THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY
A Magazine of Contemporary Thought

OCTOBER, 1901

1. The New Poetry in France          Gustave Lanson
2. Art and Artists (Concluded)        John La Farge
3. American Democracy                Hugo Münsterberg
4. French Colonial Expansion in the Nineteenth Century Camille Guy
5. France and Italy                 Salvatore Cortesi
6. The American System of Supreme Courts Simeon E. Baldwin
7. The Historical Service of John Fiske Albert Bushnell Hart
8. A History of the English Poor Law Franklin H. Giddings

BURLINGTON, VERMONT, U. S. A.
148 COLLEGE STREET.

LONDON: The International News Co., Chancery Lane.


PARIS: Brentano's, 37 Avenue de l'Opéra.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

the neighboring Japanese have, within a generation, put on the whole panoply of European fashions; but conservatism is a characteristic of every people. It is only a century and a half ago that the first proposed census of England was bitterly opposed in Parliament and eventually thrown out by the House of Lords. The Chinese live close to the starvation line, and their wonderful industry and economy only save them from being pushed over this line at all times; they are not likely to be spendthrifts in experiments under such circumstances, nor when they can point to precedents and examples for their way of living that have been successfully followed for millennia. It may take long to convince them of the advantage of change, but the conservatism of so practical a folk cannot permanently prevent their ultimate emancipation.

Undoubtedly the present crisis in the affairs of China is one of extreme peril to the nation. The state has been grossly and terribly mismanaged, while an economic revolution has transformed the producing capacity of other countries lying far beyond her ken. The price of her redemption from the evils that encompass her must be the sacrifice of her pride and the renunciation of many of her ancient ideals. But no faithful student of Chinese life can escape the conviction that, despite grave faults and evident deterioration, there is sturdy material here for the erection of a really great civilization, and sufficient potential energy to preserve it to a distant future. When these bases of Chinese society shall have been regenerated by the introduction of some high spiritual conceptions, their long training in obedience, self-reliance, love of order, and contestedness, their habit of industry, and their indomitable cheerfulness will reestablish them in the supreme position which this long-lived race has often occupied in the past. The very best argument for the support of Christian missions in China is the study of the Chinese people.

"The only method by which such beings," observes our author, "can be rescued from their torpor is by a transference of a new life which shall reveal to them the sublime truth uttered by the ancient patriarch, 'There is a spirit in man,' for only thus is it that the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding."
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

France and Belgium a new art was being ushered in through the numerous reviews and organs of many different clubs and schools: "La Vogue," the "Revue indépendante," the "Revue Wagnerienne," "L'Ermitage," the "Revue Blanche," and "La Wallone." The "decadent" or "symbolist" poetry, the "polyphonic" verse,—whimsical, alluring, and striking names,—was praised, explained, and practiced with a sincere and violent zeal. A tumultuous and furious effort was made to put the rusty chariot of French poetry into running order again, and to start it in roads unknown to both Romanticist and Parnassian. But all this life was spending its agitated being underground, as it were, in the basement of literature, and the noise did not carry to the general public on the street. The "Délire d'Usine" of Adolphe Flaubert scarcely caused the journalists to smile, even for a moment, and many of them, indeed, could not at first decide whether they had before them an essay by a sincere and original writer, or a parody by some facetious "crank."

Little by little, however, the critics of the first magnitude began to perceive that this younger generation was heartily besieging itself, and they endeavored to discover what it was about. M. Jules Lemaitre, once both charmed and offended by Verlaine, set him apart from the other young men who called themselves symbolists; their obscurity startled him, and he feared lest he might be the dupe of a band of mystics. M. Brunetière rebelled the foolish extravagancies of the innovators, but without a certain pleased forbearance at seeing their movement fall in so well with his own doctrine. A slight discussion arose over a book by Charles Monce, "La littérature de tout l'heure," in which the programme of the new art was set forth in terms that were fairly intelligible. And then suddenly, in 1891, as if in obedience to an order, all the journals and magazines

(1) "Le Symboliste Contemporain," April 1, 1891.
(2) "Le livre litteraire," April 15, Aug. 16 and 30, and also "Les jeunes poètes, auteurs et extraits," Sept. and Oct.
(3) "Le livre français et les poètes d'aujourd'hui," June 16, 1891.
(4) "Revue de la revue littéraire," 1891.
(5) "Un Hollandais à Paris," 1892, published by Perrin et Cie, 1892.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

the light: all that was most obscure and unreasonable in the works and formulas of symbolism, all that was most eccentric and immoral in the manner and lives of the symbolists themselves. Without quoting Verlaine’s beautiful poems, he pointed out his mask of a fast, his Bohemian fashions, his strange lodgings, his debauches, hospitals, and prisons; they drew for the “bourgeois” the disquieting sketch of a man, now dependent on public assistance and now a victim of the laws relative to misdeemans; they represented him as a drunkard, a vagabond, almost as an assassin. The life of Mallarmé was too simple and modest to be related; so they brought forward his poetry—

“Le rire, le drôlerie et le bel aujourd’hui
Vaut-il nos déshonneur avec un coup d’œil sacré
Ce lac du désespoir au sol se dote
Le transperçant glaçons des vols qui n’ont pas fuit”

What could a reformation be worth in the eyes of sensible men which placed itself under the standard of Verlaine, a shameful drunkard, or of Mallarmé, a maker of riddles? — a reformation extolled by so many unknowns with foreign names. Those proud enemies of tradition, these Belgians, Americans, Slavs, Greeks, and Jews,—were these indeed competent doctors for French poetry and the French language? And were there no consequences to be feared from this assault delivered by all the nations at once upon the ancestral genius of our race?

In the nebulous enthusiasm and apocalyptic solemnity of the accounts given of their doctrine, one thing only was clearly shown, that all these reformers of poetry and verse did not agree with each other. Marie Krysinska, René Ghili, Gustave Kahn, and Jean Moréas,—all worked in their own way for the salvation of French poetry, and if Charles Morice crowned them all one after another, Robert de Sousa condemned them all in a lump in the name of his own pet theory; which he held to be the only true one; and Jean Moréas, who had hatched symbolism, denied it, and in its place founded what he termed “la Poesie Romane.”

