

Rhymes of a Rounder

shop and his customer. I felt that he was more or less indifferent about the sale of books, and that he would much rather talk of them to any one whom he could deem an equal in bibliography. My esteem for him was deepened by repeated visits, and I found that he had a notable class of patrons. Eventually he got the notion that I had a taste for verse of the exotic or decadent order. This I might have denied, but on my second visit to his shop I happened to ask if he knew of any good metrical translation of Baudelaire, and from that question I suppose he came to a conclusion. It served to give me a somewhat hazy interest in his eyes, so I played up to the role assigned me, and as a result he brought various books to my attention which had been before that unknown to me. Among other things needed for my education, he suggested an anthology of English verse done in antique Romanesque and Gallic forms.

I always approach an anthology in the same dull, half-hearted way that I do a picture gallery or a table-d'hôte dinner. The things presented mix in spite of me; they acquire a composite, inferior flavor from each other; I get stuffed without any distinct satisfaction. In an anthology there is nothing to match; one poem jars with another; there is not that harmonizing undertone imparted to a volume by a single author, whose manner and personality prevails through every line from the first to the last page. So I was not at first rightly made acquainted with these intri-