

THE LIBRARY TABLE

"Voices on the Wind, An Anthology of Today." Compiled by S. Fowler Wright, Editor of "Poetry." The Merton Press, London, England.

This Anthology of the works of living poets of the British Isles (the work of the Dominions is not included, but we are promised a companion volume containing selections from the best work of contemporary Dominion and Colonial writers) is of great interest to a book-loving mind.

Mr. Wright's uncompromising attitude to the dreary drivel that so often passes as poetry nowadays has resulted in a collection which contains many poems of merit and charm, a few which might almost be called great, and none of the products of those minds so warped or diseased that only what is hideous and disgusting attracts them.

It seems almost unfair to quote any one poem from such a collection as this, since none can be said to be typical, but there are, of necessity, those which appeal more strongly than others, and which one would wish to mention.

Of these, "Evidence," by Rupert Haywra, has the same theme as "Vestigia," by Bliss Carman. A world of suggestion and food for many a noble thought lie in the stanza by Norman H. Johnson, entitled "Finite and Infinite":

"Once as I lay unsleeping in the night,
The stars that form Orion's golden belt,
Within a window-pane of space shone bright,
And in this narrow shrine serenely dwelt."

"The Seed," by Frank Noble Wood; "The Passport," by Clarice M. Covell; and "Pain," by Dorothy M. Bunn, are very fine indeed. "The Sixth Day," by C. A. Dawson Scott, is full of dramatic power.

The exclusions are as interesting as the inclusions in this little volume. Here have we nothing from the pen of Mr. Hardy, nothing from Dr. Bridges, nothing from Kipling (one understands this omission), nothing from Yeats, and most surprising of all, nothing from Walter De la Mare. One may at least guess at the reason for the other exclusions, but why slight Walter De la Mare? Is he, one wonders, one of the prophets who are not without honour, save in their own country? Or is Mr. Wright solitary in his neglect of one whom some of us, in this Outpost of Empire, are inclined to rank, tentatively at least, with the Immortals?

Another interesting feature of the Anthology is the number of women represented; of approximately 100 contributors 36 at least are women. We say "at least" because in some cases the initials alone are given, and in one case where the Christian name is Welsh, a Canadian will not venture to guess whether it is masculine or feminine. While it is a fair question if a woman can ever be anything but a lesser poet, the offerings of the women whose work is included in "Voices on the Wind" are of a high standard, and have, almost without exception, a certain quality of wistfulness, a certain charm of elusiveness which is of necessity lacking in the more virile and powerful work of men.

In spite of what has been said about the unfairness of quoting from an Anthology, two poems must be given in full here. The first because it is of special interest to Canadians; the second because of its intense personal appeal to the reviewer.

To Canada.

"When the shade of night is stealing
Silent o'er the face of day,
Cometh to my heart a longing
For the backlands far away.
Where the forests softly quiver,
And the stars are shining clear,
By the swiftly flowing river
Nature calls, and God seems near.

"When the Western dawn is breaking,
Shall I seek the plains of light;
And perchance the wild life waking
From the dreamland of the night,
May restore the Peace I've followed
From the myriad homes of men
To the palaces of Nature,
And the silence of the glen."

Bangkok, 1922.

—Antoine Didier.

Slavery.

For thirty silver pieces every week,
I have my freedom sold;
My freedom that was more to me than gold,
And I'm a slave obedient and meek.

All through the days of April, May and June,
Within four walls I sit;
O wild despair and throbbing ache of it!
While all the earth with loveliness is strewn.

I watch white fleecy clouds across the sky,
The golden sun pours in
The little sordid room, above the din
Of countless wheels, and footsteps hurrying by.

I know that out beyond the city's strife
The meadows lie sun-kissed,
I know that bluebells spread their azure mist
In shady woods, teeming with awakened life.

But I have sold my freedom, and I give
My days in toil to spend;
The dreary days that seem to have no end;
O God! why must we sell our souls to live?

—Katherine C. Ford.

"Wanderer of the Wasteland." By Zane Grey. Hodder & Stoughton, \$2.00.

When it is said that this is a typical Zane Grey novel, it will be classified for all readers.

The action takes place in the desert of New Mexico, and there are many descriptions of that strange and wild country.

The hero becomes a wanderer in this great Wasteland after a quarrel in which he shoots his brother. The novel relates his adventures and probes his reactions to life in the desert during the next fourteen years.

An occasional blue-pencilling of adjectives, and a tightening up of some loosely constructed sentences would improve Mr. Grey's style.

—L. A.

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