The wiser minds also began to ask themselves whether there was not more advertisement than infatuation in this pompous display of formulas. Among these symbolists, these decadents, these Romanticists, were found a few of the younger generation who wrote their poetry noisily in the old way, the Parnassian or Lamartine school of verse. It was, indeed, a case of new labels on very old merchandise. At bottom, was it not simply the younger generation bidding the older depart,—in their own hurry to take their place? Were these not new men who desired to come forward rather than a new art?

For once, the wiser ones were wrong. There is no doubt of this to-day. We have passed the time when M. Brunetière believed himself obliged to warn us that “the value of the critical ideas of our symbolists was entirely independent of that of their works.”

The works have come, of a real value, and often of the very first order; to-day they commend the theories by which M. Brunetière formerly excused them. Out of this indistinct, tumultuous crowd of young poets, whom M. Anatole France placed all upon the same level, in 1881, have emerged many original and superior talents: M.M. Henri de Régnier, Viéle-Griffin, Redenbach, Samain, Verhaeren, and to these must be added Fernand Grgh. I might name many others who have succeeded in creating something of note. But let us not be severe even on the mediocrities.

(1) See Brunetière, Revue des Deux Mondes, Nov. 1, 1882.
(2) Mocké, Masterschop, Redenbach, Verhaeren.
(3) Stuart Merrill, Viéle-Griffin.
(4) Marie Krysinska.
(5) Moréas.
(6) Ephraim Michael, Gustave Kahn.

(1) In an essay on Réforme poétique, very original and instructive, although it does not give full evidence.
(2) Bryanck, p. 85.
(3) Revue des Deux Mondes, April 1, 1881.
(4) See the Anthology published by Ad. van Bever and Paul Lautard: Petits poèmes lyriques, 1890.
the failures; no attempt has been lost. The unsuccessful ones marked out the path over which the famous have trod, and the extravagant quest of the impossible has determined the boundaries of the field of the possible.

Success came with talent; the new poetry is at home among the pages of the "Revue des Deux Mondes" and the "Revue de Paris." The French Academy has crowned the symbolists, and even lines of fourteen syllables, or rather the volume which contains them. Sometime in the early years of the present century, Adolphe Thiers will sit down among the Forty.

This crisis that the bourgeois public and its critics believed to be the final agony of French poetry was, in fine, nothing but a crisis in its development. The time has come for us to study this development. I shall pass over the individual characteristics, the divergencies, and contradictions of the new school, that I may confine myself more closely to its common tendencies and its general results. I should like to show by what means, and by what efforts, French poetry, which sixty years of glorious production threatened to leave petrified in a condition of deadly inactivity, gained the impetus necessary for its life.

I. THE INSPIRATION.

I shall not stop to tell of what influences, towards 1885, urged so many of the younger generation to conceive the ambitious hope of creating a new form of poetry. Naturalism was struggling in its last throes, and with it the Parnassian poetry, its contemporary and ally. Science seemed to have done in literature all that it was capable of doing; we were weary of it. Idealism was springing up once more. The soul and the mysterious were all the fashion. Against the living masters of literature, they invoked the dead, eccentrics, or foreigners: Lamartine, Vigny, Baudelaire, Villiers de l'Isle Adam,—all had their chapels; Tolstoi, Ibson, Bjornson, and, later, Nietzsche, were confusedly, frantically applauded. We became enamored of artists who by relief or color desired to give other than the real and earthly: Puisis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Rodin, Burne-Jones, the Pre-Raphaelites. We reverenced Ruskin; we applauded the painters who endeavored to render by more subtle characters whatever was more variable, intangible, and well-nigh immaterial in the life of nature,—the independents and impressionists. Wagner was deified as the great musician of the soul and of the ideal, and also because the "bourgeois" had not yet become resigned to him. In a word, one part of the younger generation needed something different from the official literature which was enthroned in the Academy, which was decorated by the government, and which sold at an advantageous rate. Shaken by an inner need, and excited by influences from without, the men of the younger generation who felt within them the inclination to write in verse rejected all the poetry of the time in its form and inmost content.

To tell the truth, it was not easy to remodel the very basis of lyric poetry, which is, and can only be, the reaction of an individual consciousness against the universe and against life, the manifestation of the fundamental problems of the universe and of life in the original vibrations of a soul. There are differences of intensity and quality in lyric inspiration, but the source is everywhere and always the same.

The Romanticists had fully understood this; they had all sounded the mystery of human existence in writing the journal of their own life; they had all told of human suffering in their own suffering. All the particular accidents of their humor and of their existence were grouped around eternal ideas,—God and nature, love and death, humanity and progress.

The Parnassians had not really placed lyricism upon new ground. That there was in Lecomte de Lisle a deeply braised sensibility in relation with a personal conception of the universe.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

and of life; that there was in Sully Prudhomme an original sentimentality, a subjective perception of the relations between man and things—no longer needs demonstration. As for the third star in the Parnassian Pleiades, M. Coppée, he escapes personality only by the commonplace; and because his soul is that of every man is the reason he does not appear to reveal it in his poetry.

But the Parnassians had desired to work in a direction exactly opposed to that of Romanticism. If they had not been able to dry up within themselves the personal source, without which there is no lyricism, they hindered it from flowing forth in their poetry into the broad light of day; they made it to run in underground rivulets. Impressed by the positive and critical minds of the middle of the century, the contemporaries of Taine and of Flaubert, they desired to create an objective poetry, picturesque or philosophical, which should reflect natural or historical realities and rational truths. Scenes from the past, landscapes, popular customs, psychological analyses, ethical exposition—they put all the sensible and all the intelligible world into their works; they sought, with haughty impassiveness or methodical abstraction or impersonal vulgarity, to put everything into them as except themselves.

