*THE POETRY OF WALTER DE LA MARE**

IN his recently published lecture, *Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination*, Mr. de la Mare tells an amusing story by way of showing how in 1916 his reputation as a poet stood " in the great eye of America." He went one day to pay his respects to a friend of Rupert Brooke's in New York. " A graceful coloured lift-girl inquired who the caller was. I told her. Whereupon she exclaimed, with a smile all radiant gold and ivory, ' Gee whiz ! What a name ! ' "

It is to be hoped that the poet's diffidence made him underestimate his fame in the United States ; even Mr. Kipling could not expect to be as well known by name to a lift-attendant as the latest cinema hero : " One star differeth from another in glory," or at least in conspicuousness. Yet it is scarcely to be disputed that something remains to be done before the readers of Mr. de la Mare's poetry, on both sides of the Atlantic, are as numerous as they should be. The poet of *Motley* and *The Listeners* will certainly never be as popular as Miss Mary Pickford ; he would disclaim any such ambition. He will probably never be as well known even as Mr. Kipling, or the friend whom he praises so generously in the essay from which we have quoted. Nevertheless, his work ought to be, and, we hope, when his *Collected Poems* have made their due impression, will be much more widely read and discussed than it is at present. There are few readers of taste, certainly few lovers of Blake and Coleridge and Shelley, who would not be subjugated by its spell if once the charm were wound up. Admittedly it takes a little time for this to be accomplished. " The Cage," or " The Sunken Garden," or " The Listeners " do not yield up their secret beauty on a

* *Collected Poems :* by Walter de la Mare (Constable, 1920, 27/6).

first hasty reading ; but having once entered into the mind they become an imperishable part of the inner consciousness, and can never be forgotten.

Mr. de la Mare, like other poets before him, has suffered from his admirers. He has been represented by some of them as the poet of a single closely circumscribed group of emotions. Yet in truth his moods are more numerous and more varied than is often supposed. He is not merely the poet of mystery, of distant romantic strangeness, of quiet gardens hushed in darkness or haunted with ever so faintly rustling shadows. He is this, and it is perhaps his characteristic mood. He is the poet of " The Sunken Garden," " The Little Old Cupid," " The Ghost," " Arabia " ; but he is also the most profound and genuine poet of childhood since Blake, and he expresses not only the mysterious essence of childhood, but the everyday feelings and interests of children, with a certainty and a completeness unapproached by any other poet. Moreover, in such poems as " Miss Loo," " Old Susan," and " Martha " he has achieved with equivalent mastery the converse of what is accomplished in " Arabia " and " The Listeners " ; as the latter make the strange and wonderful comprehensible if not familiar, so the former make strange and wonderful the familiar, the ordinary, the everyday. In his own entirely individual manner he has carried out not one but both of the aims which Wordsworth and Coleridge set before themselves in their famous joint volume. *The Listeners* is a one-man " Lyrical Ballads."

To many, perhaps most, of his readers Mr. de la Mare is the poet of three books only. These are the volumes represented by such admirable selections in the successive volumes of *Georgian Poetry*. *The Listeners*, which came in 1912, was, we believe, like Rupert Brooke's *Poems* of 1911, among the volumes which directly suggested the publication of the first *Georgian*

Poetry. There followed *Peacock Pie* in 1913, and, five years later, *Motley and other Poems*. These three books certainly contain the cream of his work, but it ought not to be forgotten that there are several other volumes in which, like Heywood of old with his two hundred plays, Mr. de la Mare has had " an entire hand, or at least a main finger." Admirers of *The Listeners* may be surprised to hear that its author had made his bow to the public full ten years before. In 1902 appeared, under the pseudonym (long since abandoned) of " Walter Ramal," a little book of *Songs of Childhood*. This was reissued, with some alterations and improvements, in 1916 ; but meantime, as early in fact as 1906, the poet's second venture had been made—a little octavo of *Poems*, published by Murray. To these we must add the interesting minor works, *A Child's Day* (1912) and the poems illustrating the pictures in *Flora* (1919). With prose we do not here concern ourselves, but it is worth remarking that Mr. de la Mare is the author of an entertaining adventure story for children, *The Three Mulla-Mulgars*, and of two novels, *Henry Brocken* and *The Return*.

