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sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John.' Now the word 'signify' in English is used in a purely secondary meaning which does not in the least suggest the primary one. We say, 'What does it signify?' meaning 'What does it matter?' We say that a person has signified his agreement with somebody else. But what the writer of the Apocalypse meant was that certain things were shown by signs. 'He sent and showed it (or them) by signs to his servant John.' The moment we get away from the signs we lose the peculiar force of the book. So much indeed is the Apocalypse a book of signs that it might even, to a large extent, be set forth pictorially. One of the signs is that of the lake burning with fire and brimstone; and if it had only been remembered that this is a sign, then we should have been delivered from the nightmare of an actual lake of fire and brimstone. In the life of Dean Farrar a letter is quoted in which the anonymous writer, after denouncing a sermon by Farrar in the Abbey, goes on to say, 'I pray that your eyes may be opened, before it is too late, and you find yourself in the lake of unquenchable fire.' The writer evidently thought of an actual lake; whereas it is but the terrible sign of something far more serious in the thing signified. If the lake burning with fire and brimstone has cooled to be the crater of an extinct volcano, we must not forget the volcano in the depths of the personal life which is not extinct. Jesus showed it by a sign to His servant John. Signs and symbols are only too easily overlooked as being signs and symbols.

DAVID YOUNG.
Whitley Bay.

Entre Nous.

New Poetry.

Messrs. Constable have published *An Annual of New Poetry, 1917* (5s. net). It contains poems by Gordon Bottomley, W. H. Davies, John Drinkwater, Edward Eastaway, Robert Frost, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, T. Sturge Moore, and R. C. Trevelyan. These are good names. Some of them are great names. The volume is altogether too original, and too weighty in its originality, to be lost sight of in the multitude of books of poetry that are coming out just now. We quoted recently a parody of W. H. Davies. Here is a genuine poem. It is called

THE BELL.

It is the bell of death I hear,
Which tells me my own time is near;
When I must join those quiet souls
Where nothing lives but worms and moles;
And not come through the grass again,
Like worms and moles, for breath or rain;
Yet let none weep when my life's through,
For I myself have wept for few.

The only things that knew me well
Were children, dogs, and girls that fell;
I bought poor children cakes and sweets,
Dogs heard my voice and danced the streets;
And, gentle to a fallen lass,
I made her weep for what she was.
Good men and women knew not me,
Nor love nor hate the mystery.

We cannot quote from everybody, but John Drinkwater must not be passed by.

ON READING THE MS. OF DOROTHY WORDSWORTH'S JOURNALS.

To-day I read the poet's sister's book,
She who so comforted those Grasmere days
When song was at the flood, and thence I took
A larger note of fortitude and praise.

And in her ancient fastness beauty stirred,
And happy faith was in my heart again,
Because the virtue of a simple word
Was durable above the lives of men.
For reading there that quiet record made
Of skies and hills, domestic hours, and free
Traffic of friends, and song, and duty paid,
I touched the wings of immortality.

The volume contains six of W. W. Gibson's attractive and inevitable monologues, each of them slightly abridged. We should like much to quote one of them. The shortest is

THE PLATELAYER.

Tapping the rails as he went by
And driving the slack wedges tight,
He walked towards the morning sky
Between two golden lines of light
That dwindled slowly into one
Sheer golden rail that ran right on
Over the fells into the sun.

And dazzling in his eyes it shone,
That golden track, as left and right
He swung his clinking hammer—ay,
'Twas dazzling after that long night
In Hindfell tunnel, working by
A smoky flare, and making good
The track the rains had torn . . .

Clink, clink,
On the sound metal—on the wood
A duller thwack!
It made him blink,
That running gold. . . .

'Twas sixteen hours
Since he'd left home—his garden smelt
So fragrant with the heavy showers
When he left home—and now he felt
That it would smell more fresh and sweet
After the tunnel's reek and fume
Of damp warm cinders. 'Twas a treat
To come upon the scent and bloom
That topped the cutting by the wood
After the cinders of the track,
The cinders and tarred sleepers—good
To lift your eyes from gritty black
Upon that blaze of green and red . . .
And she'ld be waiting by the fence,
And with the baby . . .

