# POETRY FOR THE PEOPLE

## THE ETERNAL PRESENCE.

In the mystic spread of dawn,
In sunset's golden hour,
In purpling shades of twilight
We see His wondrous power.

In gently falling raindrops,
In the snows that whiten at will,
In sunshine and in shadow
The unseen presence thrills!

In the murmuring of the brooklet,
In the tide wave of the sea
I hear the Voice of Ages
That sayest "Peace unto Thee."

Oh that we could glimpse the heavens
And see this holy face,
To us would be given full measure
Of His unbounded grace!

But we must press on with courage,
Run with patience the race
Until the city, celestial,
Shall forever be our resting place.

LILLIAN F. BROOKS,
144 West 134th St.

## AN AFRICAN'S LAMENT

O peaceful village of my lowly birth
Where romance hymns unceasing odes of mirth,
I love to fling my memory to the days
When I traversed thy silent sundry ways.
Never in life shall I forget thy fields,
Thy weed-strewn ponds and peaceful flowing rills,
The many happy moments spent in glee
Beneath thy palm trees when the breeze was free.
The beauty of thy hillsides 'midst the cool,
Thy pride—the wierd church, the rustic school;
The tuneful echo and harmonious knell
Of thy constraining wary Sabbath bell
Ringing for service and for praise divine
And flattered by the sun's resplendant line.
The preacher's sermon, rich in thoughts of grace,
Delivered with a bland and earnest race,
The humming birds that teased thy dashing flowers,
The chirping birds that flit around thy bowers,
The crowing of thy cocks ere dawn of day,
The plodding of thy toilers on their way,
The faithful well that in the time of drought
Clear water from her springing store gave out,
The merry throng that graced thy great white wall
To greet the evening's shadows as they fall—
O village of my heart, how oft I yearn
With constant aching ardor to return
And, dazed in fondest melancholy, greet
Thy graphic view, and friends and kindred meet.
What streams of joy would inundate my mind,
What burning tears would my glad eyes condign,
What silken dreams, what majesty of thought
Would bring me laurels to array my path,
How would I cycle swiftly through the street
And pedal freely with vivacious feet,
Enjoy the splendor of the splendant night
With reinstated and with moved delight.
But I thy cherished yearnings must reprove
And to imagination's brink must rove.
From thee I am parted by the sapphire sea,
From thee—the one dear place on earth to me—
Where nature breathes a breath of simple ease,
Hyperion decks the flowers and the trees.
But hark! I hear a voice, I see a hand,
It beckons me to come and join thy band,
My fears are gone, and pride has stirred my mind;
Thou are redeemed and earth true joy shall find.
While life shall last my thoughts on thee will rest,
And none can make thee absent from my breast.

CHARLES H. D. ESTE,
U. N. I. A. Literary Club, Montreal.

## REFLECTIONS OF A SLAVE.
(Selection IV.)

### FORGIVENESS.

When white men were in danger here,
And menaced by the foe,
I fought with patriotic zeal
To lay the tyrant low.

I left the South, the graves I decked
Each year, to cross the sea,
And fought for those who have enslaved
My race and oppressed me.

They little knew the heartaches—
And not their race should be op-

The life of every slave,
I sailed across the wave.

Nor thought of medal; but I struck
As only can a slave!

Around me fell the dying hosts—
I only thought of right.
I threw my mantle o'er a form
All bleeding that was white.

For slaves are hardy and the man
That has lived as one free,
Would perish in the fire and din
That thundered around me.

Aye! Chains have bound my kin and sires,
But they may never bind
The nobleness that is aroused
When pity sways the mind!

ETHEL TREWDUNLAP
3233 Wentworth avenue, Chicago, Ill.
March 14, 1921

## REFLECTIONS OF A SLAVE
(Selection V.)

### THE LAST HOPE.

A voyage made long ago—
Chains that bound three hundred years
Toiling where cotton flowers blow—
Heartaches and lashes and tears.