How many years of patient, inspired, and successful labour have gone to the making of the style which distinguishes Mr. de la Mare's best-known work can only be learned from a study of his first two volumes. Highly individual these will certainly seem ; the reader who comes to them from the later poems cannot fail to notice the promise they held of future achievements. Yet the style is immature, or rather not yet perfected ; the misses outnumber the hits, and there are perhaps not half a dozen entirely good poems in the two volumes. Perhaps the most surprising thing about *Songs of Childhood* is that there are already examples of almost all the themes and moods which experience has proved to be most suited to the poet's powers of expression. Though as yet he seldom

speaks as precisely as might be, he knows perfectly well what he wishes to say. This is no small advantage to a poet just beginning his work. We recognize at once the theme and the movement of the lines when we come at random upon such stanzas as these :

> From out the wood I watched them shine,—
> The windows of the haunted house,
> Now ruddy as enchanted wine,
> Now dim as flittermouse.
>
> There went a thin voice piping airs
> Along the grey and crooked walks,—
> A garden of thistledown and tares,
> Bright leaves, and giant stalks,—

though we feel that the rhythms are undistinguished and that there is too noticeable an attempt to gain atmosphere by excessive use of the merely pictorial or descriptive epithet.

The real successes in this volume are, as befits the title, among the pure poems of childhood. There are pleasant fairy-tale ballads, " As Lucy went a-walking," " The Pedlar," " The Isle of Lone " and one or two others ; these have a touch of that simple fairy-tale mystery in which children delight so much. This can be felt also in " If I were Lord of Tartary," which is a kind of childish " Arabia " :

> Lord of the fruits of Tartary,
> Her rivers silver-pale !
> Lord of the hills of Tartary,
> Glen, thicket, wood, and dale !
> Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,
> Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,
> Her bird-delighting citron-trees
> In every purple vale !

But it is the perfectly simple, unmysterious delightful childishness of " The Dwarf," " O Dear me ! " " The Fly," and " Bunches of Grapes " which is here perhaps

most satisfying ; precisely because it is the least ambitious of all the poet's moods :

> " Chariots of gold," says Timothy ;
> " Silvery wings," says Elaine ;
> " A bumpity ride in a wagon of hay
> For me," says Jane :

As yet it was Jane whose youthful realistic hedonism her scribe was best able to put into rhyme ; but Timothy and Elaine were to have their turn in due course.

It is doubtful, however, whether more than two or three of the *Poems* of 1906 can be said to mark an advance in anything except command over technique. As a whole, in fact, the book is disappointing. The poet inexplicably fails for the present to follow up his vein of pure childlike fun, and so there are no more " bunches of grapes " as yet. We are inclined to suspect that a good deal of the book is early work belonging to the period before *Songs of Childhood*. However that may be, it is plain that in the opening group of " Characters from Shakespeare," and in the sonnets, the poet was on a false track. The sonnets are academic exercises of the kind turned out in thousands every year by thousands of hopelessly minor poets, and the blank verse impressionistic sketches of Falstaff, Juliet's Nurse, Mercutio, Hamlet and the rest are nebulous and undistinguished. Even as bookish exercises they are very uneven. We get a glimpse of the real poet here and there only, as in " Banquo " :

> Begone, thou shudd'ring pale anomaly !
> The dark presses without on yew and thorn ;
> Stoops now the owl upon her lonely quest,

where an atrocious line serves to set off two good ones. But " Hamlet " is not an easy theme, and it is not adequately handled in such verses as these :

> Umbrageous cedars, murmuring symphonies,
> Stoop'd in late twilight o'er dark Denmark's Prince :
> He sat, his eyes companionèd with dream—
> Lustrous large eyes that held the world in view
> As some entranced child's a puppet show . . . .

The miscellaneous short poems and the " Memories of Childhood "—the nine or ten poems which close the volume—are, however, more satisfactory. Such pieces as " Remembrance," " Sorcery," and " Voices " mark an interesting stage in the progress towards the perfect atmosphere of mystery which in so many of his recent poems is created by means of nothing but a few slight touches of natural description. The touches are here still not slight enough, too deliberate ; but the details are cunningly selected, and the rhythms are more subtle than before, and take their due part in making the total impression :

> Who is it calling by the darkened river
> Where the moss lies smooth and deep,
> And the dark trees lean unmoving arms,
> Silent and vague in sleep,
> And the bright-heeled constellations pass
> In splendour through the gloom ;—
> Who is it calling o'er the darkened river
> In music, " Come ! " ?

