

A PAGE OF VERSE

TO A KETTLE

BY BARBARA GREGORY

[*English Review*]

SING!
Pretty thing!
I love your gleaming knob
As you simmer on the hob,
Pretty thing!
Sing!

Steam!
Little dream!
Be quick, my pet. Ah! see,
I wait to make the tea!
Little dream!
Steam!

Quick!
Another stick
May speed you up a bit,
And make you boil and spit.
Another stick!
Quick!

Shoot!
Little brute!
Out vapor's steaming hope,
And bubbles like to soap.
Little brute!
Shoot!

OH!
I hate you so!
Why can you never boil?
In vain seems all my toil!
I hate you so!
OH!

D——n!
Devil's dram!
Too full the thing was filled,
The water all is spilled!
Devil's dram!
D——n!

THIS POET AND THAT POET

BY HUMBERT WOLFE

[*Chapbook*]

Said this poet to that poet
'What do you lack?'
Said that poet to this poet
'Friend, scratch my back!'

Said this poet to that poet
'What if I do?'
Said that poet to this poet
'I will scratch you.'

OVERHEARD ON A SALT MARSH

BY HAROLD MONRO

[*Rhyme Sheet*]

Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?
Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare
at them?
Give them me.

No.
Give them me. Give them me. No.

Then I will howl all night in the reeds,
Lie in the mud and howl for them.

Goblin, why do you love them so?

They are better than stars or water,
Better than voices of winds that sing,
Better than any man's fair daughter,
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.

Hush, I stole them out of the moon.

Give me your beads, I want them. No.

I will lie and howl in a deep lagoon
For your green glass beads, I love them
so.

Give them me. Give them. No.

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

AN UNPUBLISHED STORY BY BALZAC

THE manuscript of a new story by Balzac, the bare existence of which has never been suspected, turned up a few weeks ago at an auction sale in an unpretentious second-hand shop in Paris, and has fallen into the hands of the French book-collector, Georges-Emmanuel Lang, who appears to have learned by a lucky chance of its existence before any of his fellow collectors got on the trail. The story — a *nouvelle* of the customary dimensions — is entitled *Les Fantaisies de la Gina*. The manuscript is so beautifully bound in hand-tooled leather that it seems curious its value was not suspected by the dealer; but — though M. Lang is discreetly reticent as to what he paid — the greatest Balzac 'find' of recent years was apparently picked up for a song, in the way every good collector dreams of, even though he usually acquires his treasures only by enriching some too-knowing dealer.

On the violet moroccan leather of the binding, tooled in gold, are the initials 'S. G.,' which are explained by an inscription in Balzac's hand on the manuscript itself, *Donné à Mlle. Sophie Grèvedon par son très humble serviteur: de Balzac*. The manuscript itself is badly blotted and in some places illegible, though only a few phrases here and there have permanently defied the endeavors of the decipherer. Balzac's biographers and the editors of his collected works seem alike to have missed the story, for it does not appear in any of the supposedly complete editions, and no reference to the story itself or to the circumstances of its composition are known.

Manuscript in hand, however, M.

Lang appealed to M. Marcel Bouteron, an enthusiastic devotee of Balzac, deeply learned in all that touches the life of the writer, his works, and his associations. M. Bouteron's reply was reassuring. No doubts exist in his mind as to the authenticity of the manuscript, and from his intimate knowledge of Balzac's travels in Italy and the friendships he made there, he has little difficulty in constructing a theory which accounts both for the inspiration of the story and the motives that led to its eventual suppression. And the owner, M. Lang, in his turn has devised a very plausible explanation for Balzac's making a present of his manuscript to Mlle. Grèvedon. The gift needs explanation because, as M. Lang observes, Balzac 'was n't very ready to make presents of his manuscripts.'

We may quote from M. Bouteron's letter to M. Lang: —

One thing is perfectly evident, my dear fellow. The manuscript of 'La Gina' is written by Balzac and is in Balzac's handwriting from one end to the other. . . .

The manuscript of 'La Gina,' as you say, bears no date. Is it possible to assign one? A definite date would be difficult, but I will venture on a probable approximation of it. Your story takes place in Milan, in the best society of the city, and there are details that Balzac could not have invented. He clearly noted them on the spot, after his usual custom. The idea of 'La Gina' came to him during a trip to Milan, just as *Illusions perdues* came after Angoulême, *Modeste Mignon* after Le Havre, *Eugénie Grandet* after Saumur, and so forth. You know as well as I do that Balzac always found inspiration in the actual, and oftenest in things that he had seen himself. 'La Gina' could only have been composed after a trip to Milan.