

of Corporal Gilbert's poem, but in the best examples of the style he seeks to follow there is much to enjoy and much food for thought. There will always be some who prefer the rhyme and measured beat of "Away in a manger, no crib, &c.," to T. S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi." The latter is stark, the statements are pithy, the feelings of men are tersely recorded, and, oh shame! the lines are broken. T. S. Eliot was moved by something he saw in the nativity, and he wrote things he saw in his own style. He was sincere, and his picture is long lasting in my mind. Those who think poetry should be an evenly flowing song will not like it, but the picture is there, the emotions and intellect of the poet were roused, and he made no attempt in setting it down to force his imagery into a set form.

The generation which followed the Great War, so far as its poets were concerned, was disillusioned, very mistrustful of the ancient landmarks, and when its poets broke into print their work was characterized by the same cynical and rebellious spirit. Bursts of genuine emotion are rarely as evenly voiced as Shakespeare's utterances, and "modern" poets have deliberately avoided the artificialness of the even metre. Their poems were "deliberately and intuitively awry." Nature does not work in straight or even lines. Her work is marked by a series of irregularities and curves, else would our trees and hills be symmetrical and our rivers like canals. It is the abruptness and variety in Nature which is so refreshing—and so it should be with poetry.

I agree that much of modern poetry is worthless, but so are many "ancient" poems honoured by inclusion in the "Oxford Book of English Verse." I admit that many modern poems are mere imitations of the masters' styles, but I have no doubt that the work of the genuine modern poet will last. Some, indeed, complain that these modern poems are hard to be understood, but I do not think that clearness of expression is everything. Some of John Donne's poems, for example, take a little working out, and the same applies to a host of "ancient" writers. Clearness of expres-

sion is NOT everything, the understanding of a poem depending on the intelligence of the reader. There are some who are unable to understand even a subtle limerick. Perhaps modern poetry is a trifle incomprehensible, for the following reason:

The modern intellectual poet has in his mind a vast number of associations—associations in the realms of psychology, involved politics, science, and the diversified literature of the day. His thoughts traverse regions not known by the ancient poet, at least as far as the technical phraseology is concerned. In consequence, his allusions often take a little catching up. The ancient poet had *his* mind crammed full of Grecian and Roman mythology, and drew on this store for his metaphors and allusions. This calling-up on the part of the old poets of the dead heroes of the ancient world baffles any person who has not had a classical education, but the poet did not worry about those who differed from him in this respect. What was good enough for them is good enough for the poets of to-day.

I am enclosing a poem by Aaronson entitled "Windy Day in Provence." It would not have gone down in Tennyson's day, but maybe your readers will enjoy it. I wonder what they think of it. Is it sufficiently regular for the likes of the orthodox reader of poetry?

In closing I must recall the remark on the modern poet, T. S. Eliot. It was said that he has many imitators, including himself.

"1 P.W. Camp."

WINDY DAY IN PROVENCE

By L. AARONSON

The cypresses are looped with wind.
The poplars besom the swinging sky.
Squat dark trunks, hands on hips,
Plant their feet in the fleeting grass.

Across his face the sun's hair
In golden wantonness is blown.
The mauve down of mountain-spines,
Ripples like cat's fur backward stroked.

Under the bridge the rods wag.
Over the bridge the wires sing.
The river round the stolid drums
Beats blue to green and green to gold.

Wind at wide hats like captured crows.
Wind at the heart like running surf.
And wind upon the wild sky
Like Van Gogh's paintbrush wild with pain.

From "Modern Poetry, 1922-34."