This poem is, we believe, Mr. de la Mare's first attempt in a metre of which (abandoning, however, the final short line) he has since made noteworthy use. Other poems, in four-line stanzas, show him feeling his way towards mastery of the effective device of a shortened fourth line, of which the classical examplar is in Keats's " La Belle Dame sans Merci."

Of the *Memories of Childhood*, two poems at least, " Echo " and " Myself," though they are very simple, unpretending little pieces, may take rank almost with his best work. The poems in this little volume of 1906 are at present so little known that it is perhaps excusable to quote one of these in its entirety :

MYSELF.

There is a garden grey
  With mists of autumn-tide,
Under the giant boughs,
  Stretched green on every side.

Along the lonely paths,
  A little child like me,
With face, with hands like mine,
  Plays ever silently ;

On, on, quite silently,
  When I am there alone,
Turns not his head ; lifts not his eyes ;
  Heeds not as he plays on.

After the birds are flown
  From singing in the trees,
When all is grey, all silent,
  Voices, and winds, and bees ;

And I am there alone :
  Forlornly, silently,
Plays in the evening garden
  Myself with me.

The beauty of this is not to be soiled by the fingering of analysis. It must speak for itself.

Coming to *The Listeners* and *Peacock Pie*, we cease to think of progress and experiments and foreshadowings ; the time is past for allowances and conditional praise. Within his limits—and these, though they cannot but seem narrow as compared with the whole field of poetry, are not, considering what is achieved within them, unduly so—the poet is a perfect artist. He has, it seems, surveyed all the themes, determined the whole range of emotions which are within his reach ; and the rest is but reaping as full a harvest as may be. The two books just mentioned are properly companion volumes, and neither of them, taken by itself, gives a complete idea of the poet's whole genius.

Roughly speaking, *Peacock Pie* contains poems—all sorts of poems—of childhood ; while *The Listeners* contains very few poems belonging to this class, and is rather, as we have said, a kind of one-man " Lyrical Ballads." This is not to imply that one has any difficulty in tracing the same personality in both series of poems ; but there is enough difference between the two, both of mood and of technique, to account for the fact that readers more familiar with one than with the other have often made the mistake of representing the poet of their favourite book as the essential de la Mare. But a lyrical poet, whose moods may be almost as numerous as his poems, cannot be represented by a single group of pieces, cannot be viewed in the perspective of a single critical formula ; he must be taken in the round.

This *caveat* is all the more pertinent for the fact that, while it is easy to spin words upon the theme of *Motley* and *The Listeners*, it is not at all easy to find anything appropriate to say about *Peacock Pie* and *A Child's Day*. This, indeed, is the essence of good children's verse ; it disconcerts the solemn commentator. Who can keep his critical dignity in the face of this ?—

> It's a very odd thing—
> As odd as can be—
> That whatever Miss T. eats
> Turns into Miss T.

" This nothing's more than matter " ; and the true test of it is the approval of the children themselves ; we do not think that any uncle need fear for the result who offers *Peacock Pie* as a birthday gift, especially if it be in the delightful edition illustrated by Mr. Heath Robinson. His pictures, however, are not quite adequate to the strange and fairy-like element in a number of the poems—" Mistletoe " or " The Song of Shadows," for example—and some may think that

the illustrator did wisely (whether consciously or not) in minimising the " outlandish " quality of these poems, which, in their view, would be more likely to puzzle children than to fascinate them. This belief, that children have only an elementary sense of the mysterious and are easily puzzled, is very common, but due, we are convinced, to a complete misconception. The truth is that children have a much keener sense of the mysterious than most grown-ups ; but it is so entirely credible to them, they take it so much as a part of normal existence, that they may sometimes seem to ignore what they are only taking for granted. What, however, really puzzles them is an apparent assumption of superiority by their obviously non-superior seniors. The slightest taint of this is enough to render suspect any reading matter which is offered them ; and, as might be expected, most verses written specifically for children fall under the ban. A good deal of Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*, for instance, is delightful reading ; but the greater part of it has the air of proceeding out of the mouths of intelligent and indulgent uncles or nurses or governesses rather than of babes and sucklings :

> Cruel children, crying babies,
> All grow up as geese and gabies,
> Hated, as their age increases,
> By their nephews and their nieces.

This makes the uncle chuckle, but it leaves the nephews and the nieces cold. The fact is that Stevenson's book would fit the title "*Memories* of Childhood " better than any of Mr. de la Mare's work.

