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Contemporary Verse



DECEMBER

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Contemporary Verse

*The All-poetry Magazine
for America*



DECEMBER

1924

Hour Hymns

By

DR. LOUIS F. BENSON

Other Contributions by

MARGARET LEE ASHLEY

MARGARET TOD RITTER

HANIEL LONG

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER

MARY DIXON THAYER

CONTRIBUTORS

We have long been seeking for hymns which, preserving the dignity and simplicity of the tradition, would sing to us with the perennial joy of true feeling. We are now privileged to give our readers a group by Dr. Louis F. Benson, of Philadelphia, long known as a leading authority in the scholarship of the field, but even more noteworthy for his original compositions. He is the author of many volumes—original, critical and compilations—and in especial has edited the hymnal for the Presbyterian Church of America.

Among the other new writers this month is A. Evelyn Newman, Professor of English at the Colorado Teachers' College, Greeley, Col. Daisy Conway Price (Mrs. Harvey L.), writes from Blacksburg, Va. L. E. C. is a sister at St. Mary's Convent, Peekskill, N. Y. Paul M. Fulcher hails from Madison, Wis., and Marguerite Reed from Rochester, N. Y.

Of our former friends, Haniel Long has migrated to Santa Fe, N. M. Roselle Mercier Montgomery has been attracting much favorable attention for her translations from Horace, which have appeared frequently in the *N. Y. Times* and elsewhere. Other poets not hitherto mentioned are Lena Hall, Josephine Johnson, Stanton A. Coblentz and Virginia McCormick. Mr. Coblentz has just published a modern anthology and Mrs. McCormick a new collection of her own work entitled *Voices of the Wind*. Miss Ashley's "Song of Edric" was admired by Mr. W. D. Howells. Miss Ritter's first volume is to appear with Macmillan.

"CONTEMPORARY VERSE" POEMS IN MR. BRAITHWAITE'S NEW ANTHOLOGY

The Scullion of the Queen	Maxwell Bodenheim
The Fisherman	Gamaliel Bradford
Armenian Love Song	William A. Drake
Spring Market	Louise Driscoll
The Olympians	Amory Hare
A Street Car Symphony	Roy Helton
Lesson in Poetry	Ruth Evelyn Henderson
Black Christmas	DuBose Heyward
One Woman	Elizabeth Warren Jones
Folly	Vivian Yeiser Laramore
To a Yellow Jessamine	Mary Sinton Leitch
The King's Horses	Herbert H. Longfellow
Harvest	Herbert H. Longfellow
The Fishers	Herbert H. Longfellow
The Flame	Hermann Ford Martin
The Secret	John Richard Moreland
On a Stile	Martha Ostenso
Conversation	Benjamin Rosenbaum
America—Giant	Benjamin Rosenbaum
Precedent	Benjamin Rosenbaum
Psalms	Benjamin Rosenbaum
Point of View	Benjamin Rosenbaum
Adirondack Evening	Chard Powers Smith
Wildcat Ledge	Lilian White Spencer
At Parting	Harold Vinal
Island Born	Harold Vinal
October Graveyard	Caroline Crosby Wilson

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FOUR HYMNS

By Louis F. Benson

A CAROL OF CHRISTMAS AT BETHLEHEM

A King might miss the guiding star,
A Wise Man's foot might stumble;
For Bethlehem is very far
From all except the humble.
*'Tis Christmas Day! 'Tis Christmas Day!
And Christmas hearts are humble.*

Some pilgrims seek a hallowed shrine;
Some soldiers march to danger;
Some travellers seek an inn—its sign,
"The Baby in a Manger."
*When Christ was born on Christmas morn,
They laid him in a manger.*

There is no palace in that place,
Nor any seat of learning,
No hill-top vision of God's face,
No altar candles burning.
*O come and see our Christmas tree,
And Christmas candles burning.*

But he who gets to Bethlehem
Shall hear the oxen lowing;
And, if he humbly kneel with them,
May catch far trumpets blowing.
*From far away, on Christmas Day,
May hear God's trumpets blowing.*

HYMN FOR ARBOR DAY

Brighter glows the summer day
Since the Master came this way ;
Down the lane and up the hill
Sound the Master's footsteps still.

All the flowers of the field
Now a sweeter fragrance yield ;
Holy is the woodland shade
Where the Master knelt and prayed.

All the birds that sail the air
Tell us of His Father's care ;
Safer now to come and go
Since the Master loved them so.

Feed them, then, in Jesus' Name :
It was winter when He came ;
It was spring-time while He stayed
In the world His Father made.

Scatter flowers here and there,
Where the earth is stripped and bare ;
Or to make some window sweet
Up above the dusty street.

By the roadside plant a tree,
Saying, "Lord, it waits for Thee" ;
Making ready day by day,
Should the Master come this way.

A MELODY OF LOVE AND LIFE

○ Love that lights the eastern sky
And shrouds the evening rest,
From out whose hand the swallows fly,
Within whose heart they nest!

○ life, content beneath the blue!
Or, if God will the gray,
Then tranquil yet, till light breaks through
To melt the mist away!

○ death that sails so close to shore
At twilight! From my gate
I scan the darkening sea once more,
And for its message wait.

What lies beyond the afterglow?
To life's new dawn how far?
As if an answer, spoken low,
Love lights the evening star.

FOR A TIME OF THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

Our Lord, our Life, Thy paths divine
Are calling us to seek the goal
Where truth, undimmed at last, will shine
Full-orbed to greet the reverent soul.

Thy law, Thy prophets' words that burn,
Yet more the Master's upward look,
Constrain us from Thy Book to learn
To worship Thee and not Thy Book.

Through realms of law untrod of old
New prophets call to heights undreamed :
Thy thoughts, O Lord, are manifold,
Our systems smaller than they seemed.

We trace Thy hand in ancient creeds
That bloom above time's trampled dust ;
We front them with our living needs,
And face Thee with our fathers' trust :

For Thou hast many things to say,
Withholden long : Thou makest plain
How words outworn must fall away,
That truth unshaken may remain.

Forgive the eyes that shun the light
In fear of what the light may bring ;
Sustain us through the doubtful night
Until the stars of morning sing.

NO ROOM

By Lena Hall

The inn was crowded that December night
To the last bed, for David's house was there,
Waiting the tax great Caesar could not spare,--
Waiting, though no one knew, unlevied Light !
Joseph was late, and Mary at his side,
Heavy with promise, drooped a little space.
Was there in Bethlehem no yearning place
Fitly prepared? A stable door yawned wide
On strange, expectant beasts, with gentle eyes,
Turning the straw until their laden breath
Curved warmly round the group from Nazareth,—
Lordliest welcome in a lowly guise.
So seldom crowded places come to be
The chosen cradle of infinity !