It was against this doctrine, after it had produced the best works that it contained, that the symbolists reacted. Supported by two Romanticists of a later time,—by Banville, a capricious juggler with rhythm, without rule or reason for his fantasy, and by Baudelaire, an exasperated pessimist, absorbed in the culture of an abnormal sensibility,—but pursuing, in reality, an entirely different aim from Banville and Baudelaire, they rebelled against the Parnassian school and re-established the reign of the soul in poetry. They reopened it to the subjective affirmations of the absolute and the unknowable.

Mr. Charles Morice, in attributing to Edgar Allan Poe the "lyric sense of science," explains himself thus: "Art will touch Science with her foot, that she may feel in her the certainty of a solid foundation, and, then, with a bound, will leap over her upon the wings of Intuition." "Poets and thinkers," he exclaims, in another connection, "we hear the winds of mystery which pour forth from the heart of phenomena, and we move towards light, towards life * * * *. To some this joy (of enthusiasm) will come as an intuition of genius before the face of Nature; they let the simple and stupendous law of Forms and eternal Emotions sing in their work; to others all the resources of human wisdom * * * * will be necessary, and the latter, more particularly the servants of the Evangel of harmonious relations and the laws of Analogy, will give in vast syntheses, according to the strength of their minds and their heart's good faith, a melodious and luminous explanation of the mysteries that are glorified in the reality of Fiction.*

M. Morice by offering to the reader in his poems "a sentimental ideology," M. Gustave Kahn, rather more obscurely, by assigning to the "great subjects" the office of "celebrating the fundamental rites of Life and of the Intelligence," M. Mallarmé by giving to verse that "evocative art 'par excellence,'" the power of illuminating the "pure of ourselves born by ourselves, always ready to burst forth on occasion, but which in existence or outside of art never attains to an adequate expression," M. René Ghil by urging "the lyric and meditative poet" to extract "the idea which is alone important" from the "ordinary thousand visions in which it, the Immortal, is disseminated," to revise from negligible realities "the holy lines" of which he will compose "the only worthy vision, the real and suggestive Symbol,"—all these, in their many ways, promulgate the same doctrine.

(1) Littré. de tout à l'heure, p. 303. See also to this question my essay entitled "La Littérature et la Science" in "Hommes et Livres."

(2) Ibid., pp. 31, 37.

(3) La Période passionnée.

(5) Première poèmes, Préface.

(6) Vers et prose, Ceremonial, p. 196.

(6) Traité du verbe.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

M. Jules Lemaitre, after having quoted the oracular lines of René Ghislain, added, "But does it not seem to you that we have a slight suspicion of these things already?" Assuredly we have, but assuredly also many acted as if they did not. The symbolists retold an old truth, but the Parnassians had rendered it necessary to retell it. Poetry, for a long time, had entered into competition with the arts which copied, and with the sciences which analyzed exterior things, such as they were outside of the soul, and without union with the soul. It busied itself with painting, with sculpture, with history, with the novel of manners, with the physical and the philosophical. Now it returned to the expression of ideal realities and of the interior life. All nature, all history, all life, were now only occasions for the poet to show his true being, its most peculiar and its most invisible modifications. All their images were but projections of the soul.

Soul, everywhere Soul! But this decadent and symbolistic soul, how far removed was it from the old ego, the solid and square ego, which thrusts back the nous-ego, and which the nous-ego circumscribes. Amalgamating the nearest hypothesists of certain physiologists with the pseudo-sciences of the sensational and with the reverse of dreamer and seer, mingling hypnosis, telepathy, spiritism, occultism, and mysticism, — symbolism transforms the traditional representation of the relations between nature and man; it gives birth to a strange, intense, and awe-inspiring perception. The universe penetrates the soul and the soul is diffused throughout the universe; vague and impossible to determine is the line which separates the two. By inconceivable correspondences nature and the ego are bound together; far beyond this arises common sensation; and the brutal contour of things is enveloped in a mist of harmonic impressions. The life of nature and the life of the soul, the life of the body and the life of the spirit, melt into each other; there are ineradicable manifold passages from the object to the subject, from the material to the spiritual, from the conscious to the unconscious.

(1) Revue Blanche, June 1, 1884.

THE NEW POETRY IN FRANCE.

where discontinuity, limit, or stop; nothing is distinct nor remains fixed. The world of the intelligence and of the senses is but the superficial level, the moving reflection of the invisible world, where life is. There is no other reality than the ideal forms in which the soul both attains to the essence of things and realizes its own essence; both being otherwise unattainable. This turn of the mind evidently obliged the symbolist poet to describe nature in an entirely different way from his predecessors.

For a century poetry had tended towards making its descriptions more and more truthful and local. Victor Hugo and Théophile Gautier had passed from an imaginary landscape to the landscape as they saw it; even Lamartine the evolution had been made from the attenuated locality of the "Meditations" to the more carefully defined locality of "Jocelyn." The Parnassian school had offered us a splendid collection of historical, ethnographical, and geographical paintings; every image was a precise fact, and all proper accidents for characterizing time and place were strongly accentuated. In the new poetry the indefinite was the law. No detail of the landscape might give it time or place. It is a moment, somewhere; an extract from the complexity, a summing up of the multiplicity of the real; it was made up of the universal elements of nature and things.

Formerly painters of interiors and landscape took for subjects particular and finished things, and endeavored by exact portrayal to make a solid and distinct reality stand forth; to-day real objects, means rather than ends, serve to render sensible the manifold accidents of air and light. It is all the divine poem of air and light that the modern painter proposes to celebrate. Poetry has followed the evolution of painting. It emphasizes less the precise contours and local circumstances which make up the real object, than the eternal properties peculiar to the material of which the object is a casual example, and than the everlasting laws of life which write themselves for a moment in the subject. In the woods and fields and mountains Vielé-Griffin did not per-
From this comes the flowing lightness, the hazy transparency of the symbolist descriptions, in which things assume an ideal appearance, and have the air of things in a dream, impalpable, imponderable.

A third period is soon passed over. If things are in us, are ourselves, what need for the description to be objectively complete and consistent? The poet's aim is not to construct the universe. It matters little to him to illumine only incoherent fragments of exterior reality, if it is only in these fragments that the life of his soul is passed.