The latter poet's way of approach is very different. He comes to childhood in a spirit of due humility. In his own memorable words :

" The world of the grown-up is to children an in-

> exhaustible astonishment and despair. They brood on us. . . . There is no solitude more secluded than a child's, no absorption more complete, no insight more exquisite, and, one might even add, more comprehensive. . . . We speak indulgently of childish make-believe, childish fancy. Bret Harte was nearer the truth when he maintained that 'the dominant expression of a child is gravity.' The cold fact is that few of us have the energy to be serious at this pitch. There runs a jingle :
>
> O whither go all the nights and days ?
> And where can to-morrow be ?
> Is there anyone there, when *I'm* not there ?
> And why am I always Me ?
>
> With such metaphysical riddles . . . children entertain the waking moments of their inward reverie. They are contemplatives, solitaries, fakirs, who sink again and again out of the noise and fever of existence into a waking vision. We can approach them only by way of intuition and remembrance, only by becoming even as one of them. . . ." (*Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination.*)

That is the faith by which *Peacock Pie* was brought into being ; and it is a faith justified by its works. There are no poems in the book—the first and last pieces, which are as mysterious and " deep almost as life," not excepted—which cannot be relished as fully by any normal child as by the grown-up children for whom also the volume is a never-to-be-exhausted delight. The childish mind proper may " react to its impression," as the current jargon has it, somewhat differently, but the impressions will be essentially the same.

A word may here be said concerning the two volumes in which Mr. de la Mare appears in the quaint role

of poetical illustrator of ready-made illustrations. *A Child's Day* is a series of verses to photographs depicting a day in the life of a little girl. This unpretending plan may involve some danger of failure to remark the real merit of some of the verses. Much of the book, of course, is merely pleasant picture-book jingle of an usual simplicity and sincerity ; but there are many glimpses to be had of the more essential individuality of the poet, especially where he contrives to get away from the pictures for a while. Perfectly rendered is the atmosphere, the " feel " of the very moment of time itself, as it were, in the lines describing Ann listening when, playing in the garden, she seems to hear the fairies calling her :

> Ann held her ball, and listened ;
> The faint song died away ;
> And it seemed it was a dream she'd dreamed
> In the hot and sunshine day ;
> She heard the whistling of the birds,
> The droning of the bees ;
> And then once more the singing came. . . .

The verses in *Flora*, a book of drawings by a little Italian girl, Pamela Bianco, are of a more occasional nature, and seem to show some traces of strain in the deliberate attempt to " expound " the remarkably clever, but slightly unnatural, almost rococo productions of this precocious young artist. As a result, the best poems—" Suppose," " The Path," and " Master Rabbit "—are those which follow the pictures least closely, some small detail being expanded, or a merely general hint being followed up in the verses.

But we must return to what, after all, is the most precious part of Mr. de la Mare's gift to us—the lyrics in *The Listeners* and *Motley and other Poems*. His other books ought never to be forgotten, but it is by these two books in the main that, for the present at least, his reputation must stand or fall. The earlier

volume, in fact, contains one poem, " Arabia," which in the short space of eight years has contrived to become well known, almost, we might say, famous. It appeared, of course, in the first *Georgian Poetry ;* it has been printed as a broadsheet and has been set—not very successfully—to music. There must be many to whom it is familiar who know scarcely anything of its creator's other work. Indeed, it would be difficult to overpraise the exquisite art of this poem, the subtlety of its word-melody, with the wavering, half-whispered, half-chanted rhythm, the unobtrusive but cunning play upon long vowels, the masterly economy of epithet. Vision and incantation is of its essence ; and we at least can never call it to mind without at once recalling also the unearthly strains of Coleridge's " Kubla Khan." The two poems are inseparable in our memory. Both have, in a degree unapproached elsewhere, save perhaps (in fashions which are somehow completely different) by Blake and by Keats in " La Belle Dame sans Merci," the quality of sheer word-magic. The reader is brought into touch with the emotion in the poet's mind scarcely at all by the sense of the words, but by their mere sound and by the rhythm of the lines. This is the true symbolism, and it marks, we believe, the highest point to which lyrical poetry, in one of its branches at least, and that perhaps the chief of all, can attain.

