

**COUNTRY LIFE
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LITERATURE.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

Although Cambridge still maintains its character of being pre-eminently the home of science, poetry is cultivated in it as carefully as the most precious garden plant. The latest evidence of this lies in the publication of an anthology called *Cambridge Poets, 1900-1913* (Heffer and Sons, Cambridge), the pieces being chosen by Aelfrida Tillyard. A book of this kind does not call for literary criticism; its interest resides in the disclosure it makes of the thoughts and ideals of the rising generation of poets, and it invites comparison with the poetic circles of Cambridge eighty years ago. How the outlook of youth has changed during that period! And in this respect the youth of Cambridge differs in no wise from the youth of the country at large.

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The modern creed is summed up by Aleister Crowley as follows:

The ship is trim: to sea! To sea!
Take life in either hand,
Crush out its wine for you and me,
And drink, and understand.

As long as these things are there can be little hope of the coming of an era of great English poetry. The early Victorians nourished the youth sublime on a more precious material, and hence they matured into great poets. But those we have quoted from have evidently listened with too much of a feeling of discipleship to the teaching of those whose motto was Art for Art's sake, and who promulgated the ideas that the sensuousness of the moment was enough. They ridiculed the far horizons of their elders, and tried to make poetry a mere matter of verbal

melody. The acceptance of the ideas set forth has been followed by a decline in English verse, of which there are at present few, if any, signs of recovery.