THESIS

JOHN MASEFIELD: POET AND DRAMATIST

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requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

by

Isabel Gordon

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS USED

A. of E. P.	Advance of English Poetry in the Twentieth Century, William Lyons Phelps
Atlantic M.	Atlantic Monthly
Bookman	The Bookman
Brit.Yr.Bk.	Britannica Year Book
C. Plays	Collected Plays
C. Poems	Collected Poems
Contemp. Rev.	Contemporary Review
Cur. Lit.	Current Literature
Cur. Opin.	Current Opinion
Everybody's M.	Everybody's Magazine
Ind.	Independent Magazine
Lectures	University of Pennsylvania: Lectures Delivered by Members of the Faculty in the Free Public Lecture Course (1913-1914)
Liv. Age.	Living Age
Lit. Dig.	Literary Digest
Nation	The Nation
N. Amer. Rev.	North American Review
R. of R.	Review of Reviews
T.N.P.	The New Poetry: An Anthology, Monroe and Henderson.
W.W.	Who's Who
Yale R.	Yale Review.

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Few poets have succeeded in winning the almost instant popularity which has been accorded to John Masefield. His first book of poems, "Salt Water Ballads", appeared in 1902.[1] It found many appreciative readers, but during the next five or six years Mr. Masefield produced little and it was not until 1908,--when he wrote "The Tragedy of Nan", "Captain Margaret", a novel of the sea, and several short poems--that he became known to the general public. From that time on his writings gained rapidly in popularity and in less than four years he was famous. Since 1908 his books have been eagerly read in England and America, as well, and many other countries, and lengthy reviews of them have appeared in most of the leading periodicals. In 1912 Mr. Galsworthy proclaimed Mr. Masefield "the man of the hour(and of tomorrow too)"[2] in poetry, while Mr. Phelps, writing two or three years later, considered him "A mighty force in the renewal of poetry."[3] However, all reviewers did not at first greet him with praise. One writer complained that "It is his (Mr. Masefield's) violence, his licentiousness, in a word his barbarism, which is gleefully hailed by a chorus of enthusiastic admirers, who point triumphantly to his poetic atrocities as though they were so many spiritual qualities."[4] Nevertheless, his "chorus of enthusiastic admirers" has steadily gained in numbers and the enthusiasm has not abated.

1. Lectures, p. 368
2. Lit. Dig., Vol. 44, p.753; Apr.13,1912.
3. Nation, Vol. 96, p.549; May 29, 1913.

Mr. Masefield is praised not only by Mr. Phelps, Mr. Galsworthy and other leading students of literature but he is read and enjoyed by all ages and all classes. Mr. Weygant of Pennsylvania University tells us that his fourteen-year old nephew declared that certain of Mr. Masefield's books for boys "have 'Treasure Island' skinned a mile";[1] while a seaman described "A Mainsail Haul" as "the real thing".[2] These statements naturally lead us to inquire who Mr. Masefield is and what qualities in his work have caused them to appeal to so large and varied a circle of readers.

A writer on Masefield is embarrassed by the meagreness of the information that is available in regard to his life. We know, it is true, that he is the son of a Gloucester solicitor.[3] On the other hand, our authorities differ in their statements with reference to the place and time of his birth. According to Mr. Andre Tridon, he was born in Shropshire, (England),[4] according to Mr. Phelps, however, he was born in Ledbury, a city in Herefordshire, a county just south of Shropshire, in 1874,[5] while, according to Mr. Thomas Seccombe, he was not born until 1875.[6] The first named date is probably the correct one, but these matters will have to be left to future investiga-

1. Lectures, p.367
2. Ind. Vol.72, p.1158; May 30, 1912
3. Lectures, p.367
4. Cur.Lit. Vol.52, p.710; June 1912.
5. A. of E.P., p.72.
6. Brit.Yr.Bk.,1913, p.187

tion, since Mr. Masefield, himself, in giving a brief sketch of his life to the editors of "Who's Who", has omitted the date and place of his birth.[1] From the following reference in his poem, "Ships", Mr. Weygant concludes that Gloucestershire was our author's home county:[2]

> "You should have seen, man cannot tell to you
> The beauty of the ships of that my city.
> .....
> Yet, though their splendour may have ceased to be,
> Each played her sovereign part in making me;"[3]

In any event, we know that he was reared in western England, whether the actual county concerned be Shropshire, Herefordshire or Gloucestershire; for his poems are full of the love of the stories and scenes of the west country.

