

A PAGE OF VERSE

SEA BURIAL

BY W. R. TITTERTON

[*New Witness*]

HERE, where life began for them,
You will find their grave.
These that knew no measure
Wait the slow tide's pleasure,
Dreaming how it ran for them,
And the big winds drave.

O'er the leaping battlement
Savage lanterns shone.
'Sword shall never falter
While on that high altar
Bides the Devil's sacrament.'
Suddenly 't is gone.

Gone the roaring buccaneer,
Drum and fife atune.
Ne'er, with linstock lighted,
Mariner affrighted
Sees the Devil's luck anear
Black across the moon.

Drowsy drabs and vanities
Hear no more the gun,
Morgan's, Kidd's, or Teach's,
Wake the whitening beaches
Stale with night's profanities
Crawling in the sun.

Fugitive and furious
Where the long day drones
Roared and flamed their glory.
Who 's to tell the story?
Polypi incurious
Drift above their bones.

Isles of lust imperial,
Drunkenness obscene,
Have you aught to tell us?
Nay! for time is jealous,
Obdurate and jealous.
Naught but shards funereal
Blister in the green —

Musket, pike, and bombard, o'er-
Whelmed. Time-tattered spars.
Rotten old rum-puncheons,

Rusting, splintered truncheons —
Here nor crew nor commodore
Vomit to the stars.

Till he leaneth over
With his landing net,
He, that angel dreadful,
They shall rest forgetful,
Drab and bully rover.

Fame's phantasmagorial
Harlot leaves behind
Death — that was her dower,
Night — that reaped the flower.
Earth's complete memorial,
Tongueless, dumb, and blind.

SILENCE

BY R. L. MÉGROZ

[*To-Day*]

URGE me not into speech,
Seeking those hidden things
Which only a dream can reach
Upon dark wings.

When as a leaf-hid bird
Trilling a lonely song
Through shadowy leaves half-heard
As a whispering throng,

In me from leaf-dark deep
Thick-cloaked in dreams Love's voice
Sings from a murmurous sleep
One word — Rejoice.

THE NONCONFORMIST

BY L. A. G. STRONG

[*Chapbook*]

EBENEZER the Nonconformist,
With a wonderful talent for praise,
Goes past the pub to the chapel
Not at all humbly.

He sees himself standing in Heaven,
With a severely plain halo,
Blatantly bellowing praises
Into the ear of the Lord.

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

THE SHELLEY CENTENARY

'I HAVE heard a distinguished living poet declare his opinion that, out of all the human race, only Shelley may be named in the same breath with Christ.' This statement, made by Mr. Edward Shanks in his article on Shelley in the June issue of the London *Mercury*, shows the spirit in which the centenary of that great poet is being observed. Indeed, it is as a prophet, a revolutionist, an idealist, that Shelley is chiefly regarded. Doubtless his exquisite lyrics are so familiar to everyone that praise of them is considered unnecessary. Almost religious homage, together with a few slightly known facts about his life, are the chief contents of all the critical panegyrics.

Only in the *Mercure de France* is the unfortunate affair with Harriet Westbrook given a complete airing. M. André Fontainas lays the blame for the unfortunate marriage entirely at the door of Harriet's older sister, who forced the match upon her. 'Was it necessary,' asks M. Fontainas, 'for the older sister of Harriet, Miss Eliza Westbrook, promptly to conceive vast plans and persuade a child of sixteen that Shelley loved her and that she must love him equally in return?' M. Fontainas sympathizes with Shelley's revolutionary ideas as to the drawbacks of the married state, and when the older sister tried to manage Shelley's domestic affairs, his elopement with the woman he really loved appears quite excusable. M. Fontainas sums up his impressions of Shelley as follows: 'A marvelous artist of words, of language, of rhythm, of imagery; an inspired conjuror with the most subtle feelings and their incalculable inter-

weavings; an enchanting master of rare and delicate expression.'

And English praise is as great, if not so lyrical. Matthew Arnold's myth of 'the ineffectual angel' is exploded by all hands. 'The genius of England, caught up into a heaven, where its inmost impulses are liberated and made articulate — that is Shelley,' exclaims C. H. Herford in the July *Poetry Review*; and in the same issue of the magazine Irene G. A. Holloway says, 'In the midst of the great imaginative poets, Shelley stands forth particularly as the poet of the ideal; in that idealism is the very woof of which his poetry is woven.' Mr. Clutton-Brock, in the Literary Supplement of the *Times*, is less fulsome, though no less appreciative. He finds the Shelley type frequent and irritating unless, as in the unique case of Shelley himself, redeemed by poetic genius. He goes on to say, 'We give thanks to him more than to any other poet; for always we long to believe in those Platonic ideas of which the philosophers talk — in a reality of righteousness and truth and beauty. That is the religious desire of mankind, but it is thwarted by those who profess to satisfy it.' But it is the opinion of Mr. Brock that this ideal world, however necessary, is always infinitely remote.

Not so Mr. Gilbert Thomas in the *Bookman*; he proclaims the reality of Shelley's prophecy to a weary world. 'It is of Shelley as a prophet that we most naturally think at this time.' Maintaining that Shelley has not yet received his full meed of recognition for the intellectual and prophetic element in his work, Mr. Thomas continues,