

He asks why I perch in the jade green hills.
I smile and do not answer. My heart is comfortable
and at peace.
Fallen peach flowers spread out widely, widely, over
the water.
It is another earth and sky, not the world of man.

The preoccupations of Chinese poetry testify always to this greater simplicity, to the quieter beauty of the civilization of which it is an expression. It is not of the crowded hours of glorious life the Tang poets loved to sing. Friendship, nostalgia, the poignancy of spring and autumn moods, a wife's longing for an absent husband, or—if it is that "thistledown in the wind," Li Tai-po singing—the delights of a congenial group of scholars with a pot of wine among flowers. Such themes occupy them. They write their

. . . characters on pure white silk,
They are like the exquisite clouds dropped from heaven.

These men of genius had each their turn at court, too. Ming Huang, "Brilliant Emperor," and Yang Kuei-fei, most lovely of imperial concubines, are immortalized by the poets who were their friends and associates. But even there—as Tao Yuan-ming sings for all of them in *Once More Fields and Gardens*:

The caged bird longs for the fluttering of the high leaves,
The fish in the garden pool languishes for the whirled
water
Of meeting streams.

I have come back to the square enclosures of my fields,
And to my walled garden with its quiet paths.

There is no dust or clatter
In the courtyard before my house.
My private rooms are quiet
And calm with the leisure of moonlight through an
open door.

Mrs. Ayscough's *Introduction* gives, in a way which reveals her intimate touch with Chinese sources, the backgrounds of their poetry—historical, geographical, social and legendary. There is even a plan of a great Chinese house that the reader may understand his poets' references to "orchid doors," "golden apartments," or "eastern flower hall." A descriptive list introduces us to those glorious and grotesque creatures which inhabit the Chinese poetic imagination, the crested love pheasant, green dragons and white, and the marvelous paired-winged bird of love. All this is set down with the loving and meticulous care of one whom Old China has enthralled. Once or twice in statements regarding the poetical aptitude of the Chinese and aspects of their land, one questions whether Mrs. Ayscough reveals a slight tendency to idealization. The notes are very satisfactory—if only the story of Hsi Hsih, the most famous of Soochow beauties, had been included! But they tell of the lovely and unbelievably virtuous Lady Chao, of the Peach Blossom Fountain, Su Wu and the wild goose letter and many others which make *Fir Flower Tablets* a veritable Chinese Repository as well as a real book of Chinese poetry.

Miss Lowell's versions are in most cases admirable. That she can vie with the Chinese themselves in making word pictures of their own kind, she has shown before this. Indeed, one is occasionally a little puzzled at a dazzling facet of some brilliant phrase—to know whether its par-

ticular glitter is Lowell, or Tang. But even if there be, ever so rarely, a little gilding of refined gold, there is the precious stuff underneath. For bringing it out and giving it to us in beautiful form the collaborators are to be congratulated. It is an achievement worthy of scholar and of poet.

OLIVIA PRICE.

An Enchanting Tale

The Children Who Followed The Piper, by Padraic Colum, with Illustrations by Dugald Stewart Walker. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.75.

YOU know what happened to all the rats that followed the Pied Piper: squealing and squeaking they fell into the river and were drowned. But what about all the little children who ran after the Piper, laughing and dancing, right through the very side of the mountain? There was Philomena and Simple Simon and Meg, the ragpicker's daughter, and John-Jump-Up and Mary-Quite-Contrary, and Valentine and John Ball with his horse Baldwin who could talk, and beautiful Goldenhood. What did they find when they came to the wood of Daylightgone, and the Dark Forest, and who was the Pied Piper, anyway?

Mr. Padraic Colum has written another entrancing story for children. Very skilfully he has contrived to bring into his dramatis personae many of the little people famed in fairy tale, and some of the intriguing adventures they come upon have long been dear to the hearts of children. But much that happens you have never heard of before, and it is really very exciting, and lots of fun. For my part, I hated to leave this land of perpetual twilight, with one star dangling in the sky, and all sorts of good people to watch over you and protect you as you sleep after a day full of unguessed things.

The illustrations by Mr. Stewart Walker are exquisite. He and Mr. Colum are to be congratulated on the book they have composed.

E. S.

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