Straight for bed
He'ld make, if he had any sense,
And sleep the day; but, like as not,
When he'd had breakfast, he'ld turn to
And hoe the back potato-plot:
'Twould be one mass of weeds he knew.
You'ld think each single drop of rain
Turned, as it fell, into a weed.
You seemed to hoe and hoe in vain.
Chickweed and groundsel didn't heed
The likes of him—and bindweed, well,
You hoed and hoed—still its white roots
Ran deeper . . .

'Twould be good to smell
The fresh-turned earth, and feel his boots
Sink deep into the brown wet mould,
After hard cinders . . .

And, maybe,
The baby, sleeping good as gold
In its new carriage under a tree,
Would keep him company, while his wife
Washed up the breakfast things.

'Twas strange,
The difference that she made to life,
That tiny baby-girl.

The change
Of work would make him sleep more sound.
'Twas sleep he needed. That long night
Shovelling wet cinders underground,
With breaking back—the smoky light
Stinging his eyes till they were sore . . .

He'd worked the night that she was born,
Standing from noon the day before
All through that winter's night till morn
Laying fog-signals on the line
Where it ran over Devil's Ghyll . . .

And she was born at half-past nine,
Just as he stood aside until
The Scots' Express ran safely by . . .
He'd but to shut his eyes to see
Those windows flashing blindingly
A moment through the blizzard—he
Could feel again that slashing snow
That seemed to cut his face.

But they,
The passengers, they couldn't know
What it cost him to keep the way
Open for them. So snug and warm
They slept or chattered, while he stood
And faced all night that raking storm—
The little house beside the wood
For ever in his thoughts: and he,
Not knowing what was happening . . .

But all went well as well could be
With Sally and the little thing.
And it had been worth while to wait
Through that long night with work to do,
To meet his mother at the gate
With such good news, and find it true,
Ay, truer than the truth.

He still
Could see his wife's eyes as he bent
Over the bairn . . .

The Devil's Ghyll
Had done its worst, and he was spent;
But he'ld have faced a thousand such
Wild nights as thon, to see that smile
Again, and feel that tender touch
Upon his cheek.

'Twas well worth while
With such reward. And it was strange,
The difference such a little thing
Could make to them—how it could change
Their whole life for them, and could bring
Such happiness to them, though they
Had seemed as happy as could be
Before it came to them.
The day
Was shaping well. And there was she,
The lassie sleeping quietly
Within her arms, beside the gate.

The storm had split that lilac tree.
But he was tired, and it must wait.

J. Logie Robertson.

He is a bold man who writes a poem and calls it *Petition to the Deil.* Mr. Robertson does so, writes it in the Burns metre besides, and calls his book by the title of it (Paisley: Gardner; 1s. 6d. net). The first verse is:

O Thou, wham yet I'm sweer to name—
A kind o' Kaiser when at hame,
A spy abroad—but a' the same,
Withoot addition,
Deevil! I thy attention claim
To my petition.

Now that verse gives us the key to the whole volume. It is a volume of war verses, as the author describes it; it is also a volume of anti-Kaiser verses. The sonnet we shall quote is typical. It is called

THE NAKED HAND.

December 27, 1915.

Thou that did'st brandish in the face of Peace
A madman's mailèd fist, that overaw'd
And then uprous'd the nations, look abroad
And mark the mailèd fists how they increase!

These (dream not otherwise!) shall break the lease
Of thy usurping power, thou thing of fraud,
Greed, pride, and cruelty! Patience of God!
When, when shall Heaven decree thy reign shall cease!

Meanwhile, to fill thy dastard heart with fear,
Look nearer home: it is a starving land,
Befool'd and bankrupt by thy make-believe!
Closer than mailèd fists, a Hand is here
That wears no armour; 'tis a Naked Hand
That thrusts at throats, and wears a ragged sleeve!

Frederic Manning.

Here is the war in all its savage realism—here in Mr. Manning's *Eidola* (Murray; 2s. 6d. net). But here also is the British soldier's unquenchable trust in God. Let us give two poems, to illustrate both attitudes.

