

Current Poetry

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SANCTUARY

BY KENDALL BANNING

Not when your banners sweep the sky
And lips of friends your feats acclaim,
Nor when gay youth goes riding by
With pulse astir and eyes aflame;
Nor when your laughter echoes through
The halls of revelry, and men
Accord you praise, my dear, do you
Have any need of me.

But when
The garlands wither, and the rust
Has silenced lutes that strummed the dance,
And golden dreams have turned to dust
Beneath the chariot wheels of chance;
When sorrow sets upon your eyes
The trace of frustrate hopes, and when
The lonely heart, in longing, cries
Out through the night—

Come to me then!
—Wings (New York)

I WILL LEAVE THIS HOUSE

BY JOSEPH AUSLANDER

I will leave this house, being tired of this
house
And too much talk;
I will walk down to the sea where the wind
blows
The waves to chalk,
And the sand scratches like a silver
mouse.
I will leave everything here and walk.

I do not know why grass like golden leather
Whipped into strings
Should quiet the heart, or why this autumn
weather,
This salt that stings
My eyes and eyelids should heal me alto-
gether—

I do not know the reason for such things.

I only know that here are walls that harden
The eyes and brain;
I only know words hiss and hurt and
pardon—

Only to hurt again;
And that the sea is like Death's emerald
garden

Dripping with silver wind and silver rain.
—Harper's Magazine

WICKLOW TINKER GIRL

BY W. M. LETTS

There was a tinker girl I met,
The March wind blew her hair.
She looked at me, she laughed at me
That day at Aughrim Fair.
She had no shawl about her head
That was so bright and squirrel-red,
But what had I to say to one
Whose dusty feet were bare?

The tinker girl she passed me by
One day I walked through 'Clash
The spring itself was in her face,
But why should I be rash?
A farmer's son must look for gold,
Cattle and wives are bought and sold,
Put tinker girls they beg and steal
From fools that have the cash.

I saw the tinker girl again.
She travelled through Greenan,
From door to door she hawked her wares,
Tin mug and jug and can.
The river there runs golden brown,
So like her eyes your heart would drown
While looking in them till she said,
"You're staring hard, young man!"

I followed her to Glenmalure,
When all the whins were gold,
And tho the sun was on the grass
The April wind blew cold.
The tinker girl still laughs at men.
She left me lonely in the glen.
She stole my watch, she stole my youth,
And left me wise and old.

—Yale Review

Light one from another?

Who cares!



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Among the Outstanding Books of the Week

South of the Sun. By Russell Owen. (New York: The John Day Company; \$2.50.)

Some of the rumors long whispered about the first Byrd expedition to Antarctica break into print in Russell Owen's long-delayed diary of his experiences, "South of the Sun."



Brabazon, New York

Russell Owen

Owen, an experienced reporter, went south as the expedition's official historian, and sent the syndicated—and also, as we now learn, carefully censored—radio dispatches from Little America. But when he returned, in 1929, his expected book did not appear. Instead, we had first, Commander Byrd's parade account of the expedition, with its careful allotment of a few words of well-chosen praise to each member of the party, and criticism of none, a report as carefully judicious as a diplomatic dispatch. Then came Laurence Gould's "Cold," in which the geologist told, for popular readers, of the efforts of the scientists. Now comes Russell Owen's human story. It, too, had its evidently diplomatic moments; the author himself speaks of "self-imposed restraint"; but the book sheds new light and has vivid pages. It wasn't all fun, heroism, and triumph in the Antarctic.

"Why, they look just like ordinary men," a woman watcher said when the boys were loading the *City of New York*.

"What does she expect, wings?" asked one of the dead-tired adventurers.

The ship was overloaded; the unpaid amateur sailors were pretty bad; the famous system was not quite so systematic as appeared in Mr. Owen's contemporary radio reports. Some of the men who could not find room to stretch out at night on board the ship were annoyed at another who had found room for his evening clothes and his harp. Snow-glasses were forgotten until they reached New Zealand; there were no wooden spoons for use on the trail, where metal spoons froze to the mouth. The trail-cookers didn't work; and the camp-stoves, in which soft coal was burned, had been built for hard coal. And the perfect commander appears in Mr. Owen's story, which is reported to have suffered a little censorship itself, as a nervous, jittery chief, who once dived into the water in hasty gallantry when what was needed was his supervision of the launching of a life-boat; his dive meant only that he, too, had to be rescued.

Every message sent across the ether was the subject of most careful consideration. When the Fairchild plane was grounded, out of gasoline, a few hundred miles from camp, Mr. Owen had difficulty in explaining it.

The meteorologists did not want it said that the shortage of gasoline was due to unexpected head winds; that would reflect on their forecasts. Owen first wrote that the trouble was due to a "gas leak." That angered the mechanic who had gone over the plane. Finally he made it "causes unknown," which was the truth.

It was dirty and lonely and also not lonely enough in Little America. The men were crowded together and got on each other's nerves. Mr. Owen calls men only by their titles, but his highest praise for steady nerves and calm efficiency goes to Bernt Balchen, the chief pilot, to Doctor Gould, the geologist, and to the expedition's sailmaker, a Norwegian jack-of-all-trades, who serenely carved ship's models in the polar night. Most of the adventurers, huddled in their dark, smoky cabins, lived at the lowest-common-denominator level of men in herds. Their language was loud and dirty. Sometimes it got on Owen's nerves.

Sometimes the boys mitigated the monotony by tunneling through the snow and tapping the fifty gallons of alcohol "for photographic purposes," or the medical supplies, and concocting effectively intoxicating, if tasteless, beverages. Sometimes the results came close to being murderous. There was a particularly large celebration upon the anniversary of the commander's flight over the North Pole.

But there was always in the background a consciousness that the expedition, camping so almost comfortably in the Antarctic night, was making history. Mr. Owen gives rapturous descriptions of the mighty ice-barrier, of the pressure ridges, of the dignified, fearless penguins, of the view of the lonely, snowy continent from the air.

And for all his annoyances his final verdict is in agreement with the doctor, who said that the more he got to know men, the better he liked them.

Worth Reading

Red Heifer. By F. D. Davison. (New York: Coward-McCann; \$2.) The biography of an Australian cow; a new addition to the all-too-short list of animal classics.

Fire on the Andes. By Carleton Beals. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company; \$3.) The story of Peru, once the home of America's greatest civilization, a country due, in Mr. Beals's view, for another explosion.

The Curse of Bigness. By Louis D. Brandeis, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. (New York: The Viking Press; \$3.) Essays and addresses of a lifetime of consistent critical optimism.

Liquor Claims and National Wealth. By Adol. A. Berle, Jr., and Victoria J. Pederson. (New York: The Macmillan Company; \$2.50.) An original, profound and statesmanlike study of the effect upon modern society of excessive concentration upon "liquid" forms of wealth, arguing that this makes for a fragile social structure.

All Around the Town. By Herbert Asbury. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf; \$2.50.) About fantastic characters who used to roam the sidewalks of New York.