Seeking, yet finding not
The freedom my forefathers lost—
The child of a race oppressed
I'm scorned where e're I am tossed.

I am paying the debt that hate
And prejudice heaped on me.
It is vain to sever my bonds
When my soul may not be free!

Under the Northern skies,
The curse preceding a slave
Follows me like the wind
Traverses the trend of a wave.

Canada beckons to me—
A cold voice whispers "beware"!
The north wind off of its sea
Murmurs "captive, take care!"

My heart goes back to the South
That I have left behind;
But torches redden its skies,
And madden my heart and mind.

They brought my sires o'er the sea,
Bound with the captive's chain,
And ocean winds whisper to me,
"Return, drifting slave, again!"

Must I sail over the sea
And leave blasted hopes behind,
To find hearts that may love me,
And hear a voice that is kind?

ETHEL TREWDUNLAP.
3233 Wentworth avenue, Chicago, Ill.
March 14, 1921.

## LIBERTY OUR WAR CRY.

Liberty shall our war cry be,
Let us sound it day by day;
We behold our guiding star
Shining bright in yonder sky.

Day by day we ask for blessings
From our dear Redeemer's hand;
Help us, Lord, we are trying
That we gain our promised land.

We are drawing near the goal,
We are marching hand in hand,
Smiling onward as we go
To our dear old fatherland.

When we reach that sunny shore
We shall then no longer be
Slaves and bondmen as of yore,
But a race all nations fear.

—R. C. JAMES.
Puerto Barrios.

## DIVISION 148, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

United in a cause for which brave men die,
Not stopping in their purpose till the new land they spy;
In search of freedom, the cost ready to pay,
And the world seems larger as our folks sailed away.

Usurpers of our homeland, with their hearts of burnished gold,
Never for once thought of God, or their crimes, to be told;
Increase our vision, O! God. Guide us lest we stray
Away from our standard and the U. N. I. A.

Unseen, may Thou guide us to a home of pure delight,
Near the sands of Carthage, Ethiopia's night;
Instill within our hearts reverence for the day—
Among the pyramids we sing of the U. N. I. A.

LUCIUS C. LENAN-LEHMAN,
Luco C. Lenanji al Muliah Man of Islam.
Khartoum, East Soudan.

## "THE BLACK MAN'S BURDEN."

By T. THOMAS FORTUNE.

(This poem will appear in the April number of the Negro Outlook, a monthly magazine, published at Memphis, Tenn.)

Poet.—Rudyard Kipling, an Englishman born and reared in India, endeavored to prove in "The White Man's Burden," a poem of great subtlety and misleading tendency, that the black man has always been a drain upon the white man's strength and resources, although the black man has (through the white man's agency) in the Americas and the West Indies, been the source of the richest wealth of the white people. Many of the white people believe that Kipling's poem is true, and that the black man has been a curse to the white man. Kipling's poem is a libel on the black man, and is a misrepresentation of the facts. The black man has been a curse to himself, and to no one else. He has been the victim of the white man's cupidity and greed, and has been robbed of the fruits of his toil and labor, and has been kept in ignorance and poverty that the white man might fatten and grow rich on the fruits of the black man's toil. The white man has worked it out to his advantage that way in Africa, Asiatic East India, Australia, Samoa, Hawaii, the Americas, the West Indies, Japheth being "enlarged" at the expense of the other sons since the flood of waters. The enlargement of Japheth, however, is by no means the spiritual reversion of the inheritance, which has again through the ages come to "even."

What is the Black Man's Burden,
"Ye hypocrites and vile,"
"Ye whited sepulchres,"
From th' Amazon to the Nile?
What is the Black Man's Burden,
Ye Gentile parasites,
Who crush and rob your brother
Of his manhood and his rights?

What is the Black Man's Burden,
Westward to Eastward Ind,
But Japheth's broken pledges—
Faithless Master of his kind?
He robbed Ham of his manhood,
His brotherhood he's slain,
His woman he has raped,
Her children sold for gain!

