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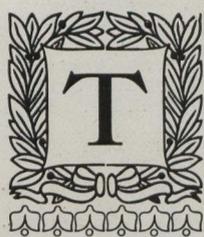
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The Spring Chanson

Sing to the Spring; but through the Spring I look
And see when fields are bare, the woodlands pale,
And hear a sad, unmated, red-breast wail
In beechen russets by a leaden brook.
For I am tortured by a boding eye,
That, gazing on the morning's glorious grain,
Beholds late shreds of fiery sunset stain
The marble pallor of a western sky.

Sweet is thy song, oh merle! and sweetly sung
Thy forefathers in our forefather's ears:
And this—far more than all—the song endears,
In that it knits the old world with the young.
Men live and die, the song remains, and when
I list the passion of my vernal breath,
Methinks thou singest but to love and death,
To happy lovers and to dying men.

The Poetry of Spring



THE ordinary Spring Poet of these later days needs to reconstruct his weather bulletins. In Montreal the atmospheric conditions have not been of the kind that the rhyming gentleman writes about in relation to the season, and according to the news, a real poetic Spring has not noticeably impressed itself anywhere within a few thousand miles. Indeed, some parts of the continent are counting up the tragedies of Spring, the State of Nebraska having been visited by a tornado which, in its effects on human life, was more disastrous than the loss of the Titanic.

And yet, doubtless, there are poets who change their lays with a change of weather. It is quite conceivable that there is a poet of the tornado, and that his verses are read.

It has been asserted recently that the reason why many people do not like Spring or any other poetry is because they do not read it.

Poetry of old set the things of common experience into song and was loved because it came so near the experience of every man. There is a great deal of poetry of this sort to-day, touching the beauty and romance that may be found in many a daily commonplace. Kipling is, of course, the most popular singer of these things, searching out the uncommon or splendid or

lovely or strong in circumstances which the actors live through every day without knowing that they are part and parcel of poetic beauty. To be sure no one has yet sung the song of book-keeping, but even typewriting, with the steady rhythmic whirl of the machine under trained fingers, has been made into a song.

There is nothing new in this transfiguration of the commonplace. It is said that when artists visit faraway farms and make pictures of barns and old vine-covered cottages, the owner sometimes stands by and wonders. The song of the old oaken bucket is an example of making poetry out of what was, for the people who used it, a most commonplace factor in the day's provision for human need. So the great picture of Turner, which shows an engine driving through misty iridescence, makes poetry of what people have seen a thousand times, and the song of the ship's engines, the voice of great mills, and the like, are being made significant by those who have vision of something beyond the steel and iron and cotton and flax concerned there.

The stir of human thought to find what is beautiful, that is, what is permanent, under the veil of appearance, is a marked sign of the immediate present in more directions than one, and it may be that while the city man, at least, is reviling Spring, a poet is springing up who will show to us the beauties of dull skies and quick changes in the mood of the weather man.