Here we lay hold upon the principle of the desultory character, the obscurity, the awkwardness, of certain descriptions in recent poetry.

But also what expressive depth, what living vibrations will be within the reach of the landscape! Each picturesque note causes the resonance of a sentimental harmony. In perceiving the life in things the poet tells of the relation between his soul and life—

INSTANT.

"Une étoile fleurit, pâle dans le ciel bleu;  
De l'infinité, légère et vague, le nuit pleut.  
Sur le Bosphore, la nuit, dans la brume sereine  
Un bateau longement fait pleurer un sieste.  
Un pape douteux se jette dans la chambre à coucher,  
C'est elle, l'aimable et le sourire de bonheur.  
Je travaille, je ris, sans regret, sans ennui,  
Il fait traitre, il fait douter. Bien de plus. C'est la vie."

(1) Médailles d'Argile, p. 15.
(3) Grévin, La Beauté de jour, p. 145. The landscapes also of Viollet-Grévin ("Pierres et Poésies") are generally the revelation of life in the soul of the poet.
poetic composition. Even the poet's vision becomes symbolical; the forms of things are to him the hieroglyphics of the ideas, and ideas have no longer the need of being formulated except in pictures.

"Déjà, pour nos regards éteintes, des plaines
Gisent dans la splendeur matinale et serre,
Sous le ciel tendre que la brume pisè note
De son rêve; et vers nous une ruine d'italines
Parni des branches monte, et l'horizon déplié
Au loin l'immensité vaporeuse des pliètes."

It is thus that the symbolist expresses the standpoint of the youth discovering with intoxication this new and magnificent life.

By integrating the idea in the picture, the symbol is other than a process of composition. It translates or produces an original fusion of treating the inner life as poetic material.

From the time of Rousseau and of Chateaubriand, it has been acknowledged that the ego was the source of lyric poetry; they had caused it to spring forth by telling of themselves. The Romanticists used all forms, poetry, drama, the novel, and history in which to confess themselves and express their intimate thoughts. Thus a critic could speak of the immodesty and naiveté essential to the modern lyric; immodesty in telling the secrets of the heart, naïveté in believing yourself the privileged of misfortune. The Parnassians had repressed this frenzied ostentation of self. "I will not sell you my intoxication and my misfortune," said Leconte de Lisle to the public —

"Je ne te vendrai pas mon ivresse et mon mal,
Je ne laverai pas ma vie à tes laves.
Je ne douterai pas sur ton triste banal
Avec tes listiers et tes proxénètes."

These lines were the safeguards of the "Jeune." They did not wish to be "exhibitors." They pretend to express themselves without making themselves known, to give the revelation of the life which went on within themselves without betraying their

(1) V. Hugo, La Fable (Feux interieurs); La Caravanne (Château-
ment), Vigny, La mort du boeuf; La bataille à la mer.
(2) Sur Leconte de Lisle, Bhagavad.
(3) Baudelaire, Fleurs du Mal. (Correspondances.)
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

Life's confidence. The very "Meditations" of Lamartine are an exact autobiography beside the veiled characters that are given us by Henri de Regnier, Viele-Guiffli, Verhaeren, and Gregh. The latter separate sentiment from fact, gather up the emotion of their soul, while detaching this emotion from the object and the occasion which have given it birth. But as the concrete and the actual are necessary in order to realize modes of sensibility, nature has lent her forms and phenomena. Thus, recent poets tell of themselves through the woods, the waters, the wind, and the light. Through the subtle play of harmonies, they symbolize their life in order not to relate it. They tell only what they have felt of life without telling what has made them feel it so. Their poetry, consequently, could remain pure poetry without being turned into oratorical or philosophical discourse. The problems of life were presented in vibrations of awe, not in discussions, and the philosophy of the poet, without being explicitly formulated, is as though in dissolution in the waves which mount up from the bottom of his soul.

At one time it might have been thought that general conceptions would be wanting in the new art. The decadents and symbolists had somewhat the appearance of being merely the apes of Baudelaire and of Baudelaire, they had the air of being maniacs or copyists, proudly developing, in the frenzied dance of their rhythms and in the foolish arabesques of their images, all the abnormal perceptions or eccentric fancies which rose in their brain. But Verlaine pointed out a pathway. His "Sagesse" is the journal of a pensive soul; it is the crisis of the conversion of the sinner, the song—one of the most beautiful that there is—of the soul, bathed and joyful before the life whose mystery a ray of God has illumined. In the collection which followed "Sagesse," pious verse alternated with sensual, the effusions of contrite humility and pure faith with slightly veiled images of the sins of the flesh. Verlaine was not, I believe, inessential to the rhythmical grace of this alternation. But through these contrac-
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

seemed foolish to feel a love for life. Poetry was still sad, but it was no longer desperate, except among certain Belgians with an imagination too deeply tinted with Catholicism. There was a gentleness in its sadness; an inclination was shown to accept life just as it is, in its misery, in its fleeting character, in its inachievemnt; to love it because it is, and because nothing can exist save in it and by it,—the universe, truth, beauty.

From the Christian point of view, which makes life appear wicked by directing us to the beyond, to eternity, poetry returned to the Greek point of view, which embraces life in all its nakedness,—rich in evil and in good, and filled with this sweet and clear charm of being.

With M. de Régnier, with Viénot-Griffin, the insufficiency of the real is denounced with an affectionate assent. "All things are eternal and vain," says M. de Régnier, and he loves them as they are, not as an Epicurean eager to enjoy, nor like Vigny, that tender stoic, who believed he ought by his love to compensate mortals for their unhappiness in being born to die; he loves them with their law, in their transition, which is a perpetual beginning again of joy and beauty.

M. Gregh, enlightening the thought tendency of his contemporaries with his intellectual acuteness, has given his latest collection of verse the title "La Beauté de Vivre." "Life wounds and deceives," he says, and he knows it:—

"Et pourtant je ne m'ennuie pas l'antique sort,
Vieux jug, doux d'être uni, sous quoi nous nous croisons,
Ni les hommes, trop de leur part pour être bons,
Ni Dieu même, le seul vrai coupable, s'il est.
Pourquoi? Parce que tout, en me blessant, me plaît
Et que, bon ou mauvais, n'importe, vivre est beau!"

