket, and are addressed thenceforth as 'Comrade.'"

"People from every station of life are gathered together here to study the world's affairs. Some come from the slums of London. Some from England's Aristocracy. Some from the Army, Navy, and Dominions. There is absolutely no class consciousness, for everyone (with the exception of a few Conservative students as guests) is working for the one ideal of the 'world state.' Maxton, a great power, was the school host, and greeted us at the door. It was a revelation to hear Shaw, now 75 years of age. Straight as a ramrod, he stood with his arms folded, the picture of health, sane living and sane thinking, and spoke for two and a half hours without notes, keeping his audience spellbound, except when they rocked with laughter at his sparkling wit."

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to M.K. for "Midnight Silence," and we congratulate our new contributor on the attractive verse form in which she has couched her poetic imagination. Another newcomer to the column is P.M., whose graceful and fluent poem entitled "An Aspen in the City" is only slightly less admirable than that of the prize-winner. Some of the verses sent in naturally have had reference to the catastrophe that during the month has devastated Hawke's Bay. These, however, are by no means the best poems, possibly because our reactions to the calamity are still too poignant to be expressed in any but the briefest and starkest way. "Emotion remembered in tranquillity" is more amenable to the poetic muse that the first horrified recoil from those bludgeonings of fate that lately have rained so heavily upon our community.

"Thur" finds inspiration in the wind lately raging o'er land and sea, contrasting its sound and fury with peaceful pillow, on which her dreams are lit by pleasant imaginative touch.

S.B. sings of eternal mother-love in commendably brief lines. Creditable for a first attempt, but still a long way from top notch.

K.M.—The prize poem competition is open to all readers of the "Record," the only stipulation being that no poem will exceed 25 lines.

S.E.D. writes with facility, but no distinction, about the recent tragedy of fire and earthquake.

"At Napier" is on the same tremendous topic and tells the tale in two categorical verses. "Wrecked much substantial property," however, is not an inspired line; neither is "The earthquake came on suddenly." Did it ever do anything else?

Karl.—You trench on too controversial a topic.

H.B.—Inadequate to a degree.

"Ne'er-do-well."—We regret your keenly critical exposition is outside our province.

... Midnight Silence ...

Stillness. So quiet, so still,
A pool beneath a rock were not more still. . . .
The great sea thunders on the reef,
But only softly sleeping murmurs stir
Within this quiet pool.
So still the pool,
So cool and dark within the pool,
Beneath the great dark rock.
And on the still, cool sand
Red seaweed softly drifting. . . .
Here will I lie dreaming,
Softly, sweetly sleeping,
The Sea King's lover. . . .
Here will I lie dreaming
Still and cool,
Drifting on the seaweed
In the dark, still pool. . . .

—M.K.

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