

A NEW POET AND AN OLD ONE

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NO one will buy poetry nowadays. And yet every year produces one or two volumes of poetry which sell by the thousand. There is, then, a kind of poetry which is in favour, and a kind or kinds for which there is no demand. Putting aside the work of thoroughly minor poets—often very good, but naturally not of general interest—it would probably not be far from the truth to say that the line of popularity is drawn, by the present generation of readers, between the poetry which stirs emotion and that which awakens thought. The public long to feel; they do not like being made to think. And with an English public the case is aggravated by the fact that quick as they are to perceive beauty of emotion, they are very backward in believing or delighting in the beauty of thought or imagination. The lyric is at present enjoying a complete triumph; it has taken all life for its province, and deals with national sport and imperial defence as well as with the old cries—the life-born joy and the personal sorrows that touch the mind of man. But there are not wanting among us poets of high courage who will go their own way even if they have to go alone, and face the chance of leaving to a remote posterity a great inheritance and an obscure name.

It is only a chance that they face. Beauty, after all, is never friendless, and one by one even the poets, even in their