Do not take this for a dilettante affirmation; the poet does not lose his interest in the objects of life. Suffering and acting:

(1) Rodenbach, Verhaeren.
(2) Médailles d'Argis (La trace), p. 56.
(3) La Beauté de Vivre, p. 86.

THE NEW POETRY IN FRANCE.

he accepts all—even his ignorance of what it all means. The happiness of living can dispense with other happiness:

"Vivre est bon, vivre est beau, je le sens, je le crois,
Arrière ennui, chagrins, regrets, tourments passés,
Nécessité insensée et sans cause, autre triste;
Rien de cela n'est vrai, rien de tout cela n'existe,—
Il n'est rien de vrai que la joie ici bas." 

In this new attitude of the poet, poetry changed its note entirely.

II. The Language and Style.

In the evolution of the symbolists, the outlines of two opposite tendencies were, at the beginning, apparently visible. Some, like Verlaine and Laforgue, who set at defiance the Academy and the magisterial word of the Parnassians, and the literary cant of the bourgeois, approached poetical style to the inorganic fluidity of the spoken phrase, and gave free play in their poetry to all the incorrect and undignified slang, all the jocular and coarse vocabulary of the faubours and the taverns. But the others, Mallarmé, René Ghil, and Peladan, who looked with scorn at Coppée and Musset and despised the "langue omnibus de fait divers" in the novels of M. Zola, desired to separate the language of art from the rude spoken speech, and the aesthetic word from the every-day location. The point of coincidence between these two doctrines was the principle of the individuality of their style; the suppression of all stereotyped rules and traditions, the right of the artist to break through mere convention and public opinion (Verlaine) as through grammatical customs (Mallarmé); the liberty to compose for himself in his own way the style which alone expresses him, and expresses him exactly.

(1) Ibid, p. 162. See Viénot-Griffin, La Legende de Weland le forgeron, the meaning of which is identical.
(2) See the substantial and somewhat severe pages of Brunet, "Histoire de la litterature francaise," published under the direction of M. Peit de Jullieville, vol. viii. p. 791. 7. 8.
(3) Découpage première, Vers et prose, p. 187.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

Hence away with all scruples! All vocabularies are good,—those of the sciences, those of business, that of the street, the most modern slang, and the most Gothic archaisms,—the Latin, the Greek, or English' word. The poet will draw from all vocabularies, and outside of these he will forge the word which gives the dreamed of caress to his nerves.

These innovations were accepted more easily in the vocabulary than in syntax, because the syntax of a language reflects the century long habits of a people's thought, the very structure of its mind.

"War on rhetoric and peace to syntax," cried that caution revolutionist, Victor Hugo. The symbolists have overturned syntax. The place of the adjective, the construction of the verbs, use of moods, prepositions, and conjunctions, the order of the words,—everything was turned upside down in the venerable French grammar. The result was, first of all, an inexplicable rigmarole, over which it was easy to make merry.

The French language was the language of the intelligence; they wanted to make it the language of sentiment. "To paint and define," to trace exact images and precise ideas, to order the images and ideas according to the real relations of nature or the abstract relations of logic,—this was all the art of the classic writer. Romanticsists and the Parnassians had "painted" rather than "defined," but they had hardly encroached upon the intellectual and analytical phrasing and the eighteenth century had carried to perfection. The symbolists, on the contrary, have no care either for "painting" or "defining." They haughtily reject the picturesque precision of the Parnassians. "Abolished the pretention, aesthetically an error, notwithstanding it rules almost all the masterpieces of enveloping within the subtle leaves of the book anything else, for example, than the horror of the forest, the mute thunder scattered through the foliage; not the essential and dense wood of the trees!" That is, poetry should give up

(1) "Le grand ciel s'offre, révolue dans la nuit!" V одеже, Poesie et poétique, p. 171.
(2) Mallarmé, Divagation première, Vers et poésie, p. 185.
(3) The NEW POETRY IN FRANCE.

striking in rivalry, not merely with nature, but with painting and sculpture. Poetry has neither color nor relief, nor three dimensions, nor even two, nor one; it has only words, which are the tokens and modifiers of the soul. Consequently it may not imitate things; it invokes and suggests the impressions of things.

Thus, the poet will give preference to the sentimental rather than to the picturesque vocabulary, even in creating a landscape. He will transpose all the words of the soul to the things; he will substitute for their perceptible shape our affective relations to them:—

"Le son du cœur s'afflige vers le bois
D'une déclame on vient croire enchanter.

Tout il fait dans cet espace etat:
Oh se dorlote en paysage lent."

This procedure intimately mixes the soul with things; it flows naturally in the ways of feeling that I have defined above. Here is another rarer fashion, and, at first, most disconcerting: "Le vent bleu d'outremonts fait pâlpir les frênes." The two words are concrete and picturesque, but their alliance destroys their objectivity. It is the analysis of the mind which divides qualities among objects. The expression of the poet respects the synthetical integrity of sensation; he writes while placing himself at the centre of consciousness.

With picturesque precision departs intellectual precision. The business of the poet is to show the inner life, not to explain either the world or himself. Mallarmé desired that the poet should put away "even the temptation to explain himself"; that he should be an impartial spectator of the work of words in himself, abdicating "all personal direction" of the phrase. A pure work implies the "censorious" disappearance of the poet, who

(1) Laforgue has said, "Quel est le secret d'un loc melancolique?"
This is the foundation of the process of the symbolists and its simplest application.
(2) Verlaine, Regrets, Gloires remplies, t. 4, p. 178.
(3) V. Gollin in Poèmes et Poésies, p. 122.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

gives up the initiative to the words mobilized through the shock of their inequalities." This very arbitrary view presumes that the spontaneous association of words in minds be adequate to the changeable relations of the deep life of the soul, it led Mallarmé to the most unintelligible, and, at bottom, the least suggestive writing that ever existed. For the rest, this subtle and charming talker had not the creative gift.