He got them in the darkness—
He shuns them in the light—
The children of "the first fruits,"
The "off-ends," of his might:
The Lord-Masters shall perish,
The unnatural parents die,
Because they wronged the widow
And th' widow's son deny!

White Christians of the Nations,
Ye slumber in the light,
But the Father of us all
Shall rouse ye in the night!
The God who rules the Nations,
"O, Hypocrites and vile!"
Shall search ye out as serpents
And blast ye in your guile.

What is the Black Man's Burden,
Westward to Eastward Ind,
But Japheth's broken pledges—
Faithless Master of his kind?
But, now, the even cometh,
The even now is here;
And all the Christian Nations
Are rived with dread and fear

## ANOTHER WRITER TRIES HAND AT DEFINING POETRY

March 7 1921.

To the Editor of Negro World,
Sir:

In your issue of December 25, last, I came across a lengthy, but by no means lucid article by Mr. Lucien Watkins wherein that gentleman tries to answer satisfactorily the question, "What is Poetry?" I am not, like that gentleman, the happy possessor of an "artistic temperament," so I will refrain from criticizing his definition and description of poetry.

Poetry is to me a vague and elusive phantom which, on account of its very vagueness, baffles all efforts to describe it. According to Lamartine, "It is the enthusiasm of the man most devine in his heart who is more divine in his thoughts." But Madame de Staal affirms "It is indeed so divine in the heart of the man as to be almost indescribable." So that he is a pretty bold man who attempts to not only define poetry, but even to give as an example of true poetry what is after all but a banal and commonplace piece of imagination. Truly, some folks rush in where angels fear to tread.

His highly be-adjectived description of poetry might well bear comparison with, and in our opinion, fairly take the palm from the following hysterical description of the sublime beauties of poetry in general and romantic poetry in particular, which M. le Clere holds forth for the benefit of Dupuis and Cotonet, two unsophisticated youths like myself, sublimely ignorant of "What is Poetry."

"It is the stars that sigh, the wind that blows, 'tis the cold night, the flowers that exhale their fragrance, it is the bird that flies. Oh, how beautiful! It is infinite!

"The diameter, the pyramid, the orient, the affection, the embrace, the whirl, that novel science. It is the philosophy of providential geometry that exists in the vague experience to cut through hidden secrets."—Cotonet

"Sir, I should waste beads of perspiration to tell you: It's almost a fable."—Le Clere.

"I am angry, I cannot tell my feelings to the world."

To conclude, his attempt at a definition of what is poetry reminds me of the Umbrian hound of Virgil's Aeneid, which, pursuing a fleet and elusive stag:

"Mille fugit refugitque vias et vividus Umber Haeret hiams iamiamque tenet, similisque tenenti Increpuit malis, morsuque elusus inani est."

Aeneid XII. 752

GEORGE W. STRONACH,
El Callao, Venezuela, South America.

Editor's Note—The definitions of poetry by Lamartine, Madame de Staal and M. Le Clere are very interesting but no more brilliant than the splendid definitions of the late Lucien B. Watkins.

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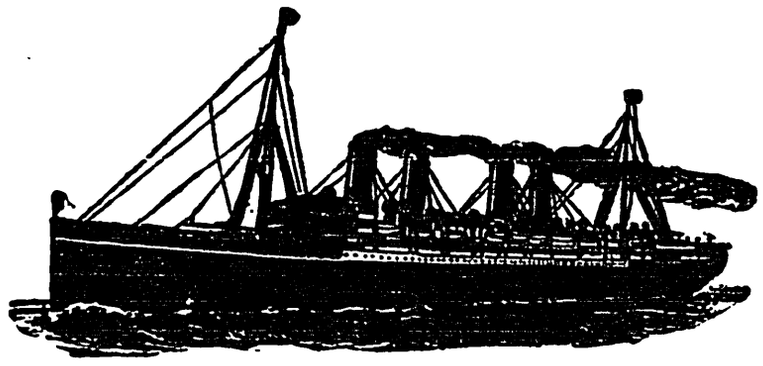

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