

THE POETRY OF VICTOR HUGO

PATRIOTIC POEMS

It is permissible to condone an exaggerated patriotism if it is not aggressive and exclusive. Hugo's enthusiasms are not characterized by their moderation, and his passionate love of his country is not the smallest of these enthusiasms. France is a light-bearer to the nations, and Paris, *la cité-mère*, is the mind of France. France, or Paris, for they are one in his thought, he loves concretely in her history, celebrating her triumphs and commiserating her defeats with a like intensity of passion; and he loves her in the abstract as the symbol of humanity in its aspiration to those ideal conditions whose consummation his poetry foreshadows.

It cannot be said that this vast patriotism of Hugo's is entirely free from aggressiveness; but Hugo will always be found ready to praise the great men with whom his genius sympathizes, whatever the country of their birth, and his vision of universal peace and a future United States of Europe redeems his patriotism from the charge of undue exclusiveness.

His wonderful poems of exile are the reflection of his patriotism, poignant in proportion to his love of France.

LE CHANT DE CEUX QUI S'EN VONT SUR MER

(Air breton)

Adieu, patrie !
L'onde est en furie.
Adieu, patrie,
Azur !

Adieu, maison, treille au fruit mûr,
Adieu, les fleurs d'or du vieux mur !