" Arabia," however, is not unique among Mr. de la Mare's poems in making us think of Coleridge ; we mean, of course, the Coleridge of a bare half-dozen of perfect pieces, who died a premature death about 1816, though the Highgate philosopher lived on to become the butt of one to whom Lamb was a " sorry phenomenon " and Keats a " maudlin sentimentalist." If it were possible to name a single poet as the imaginative progenitor of Mr. de la Mare's work, Coleridge would be the man. The indescribable atmosphere of

magical strangeness and mysterious beauty which breathes not only in " Arabia," but in " The Listeners," " Nod," and a dozen or more poems in *Motley*, is something equally remote from the prophetic, half-Biblical eloquence of Blake, the swift, ethereal utterance of Shelley, and the rich, romantic wonderment of Keats. It can be felt—or something very like it can be felt—in " Kubla Khan " and in parts of " Christabel " and " The Ancient Mariner," and nowhere else. Moreover, the peculiarly subtle tenuous rhythm of these, the most intensely characteristic of Mr. de la Mare's poems, seems to reach back to the experiment, or rather the revival of a forgotten mode, which Coleridge deliberately attempted in " Christabel "—the determination of rhythm by the number of beats or stresses in the line without any reference to the number of syllables. This can be seen—still, however, in a relatively simple form—in the well-known lines :

> There is not wind enough to twirl
> The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,
> Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
> On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky,

where to use the traditional terms iamb, trochee, anapæst, and so on would be sheer nonsense. In many of his poems Mr. de la Mare can be seen—whether deliberately or instinctively matters little—using essentially the same device, though he seems to handle it more subtly, or, if it be extravagant to say that, at least the resulting rhythms are slower and more dreamlike, as befits his themes. In " The Sunken Garden " and " The Empty House " the basis is, as in " Christabel," the couplet of four-stress lines :

> Mute shadows creeping slow
> Mark how the hours go.
> Every stone is mouldering slow,
> And the least winds that blow

Some minutest atom shake,
Some fretting ruin make
In roof and walls. How black it is
Beneath these thick-boughed trees!

In " Nod," " The Old Men," " The Ghost," " Alexander," and some others the method is applied with wonderful power to various four-line stanzas. The full effect of the great liberty of rhythm which it gives can only be seen by examining these poems as wholes. For a single instance out of many, we may mention the trance-like impression produced by commencing every line in this stanza (from " Alexander ") with a full stress :

Time, like a falling dew,
Life, like the scene of a dream,
Laid between slumber and slumber,
  Only did seem. . . .

" The Listeners," however, is perhaps the most striking example of metrical artistry which Mr. de la Mare has given us. In this the basis is a series of four-line groups (not, however, written in separate stanzas), in each of which the first and third lines have four beats, the second and third three ; only the shorter pair of lines are rhymed. We have this metre, in a musical but quite simple form, in those delightfully simple poems " The Sleeper," " The Keys of Morning," and " The Scarecrow " ; but in " The Listeners" it suffers a sea-change :

Never the least stir made the listeners,
  Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
  From the one man left awake :
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
  And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
  When the plunging hoofs were gone.

It is only when the words have sunk deep into the memory that the thin, sweet, evanescent music of these lines can be clearly heard by " ears of flesh and blood."

To some this doubtless crude and blundering attempt at metrical analysis will seem, perhaps, but as " the crackling of thorns under the pot," the expense of words upon what must be felt to be known, not learned by rote. Yet it is always worth while to try and give reasons for the faith that is in us, granting that the faith must needs be there first.

We have anticipated part of what we wished to say concerning *Motley and other Poems.* There are, in fact, no striking contrasts between the bulk of the poems in this volume and those in its predecessor. *Motley* shows, we think, on the whole more consummate artistry ; but it has perhaps rather less variety of atmosphere. With the exception of one or two not very successful war poems—Mr. de la Mare, like Shelley, " does not deal in flesh and blood," in the sense that he is anything but a topical writer—the contents of *Motley* belong in the main to the same group with " Arabia " and " The Listeners," poems which, as we have said, bring the strange and wonderful within the compass of our understanding. We have alluded to the complementary group of poems in *The Listeners*—" Martha," " Miss Loo," " Winter Dusk," and the rest—in which familiar scenes are made strange and wonderful through being viewed, as it were, out of time or through the veil of a strangely intense emotion. In *Motley* this group is scarcely represented, unless we may instance those lovely poems " The Linnet " and " The Scribe " ; but there are four or five poems, not all of them quite successful perhaps, yet deeply interesting, in which he seems to break fresh ground ; the best of them are " The Cage," " The Remonstrance," " Eyes," and " Life." These share with " Martha " and " Winter Dusk " a quality

which may be very crudely called " human interest," but they deal not with specific incidents as indicating states of mind, but with the mental state itself. Hence the language is " metaphysical," and concrete imagery becomes purely symbolical. Thus " The Cage " symbolizes the passion of grief that underlies our delight in beauty—grief at the barriers that confine our mortal consciousness :

