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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

Almost simultaneously have appeared an anthology of Cambridge Poets (1900-1913) published by Heffer, and another of Oxford Poets (1910-1918) published by Blackwell. Sir A. Quiller-Couch introduces the former, and Professor Gilbert Murray the latter. There is much more performance and much more promise in the Cambridge volume than in the Oxford one. The Oxford book suffers, no doubt, from the restriction of date, though unless "1910-1918" implies (which I doubt) that all the writers included have been undergraduates at some time during that period, it might have been improved by selections from recent volumes by young Oxford men still in their twenties, whose works have not been drawn upon. As it is, there is not really a striking serious poem in the collection. The best things are some of the parodies at the end, especially Mr. R. A. Knox's most ingenious *Absolute and Abitophell*, Mr. Philip Gucdalla's *Dolarcs*, and Mr. Bridges-Adams' chaste *Fragment from the Elizabethan*. Mr. Michael Sadler's *Sic Transit* and Mr. R. A. Eric Shepherd's *Parvula Dorothea* are graceful; but the majority of the other poems are affected and unconvincing. The most prevalent influence appears to be that of Mr. Belloc, but the mark of Mr. Mascfield is visible on these lines by Mr. A. J. Dawe:

And all that night I roared and cried,
And kissed the woman by my side,
And she was very kind to me
And understood my misery.
And I was full of beer and gin
And deadly drunk, and all for sin
To quench the raging flame within.
And all the people in the fair
Could only stop and stare and stare
Till I could bash their faces in. . . .
The blood went singing in my ears
And in my eyes ran burning tears,
And being out for mighty fun

I did great things I'd never done.
And now I feel my smashed-up soul
Is clinkered like a burned-out coal.

This is not ostensibly parody.

The Cambridge book contains work by nearly forty writers, including M. D. Armstrong, Rupert Brooke, A. Y. Campbell, Frances Cornford, Aleister Crowley, J. E. Flecker, Harold Monro, and Sarojini Naidu. There are some good poems, and there might have been more had several of these poets been represented by their best work. Mr. Brookse's *Dining-Room Tea* might well have accompanied his *Grantchester*, and better examples might have been given of Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Flecker. Mr. Campbell, whose small book published last year contained some remarkably good work, ought to have had much more space, and one could have spared the contributions of several uninspired writers who occupy about a dozen pages each. But the editress (Aelfrida Tillyard) has helped to demonstrate that there is a genuine revival in poetry, and if the quality of her anthology has suffered by the inclusion of so large a number of writers, that is presumably accounted for by a conscientious desire to cover the ground properly.

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