

## A PAGE OF VERSE

### IN THE ELIZABETHAN MANNER

BY C. H. O. SCAIFE

[*Oxford Poetry*]

SAY, fond lover, canst thou prove  
Ought that is not bad of Love?  
If thou canst  
I will again  
Suffer that delightful pain;  
Though I think thou canst not say  
Love is good in any way.

### THE FOUNTAIN IN THE PINE FOREST

BY EDWARD SHANKS

[*Spectator*]

FAR off among those woods it rises  
More than a thousand miles from here:  
Some other eye it now surprises,  
Its rustling soothes another ear.

The woods each side were black and  
silent,

The road was dusty and blinding  
white:

Down it as down a narrow funnel  
Came in full stream the noonday  
light.

The cart swayed over stone and rut:  
Huddled in hot, unhappy doze,  
I drowsed along with eyes half shut,  
Desiring only the journey's close.

But suddenly we lurched and turned  
And, round the corner, bright and thin  
And cool in the sullen trees, there  
burned  
That fountain! And my breath drew  
in.

I woke and spoke, hushed in surprise:  
They did not hear. The cart went on.  
Still the glare dazzled in our eyes,  
The wheels ground harsh on rut and  
stone.

Again we lurched and turned a corner.  
Laughing, the driver shook his rein  
And shouted something that went by  
me:  
I sank in my hot sleep again.

Far off among those woods it rises  
More than a thousand miles from  
here:  
Some other eye it now surprises,  
Its rustling soothes another ear.

How far away in time and distance  
Is that bright fountain left behind!  
Day after day the glimmering image  
Fades in the forests of the mind.

### THE CHILDLESS WOMAN

BY KATHARINE TYNAN

[*Evensong*]

THE children she had missed  
That never yet had birth,  
Unwarmed, unfed, unknissed,  
Soured all her joy of earth.  
But when her day was done  
And none was desolate,  
Dusty and all alone,  
She knocked at Heaven's gate.  
Birds from a parapet  
Called to her clear and shrill;  
With 'Mother! Mother!' so wild and  
sweet,  
And they were never still.  
They were no birds at all,  
But children small and bright.

\* \* \* \*

The heart in her side  
Forgot the ancient wrong:  
When 'Mother! Mother! Mother!' they  
cried,  
It soared like a bird's song.

# LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

## SIR SIDNEY COLVIN IN STEVENSON'S DEFENSE

AN article on 'The Stevenson Myth' by Mr. George S. Hellman in the December *Century* has roused commotion in literary England; and Sir Sidney Colvin — Stevenson's intimate and life-long friend, who began, but never finished, his biography — contributes to the London *Sunday Times* an indignant rebuttal.

Mr. Hellman's original article was based on early and for the most part unpublished Stevenson manuscripts, including poems to his early loves. Among its chief assertions were these:

That Stevenson in his early days had several more or less illicit love affairs, notice of which has been largely suppressed.

That one of these may have something to do with his trip abroad in 1873, which has always been supposed to have been wholly due to his ill health.

That Mrs. Stevenson — constituting herself both literary censor and custodian of her husband's reputation as an author — took advantage of his illness to throw into the fire the manuscript of a novel dealing with the life of a streetwalker.

That Sir Sidney did not complete the official biography which he began 'despite the fact that Stevenson himself had expressed the hope that this dearest of his friends would be his editor and biographer.'

That Mrs. Stevenson was responsible for this.

That Sir Sidney and several other friends were opposed to Mrs. Stevenson's creating a Stevenson myth by suppressing important facts.

That the second and maturer Stevenson was never wholly comprehensible to W. E. Henley, the friend of his earlier days.

Mr. Hellman's article sets to boiling a discussion of the beloved writer's early days which has long been simmering. One, at least, of his state-

ments has been bluntly denied by Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, — Stevenson's stepson; once his collaborator, and long a member of his household, — who is now in London supervising Mr. Arthur Bouchier's production of *Treasure Island*. Mr. Osbourne denied that his mother ever burned any manuscript dealing with the life of a streetwalker, saying that he had never heard of such a thing and believed it quite untrue. The denial is not entirely convincing, to be sure, for such an incident might readily have been concealed; but it is hard to believe that Mr. Osbourne would not at least have known of such a manuscript's existence, and that, knowing, he would not have been puzzled by its disappearance — if it ever had disappeared.

Sir Sidney's refutation is brief but vigorous:

'The false inferences drawn from gratuitous assumptions in the article would take me more time to refute than I can well spare. It is merely untrue to say or suggest that I gave up writing the Life because the widow would not have given me a free hand — I gave it up simply because I lacked health and leisure to complete the task in any reasonable time.

'The denial in the article of the widow's statement that verse was his pastime — as contrasted with his serious art and craft of prose — is equally unfortunate.

'He expressed himself to himself in verse with little or none of the scrupulous art and finish that he used in prose; to the last he sent me those of his verses which he wished to be printed, and I am convinced that he did *not* intend for publication most of the verses printed