THE TRENCHES.

Endless lanes sunken in the clay,
Bays, and traverses, fringed with wasted herbage,
Seed-pods of blue scabious, and some lingering blooms;
And the sky, seen as from a well,
Brilliant with frosty stars.
We stumble, cursing, on the slippery duck-boards,
Goaded like the damned by some invisible wrath,
A will stronger than weariness, stronger than animal fear,
Implacable and monotonous.

Here a shaft, slanting, and below
A dusty and flickering light from one feeble candle
And prone figures sleeping uneasily,
Murmuring,
And men who cannot sleep,
With faces impassive as masks,
Bright, feverish eyes, and drawn lips,
Sad, pitiless, terrible faces,
Each an incarnate curse.

Here in a bay, a helmeted sentry
Silent and motionless, watching while two sleep,
And he sees before him
With indifferent eyes the blasted and torn land
Peopled with stiff prone forms, stupidly rigid,
As tho' they had not been men.

Dead are the lips where love laughed or sang,
The hands of youth eager to lay hold of life,
Eyes that have laughed to eyes,

And these were begotten,
O love, and lived lightly, and burnt
With the lust of a man's first strength: ere they were rent,
Almost at unawares, savagely; and strewn
In bloody fragments, to be the carrion
Of rats and crows.

And the sentry moves not, searching
Night for menace with weary eyes.

THE SOUL'S ANSWER.

My soul said unto me: Yea, God is wise
With wisdom far too bright for our weak eyes.
I answered thus my soul: Yea, God is wise!

My soul said unto me: Yea, God is good
And maketh love to be our daily food.
I answered thus my soul: Yea, God is good!

I sent my soul from me that it might tell
The damned and make a Heaven where was Hell,
It smiled and said: Nay, fear not, all is well!

Marjorie L. C. Pickthall.

'In many English churches before the Reformation there was kept a little lamp continually burning, called the Lamp of Poor Souls. People were reminded thereby to pray for the souls of those dead whose kinsfolk were too poor to pay for prayers and masses.' That lamp of pity gives the title and the tone to the book. The title is *The Lamp of Poor Souls* (Lane; 5s. net). For all poor souls everywhere, alive or dead, this true poet has a heart of pity. There is variety enough, for there is variety of need in the world. And pity is not a narrow grace. It is observant of nature, it is inclusive of gentle humour. Two of the most acceptable of the poems handle the hackneyed themes of the Dawn and the Evening; and the poem entitled Wiltshire is of some breadth of kindly satire.

I DIED o' cider and taters
When I wer a-turned four-score.
Us always wer hearty aters,
My feyther he wer afore.

There is a memorable poem on the bridegroom at Cana, who was led to love Christ because his heart was so full of love for his bride. But let us rather quote

THE LITTLE SISTER OF THE PROPHET.

'*If there arise among you a prophet or dreamer . . .*'

I have left a basket of dates
In the cool dark room that is under the vine,
Some curds set out in two little crimson plates
And a flask of the amber wine,
And cakes most cunningly beaten
Of savoury herbs, and spice, and the delicate wheaten
Flour that is best,
And all to lighten his spirit and sweeten his rest.

This morning he cried, 'Awake,
And see what the wonderful grace of the Lord hath revealed!'
And we ran for his sake,
But 'twas only the dawn outspread o'er our father's field,
And the house of the potter white in the valley below.
But his hands were upraised to the east and he cried to us, 'So
Ye may ponder and read
The strength and the beauty of God out-rolled in a fiery screed!'

Then the little brown mother smiled,
As one does on the words of a well-loved child,
And, 'Son,' she replied, 'have the oxen been watered and fed?
For work is to do, though the skies be never so red,
And already the first sweet hours of the day are spent.'
And he sighed, and went.

Will he come from the byre
With his head all misty with dreams, and his eyes on fire,
Shaking us all with the weight of the words of his passion?
I will give him raisins instead of dates,
And wreathe young leaves on the little red plates.
I will put on my new head-tyre,
And braid my hair in a comelier fashion.
Will he note? Will he mind?
Will he touch my cheek as he used to, and laugh and be kind?

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