> Why did you flutter in vain hope, poor bird,
> Hard-pressed in your small cage of clay ?
> 'Twas but a sweet, false echo that you heard,
> Caught only a feint of day.
>
> Still is the night all dark, a homeless dark.
> Burn yet the unanswering stars. And silence brings
> The same sea's desolate surge—*sans* bound or mark—
> Of all your wanderings.
>
> Fret now no more ; be still. Those stedfast eyes,
> Those folded hands, they cannot set you free ;
> Only with beauty wake wild memories—
> Sorrow for where you are, for where you would be.

If Mr. de la Mare can work the vein which here he seems to have struck, we shall perhaps have no more child poems from him, no fresh " Arabia " or " Miss Loo " ; but he may give us something finer and rarer still. In a poet who has achieved what he has done during the last ten years it would be unreasonable to expect any positively new development ; but if it does come, it will proceed, we believe, along these lines.

To some the language we have used in reference to this poet may seem extravagant ; and it is a question whether they will consider it any mitigation of the offence to add that there is no other poet of Mr. de la Mare's generation of whom we feel tempted to say the like. Indeed, this poet's success in finding out what it was his part to say, and in saying it with complete sureness, ought to stand out all the more clearly beside the failure or half-success of his contemporaries. We

do not now feel that confidence in the coming of a new age of poetry which we confess to having shared, when the first *Georgian Poetry* appeared, with others whose optimism remains unimpaired. The passage of time has brought with it, if not wisdom, at least caution. The successive *Georgian Poetry* anthologies, apart from the work of Messrs. de la Mare and W. H. Davies, have shown a successive deterioration. Two poets do not make a new age ; and who will maintain that the uncomfortable void is filled by the clamour of voices that has arisen from the legion of rival anthologies compiled during the last six or seven years ? *Some Imagist Poets*, *Coterie*, *Wheels* . . . what are they but interesting yet barren experiments, plants rooted in no tradition, growing up in anarchy rather than out of progress ? " And because it had no root, it withered away." The besetting dangers which threaten poetry in every age are " academicism," if we may coin a term for the fossilization of tradition into dead convention, and anarchy, the rejection of allegiance to tradition altogether. It is the second of these which touches us most nearly to-day, as the former was the vice of yesterday. We are witnessing the reaction from the insincerity, or supposed insincerity, of Victorian poetry. Rightly or wrongly, living poets are out of sympathy with the art of the Victorian age. There is a dim feeling abroad that since the early part of the last century, since the premature death of Keats, Shelley, and Byron, the thread of continuity in English poetry has been lost. Hence the attempt made by a large number of our younger poets to abjure tradition, ignore the past, and begin again from the beginning, " as if a man were author of himself, and knew no other kin." But the anarchists, though the most obtrusive, are not, we believe, the most significant, and they are certainly the least successful, of our poets. The poets who are working on the right lines are busied, each after his

own fashion, in striking back beyond the last three generations and casting about among the earlier ages for the lost thread. They are, in short, trying to do precisely what the poets of the "Renascence of Wonder" themselves were doing a century ago. We cannot say that the results have yet come up to expectation, but the mere example of Mr. de la Mare's work, perhaps as much as its absolute value, which we believe to be very great, should be of immense profit if and when his poetry is studied with the attention which it merits—not with the slavishness of an imitator, but with the devotion of a disciple. His successful renewal of the old metrical forms is itself a sufficient reply to the heresies of Mr. F. S. Flint and other "vers-librists." He has shown that the thing can be done—the tradition can be renewed in its entirety if one man has been able to renew it for himself. The way will lie not, of course, in barren imitation of the characteristic peculiarities of this poet's style, which are valid for him and for him only, but in following his patient self-examination, his rigid avoidance of what is outside the scope of his powers, his indifference to a shallow, easily-won fame, or rather notoriety—in short, by learning from him the supreme lesson, that of artistic sincerity.

R. W. King.