The greater part of the symbolists have retained, more or less, that part of the intelligible which it is illogical to wish wholly annulled, when one works on words. But they have tried to replace the logical structure of the sentence by a purely affective order. They have placed in the background, behind veils of mist, the definite and common meaning of words, and especially do they utilize their unstable and vague values, these impressions and associations which envelop the solid core of the definition, these effects of physiognomy and of accent, which speak only to the mind and to the heart. Through the relations of grammar and of syntax, they no longer strive to translate the relations of ideas, of judgments; and of reasoning, but all that desultoriness of the coexisting and all that subtility of intercourse, which ceaselessly, in the mysterious harmony of life, discontent the logic of the mind. Read these bewildering lines of Verlaine, from the "Crepuscule du soir mystique," and you will find in them a precision of sentiment which has nothing to do with intellectual precision.

"Le Souvenir avec le Crepuscule
Rougeon et tremble l'ardent horizon
De l'Espérance en flamme qui recycle;
Et s'agrandit ainsi qu'une chanson
Mystérieuse en mainte cornetation.
—Daïkui, lys, tulipe, en renoncule.
S'élance autour d'un treillis, et cède
Parmi la multitude exubérante.
De parfums brûlés et brûlés, dont le poison
—Daïkui, lys, tulipe, en renoncule.
Noyant mon sein, mon âme, et ma raison,
Mele dans une immense piétation
Le souvenir avec le crepuscule."

THE NEW POETRY IN FRANCE.

This style would have made Voltaire roar with rage. And his time he would have been wrong. But it is true that this way of using the language and syntax is the very opposite of the way in which Voltaire used it.

III. The Verse.

The public would perhaps have become accustomed to not understanding; the unintelligible imposes respect. But they could not endure being given in place of poetry lines in which nothing was to be found of that which serves to distinguish poetry from prose. The symbolists removed all the signs by which an educated Frenchman might perceive that he was not reading prose. With some, indeed, there was a tendency to the "enjambement," the running of one line over into another, thus breaking the verse as Hugo would never have broken it. With them all, there was a multiplying of the hiatus: the regular caesura falls in the middle of a word or on a mute syllable; the rhyme, now exact, now entangled, and often abolished, but in revenge reappearing in the middle of the verse; no alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes; the masculine rhymes with the feminine, and the singulars with the plurals; isolated lines of eleven, thirteen, fourteen, and sixteen syllables reappear suddenly here and there, with lines which can not be reduced to any number of syllables on account of the caprice of the mute, which are sometimes counted and sometimes annulled. Under the names of polymorphous, liberated, or free verse, we have false verses, "deliciously and intentionally false," friends would say, or sophisticated prose paradoxically cut off into unequal lines.

And here, again, beneath the extravagancies, and in the contradictions, was followed the natural evolution of French versification, —a clear and legitimate evolution.

Ronsard, who had reinstated in honor the Alexandrine, had not perfected its technique, and had multiplied its irregularities before defining its regularity. Malherbe had fixed the simple form of the Alexandrine; he made it a rational basis for all future complications. He renders the rhythm sensible to the rudest
of the constant casura on the hemistich and by the strength of the rhyme emphasized by a pause. Thus the classic Alexandrines are solidly constructed on two principal rhythmical accents that always coincide with the tonic accents on the sixth and twelfth syllables, and are always strengthened by pauses of the meaning. Within the hemistiches, secondary accents that are purely intensive and without obligatory pause, and that are distributed according to the sense, lessen the monotonous oscillation of the rhythm, without effacing the principal accents.

But it has not been sufficiently noticed in studies of French versification that one of the most efficacious factors of poetical rhythm is the relation which unites the line to the phrase. Mèhèbre founded this relation on the agreement of the meaning and the rhythm, by the subdivision of the sense to the rhythm. I mean to say that the rhythmical design determines the grammatical design, and marks the place of the principal punctuation before hand. The meaning pauses at the casura, at the rhyme, and the phrase always finishes at the end of a line. Thus the poetic phrase of the classics was distributed through quatrains and distiches; each line, each hemistich even, containing a distinct element of syntax. Maynard, pushing this principle to its logical conclusion, desired that each line should be "detached," should offer a complete meaning; and the absolute harmony of the phrase and of the line was realized.

Neither Chénier nor the Romanticists themselves destroyed the classic type of the Alexandrine. They merely introduced into it discords which, to have their full effect, implied the persistence of the regular rhythm, with which they were destined to contrast. They practiced the discord of the phrase and of the line; they governed the middle accent by changeable accents which the sense indicates, and which strong punctuation could enforce; they weakened the final accent by removing all suspension of the meaning. The regular accents could always be visibly perceived in Chénier; less visibly but as readily in Hugo, who never consented to make the sixth syllable of the line fall on an mute, nor in the middle of a word. The irregular and troubled
Every vestige of classical rhythm has indeed disappeared; the accent may be placed everywhere; it need not be placed anywhere. There is nothing fixed but the rhyme which comes at the end of twelve syllables.

The rhyme, the only one of the traditional factors which remains, ought, it would seem, to gain in importance; but, on the contrary, just the opposite has happened. Verlaine despises the "rich" rhyme, "this half-penny jewel which rings hollow and false under the file." He ridicules the exact rhyme; he rhymes feminine terminations with masculine; he makes much use of assonance; and he stifles the rhyme both by a diminution of its fullness and of its exactitude; and by the encroachment on the next verse, which juggles it away. In reality, the rhyme loses nothing; it is only its function that changes.

Rhyme had always been regarded as a signal the function of which was to mark the end of the line. But is the line forced to bear external marks of its structure? Is it necessary that the hearer should explain to himself how the line is made? With Verlaine, no more visible mechanism; the rhythm is made to be felt, not analyzed, by the public. Consequently, the rhyme, dismissed from its duty of automatic warning, will once more become a musical note, whose recollections, modifications, and decorations illustrate a melodious design through the confused riches of the concatenation of sounds. Symbolism, while seeming to weaken rhyme, removes from it all heaviness and monotony, endows it with a manifold resonance that is delicate and light.

Rhyme no longer cuts a line; it is merged in the continuity of the rhythmical development. Neither pause nor accent, nor even rhyme, any longer necessarily signals the end of the line; the individual distinctness of the Alexandrine has vanished. The rhythmical unity is no longer the line or hemistich; it is the member of the sentence, enclosed in a portion of a line, or ran-

(1) Vieil-Guiffre, Poèmes et Poétiers, p. 53.

THE NEW POETRY IN FRANCE.

ning over two lines. The meaning determines every unity, and places the accents which give the line its music. So that while pushing the Romantic discord to its limits, Verlaine, and after him symbolism, re-established the harmony between the meaning and the rhythm which existed among the classics. But the relation has been reversed. Malherbe molded the sentence upon the metre, and inserted the grammatical pauses at the pause of the cadence; the present poetry molds the rhythm on the phrase, and articulates the line at the places where the meaning is held in suspense.

The transformation of the Alexandrine has naturally been extended to other verse, and to the strophe. The classics, who found it impracticable to realize small detached lines, grouped them in twos, threes, or fours, between necessary pauses. For example, the strophe of ten lines was broken by a quarten and two tripers. But, as far as possible, the running over of the line in each group was avoided; each line contained a distinct grammatical element. Neither the Romanticists nor the Parnasians have changed the structure of the strophe in any very striking way. Ideas and style aside, neither the "Mages," nor "Ibo," would have shocked Malherbe. Verlaine and the symbolists at first suppressed the necessary inner pauses in the strophe; later, they abolished the distinction of the strophe as well as of the lines; they ran them over and put them out of measure; they carried on the rhyme from one line into the next, from one strophe to another, in such a way that the meaning and the metre determined the accents and pauses. It was no longer the fixed structure of the strophe; it was the individual movement of the phrase which produced the rhythm. As in the case of the Alexandrine, merely the number of syllables and the rhyme remained, so of the strophe there remains only the number of lines and the distribution of the rhymes.

This was still too much. Every fixed form that imposed an exact rhythm was distasteful to the symbolists; so they strove to prevent the strophes in order to render them unrecognizable. Verlaine disguised his quarten by designing in them the rhymes.
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY.

of the terza rima.  Others add a fifteenth line to the sonnet. In the same way, they forsook the common and familiar verse for rare and unusual metres. They cultivated uneven lines, to which the ear was not accustomed; the lines of five and nine syllables did not carry in themselves harmonies already made. They tried lines of seven and thirteen syllables, which appeared like false Alexandrines. They braved the decrees of conservative theorists, who forbade, in the name of physiology, the existence of lines longer than the Alexandrine, and invented long lines of fourteen and sixteen syllables.

But it is difficult to prevent these long lines from seeming like a collection of shorter verses; to prevent all these new and rare lines of a precise number of syllables from having the appearance of being constructed with elements that have been always utilized,—with groups of three, four, five, or six syllables. Thus symbolism was to end forcibly in a "vers-librisme," in which all fixed structure of strophe or line should disappear.

The classics had known a kind of free verse in which the metrical diversity was liberated from the regularity of the strophe. But these lines of every measure, whose succession was governed by no definite laws, were the positive types of French verificiation, from the line of three syllables to the Alexandrine. La Fontaine, by his displacements of the caesura and running over of the verse, joined the metrical unities and created a continued rhythm in which the rhyme, now purely musical, served no longer to announce the end of the line. This free verse, once more successfully resumed in our day, is not the free verse of the symbolists.

2. Samain, Grégh.
3. Except the line of seven syllables which is used by the Classists and Romanticists.
5. Not, for example, Jacques Madeleine (of the school of Charles Mon-
6. d'La Fontaine et Molière.

THE NEW POETRY IN FRANCE. 461

To tell the truth, there are five or six theories of free verse among the symbolists, and as many models. But from the individual oppositions of construction and theory there has emerged a common and convergent effort towards the abolition of the numerical relations in the line. No determined number of lines makes the strophe, no determined number of syllables makes the line. The poet causes the rhyme to appear at the end of a group of words; he puts together by rhymes and assonance, or merely by typographical disposition, many of these groups of words, without troubling himself about the number of syllables in the group that he calls a line, or the number of lines in the "laisse," which takes the place of the strophe. The movement and the pauses of the meaning alone delineate to his ear the line and the "laisse."

There is nothing rash in constructing these undetermined "laisse:" the Romantics had already often preferred them to, or mingled them in, with their strophes. But free verse is truly the last step of the symbolist art. All the laws which based verification on mathematical relations have been successively rejected,—laws of periodicity of accents and pauses, laws of the composition of strophes, and laws of the measuring of syllables. A rhythmical "quadrillage" no longer determines the arrangement of the word, nor the movement of the soul which is written in this arrangement. There is no longer anything but the rhyme, which is caused to be heard where one wishes, as much as one wishes, and when one wishes.

But would not free verse be simply prose? The question is not answered.

I will remark merely that it is not sufficient to abolish theoretically the numerical harmonies in order to prevent them from making themselves felt in the real rhythms, nor is it sufficient not to observe them to keep them from existing. Why do the long lines of free verse so often give the effect of heavy prose, while the shorter ones move so many times in delicious melodies? It is because the ear perceives (I do not say analyses) numerical relations in the shorter lines, and does not perceive
those in the long ones. The free verse of the symbolists sings where, by the accents and pauses, a succession appears, as irregular as may be, of rhythmical elements of three, four, and six syllables, that oppose and compose one another; and it answers to the free verse of La Fontaine, just as the Alexandrine of Verlaine answers to the Alexandrine of Racine. Without M. Kahn’s being aware of it, number acts in his free verses, there where they have power of verse; even in prose, there is no rhythm without a numerical basis.

What the singing grace of the free verse (with M. de Régnier, for example, M. Verhaeren, or M. Viély-Griffin) teaches us, is that mathematics and life are two things. Life is a perpetual approximation. Neither the exact formulas of science are strictly realized in nature, nor does poetry need to represent the precise relations of number. Certain relations that are inexact, but are, nevertheless, perceived may, through their very inexactness, have a real charm in their fleeting and vague design.——

"Mo corsette est pleine, prênez
La grappe bourde qui déborde et saine,
Prênez le poire mèle, ou la chaisnique
Épignée qui court la cendre blanche,
Prênez les fruits du verger clair
Et les fruits aprés de la hêre,
Goutez en l’oeuvre et la chair,
Bonne et pure,
Savoureuse, arôme amer,
Délice ou pêche
Puis allez boire à la fontaine."

This exquisite couplet is built up around the numbers four, eight, and ten, with a certain indecision which has its grace, and

(1) De Régnier, Médailles d’Argile, p. 317. M. G. Kahn for
tills the running over of the line; the line is a "long word."

"The classic line was a "long word," of a measured length; the free line of M. Kahn is a "long word," of a length that varies ad libitum. With M. de Régnier, the consideration of the relations of number naturally upheld the location and the running over.

which results, from excess or defect in some measure, through the play of the e mute.

For here, indeed, is the solution of this terrible question of the e mute, over which such war has raged. There are only foreign ears for whom the e mute is actually mute, and for whom "Un Dieu qui nous aimant d’une amour infini," does not sound in any way different from "Un Dieu qui nous aimant d’un amour infini."

That current pronunciation often annuls the resonance of the e mute is of no consequence at all. There is no need of bringing forward through it the melodious qualities of words; but verse is, on the contrary, an instrument made to awaken all the sleeping music of the language.

The e mute is an important factor in the harmony of the line exactly because it alters it. The e mute introduces approximation in the numerical relation; by the feminine rhymes it lengthens the Alexandrine; counted in the middle of the line, it shortens this. It is never completely annulled, and it never attains the strength of a resonant syllable; it runs through a whole scale of delicate shades. Besides the sonorous syllables that are accented or not, it introduces a third uncertain and subtle value into the rhythm. Its rôle in our versification is analogous to that played in Latin and Greek prosody by the substitution of the feet, which alters the pure metre and gives the line a living freedom of movement. In certain places, one could not well count the e mute, just as the Middle Ages did not count it at the cæsura. But this would be on the condition of not thinking it is annulled, by not counting it. And this alteration would be purely theoretical; there would be nothing gained by it.

All this transformation of the technique of the line harmonizes with the aesthetics of the symbolists. When they strove to define and paint, the verse assisted the clearness of the idea, the intensity of the painting. It was the instrument of the condens- ing of the phrase, or the frame which gave it value. Even among the Romanticists, with the exception of Lamartine, and, where he wishes, Victor Hugo,—in whom everything is found—and
very evidently among the Parnassians, the verse has more color than music. Among the symbolists the musical form becomes the principal means of poetic expression. With them nearly everything is subordinate to rhythm, whose free and original line exactly portrays the undulation of the sentimental life. —

"De la musique avant toute chose * * *
Rien de plus cher que le chant nommé
Où l'indéfini au prêtre se joint * * *
De la musique encore et toujours!
Que ton vers soit la chose en solvant
Qu'on sent qui suit d'une fine en allée
Vers d'autres yeux et d'autres amours!"

This is the poetic art of symbolism. And, indeed, what can a poetry do that wishes to be neither body nor thought, but merely soul, that would contain neither picture of the universe nor knowledge of the mind, but the palpitation of life in the very heart of the age, what can it do, if not create music and music alone.

Symbolism has reacted against the Parnassian school by drawing near again to Romanticism; but the Parnassians have obliged it to correct Romanticism. By occasionally brutally opposing itself to the two great forms of the poetry of the nineteenth century, it has continued these forms, thus realizing the vital condition of revolution, which is to recapitulate the past that it aspires to destroy. Symbolism has prepared the instrument for the twentieth century which will be able to create great and worthy poetry, and different from that of the Romantic and Parnassian schools.

Is this saying that the symbolist art will have driven out the technique and all the anterior traditions of French poetry?

If the symbolists believed this in the first era of their ambition, the more eminent among them no longer claim this to-day.

Symbolism has recalled poetry to its definition, which is to be the emanation of a soul, it has recalled verse, too, to its function, which is to be the song of the soul. By questioning all French versification, it has put the old materials to the test.

(1) Véronique, edits et extraits, III, p. 311.

**THE NEW POETRY IN FRANCE.**

Certain principles of this versification have emerged all the stronger for the trial; but some sacred and ancient rules were found to be without a true aesthetic basis. The exclusion of the hiatus and the half-assonance, the refusal to allow singulars to rhyme with plurals, the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, with other chance customs, can no longer tyrannize over the artist. Technique is free; that is, technique is subjected only to the idea; and the means employed to realize poetry will be judged only by their effects.

The symbol and the free line enrich art, but the symbol is not the only form of poetry; and the free verse is the limit of the verse, to which it sometimes extends, but where it will not be able to rest. Neither the inspiration nor composition of Romanticism and of Parnassian art are abolished for the temperaments that are Romantic and Parnassian. Beside the symbolist and musical poetry, a picturesque and realist poetry, and another intellectual and thoughtful, may exist, and all these may resolve themselves into manifold combinations. Already in recent collections of verses symbolism is more tempered. With M. de Régnier, sculptor and painter, who, now and then goes, hand in hand with M. de Heredia, with M. Grégh, man of analysis and philosophy, who bears some resemblance to Sully Prudhomme, the new poetry broadly opens up to the world of the body and the intellectual world; sensation is exteriorized even to the object; sentiment is illuminated even to the idea.

A suppleness in the language and in the line will be left from symbolism, a deepening of the conditions of art and of poetry, a refinement of the musical sense, an over-excitement of the meaning of life, by which even the poets who will reject the symbol and free verse will profit, and will pass it by only at their own cost.

And to the symbolists, finally, is due the fact that poetry has become once more the dominating form of literature, the one that at present influences the other artistic forms, the novel and the drama.

(1) Les Médailles d'argile, La Baute de vie. M. Grégh, author of the "Relais de vie," apparently desires to hold himself aloof from symbolism, but he is more the less the product of this movement.