> "It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
> I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
> For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
> And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.
>
> It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine,
> Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
> There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
> And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest."[4]

When a boy, Mr. Masefield frequently ran away from home, spending hours, even days, tramping up and down the country roads and lanes.[5] No doubt, it was at this time that he acquired his intimate knowledge of the people of

1. W.W., 1920, p.1733
2. Lectures, p.367
3. C.Poems, p.68
4. Ibid., p.40
5. Everybody's Mag.,Vol.34,p.400;Mar.,1916.

the western counties, whom he has since described with so much realism. He received a good common school education and at the age of fourteen his father indentured him to a sea-captain for the sum of one shilling a week.[2] He spent several years before the mast, tramped on foot through many countries,[3] tried farming in the United States,[4] and, when he was twenty-eight years old, was engaged in serving drinks and washing glasses in a saloon in Old Columbia Hotel on Greenwich Avenue, New York.[5] (Here he became familiar with the life and thoughts of the barroom habitués and gained an insight into their lives which is shown in certain of his poems, especially in "The Everlasting Mercy".) He next entered a carpet factory in the Bronx,[6] and it was while he was working in this factory that he bought, for seventy-five cents,[7] a copy of Chaucer's "Parlement of Foules". As he read this volume his desire to become a poet crystallized. He tells us of this experience in the preface of his "Collected Poems". He says "I did not begin to read poetry with passion and system until 1896. I was living then in Yonkers, New York(8 Maple Street), Chaucer was the poet, and the "Parliament of Fowls" the poem, of my conversion. I read the 'Parliament' all through one Sunday afternoon, with the feeling that I

1. A.of E.P., p.74
2. R.ofR., Vol.47, p.370; Mar., 1913
3. A.ofE.P., p.72
4. Lectures, p.367
5. A. of E.P., p.73
6. Ibid., p.73
7. Cur.Opin., Vol.60, p.194; Mar. 1916

had been kept out of my inheritance and had then suddenly entered upon it, and had found it a new world of wonder and delight."[1] Mr. Masefield has described something of this experience in his poem, "The Dauber". The Dauber becomes dissatisfied with his work and longs for some means of expressing himself, but does not know what it is he wishes to do. He finds his mother's sketch-book and realizes that not farming, but painting, is his life work.

> "That rotting sketch-book showed me how and where
> I, too, could get away; and then I knew
> That drawing was the work I longed to do."[2]

It was thus that Chaucer showed John Masefield how he too, "could get away" and do the thing "he longed to do".

Chaucer was Mr. Masefield's immediate inspiration, but he had, as a child, read several of Longfellow's poems,--especially his "Hiawatha"--some of Tennyson's poems, Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry", most of Sir Walter Scott's poems, and two or three of Shakespeare's lyrics, as well as Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome", and Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso". These he greatly enjoyed and even composed imitations of some of the "Lays".[3]

When he was nine years of age, John Masefield wrote

1. C. Poems, p.vi.
2. Ibid., p.272
3. Ibid., p.vi.

down his first poem, but he says, in the preface to his poems, that he had composed many poems in his head before this, although he had not written them down.[1] His first productions in verse were indicative both of his age and of his interest in the unusual and adventurous--and interest manifest in his later works as well. One of these early compositions was about a Red Indian and the other was the story of a pony named Gypsy.[2] After this he wrote several other poems, but when he w went to sea in his fourteenth year he stopped writing and, with the exception of one or two sea ballads, he composed nothing more until he was eighteen.[3] He then wrote a few more ballads and songs, but it was not until some ten years later, when he had read "The Parliament of Fowls", that he "read many poets (Chaucer, Keats, Shelley, Milton and Shakespeare, more than the others) and wrote many imitations of them".[4]

Shortly after this he returned to England and in 1903 married Constance de la Cherois-Crommelin.[5] They have two children, a boy and a girl, and live the greater part of the year in a small village named Great Hampden, which is about twenty-eight miles from London.[6]

1. C. Poems, p.v.
2. " " "
3. Ibid., p. vi.
4. Ibid., p. vii.
5. W.W.,1920, p.1733
6. Ind., Vol. 73, p.533; Sept.5,1912.

Mr. John Cournos, who visited Mr. Masefield in his home in Great Hampden describes him as "a fairly large, rather roughly dressed, gentle-looking person". He continues: "A good, well-constructed head is Masefield's--- attractively broad across the eyes; its lower jaw hints at strength without flaunting it. A tinge of gray in closely cropped hair adds not a little to its character; while the small mustache is an effective touch in the portrait because of its more pronounced red. The elusive eyes are a live hazel bordering on gray; it is these that help to give the face, especially in three quarter view, an indescribably gentle, soft, and reflective aspect, that does not take from its masculine look, and only serves to give the countenance a certain quiet balance."[1] And so we find Mr. Masefield a rather gentle but forcible Englishman who has spent the greater share of his life sailing the ocean or tramping over foreign lands and studying the ways of men. He does not smoke[2] and, in spite of his sojourn in a New York barroom, or, possibly, because of it, he, like his Dauber, is "temperance".[3]

Mr. Masefield's success as a writer can be attributed to no one cause. It is due to many things, the most important of which, perhaps, is his knowledge of

1. Ind., Vol.73, p.534; Sept. 5, 1912.
2. Ind., Vol.73, p.534; Sept. 5, 1912.
3. Everybody's Mag., Vol.34, p.400; Mar. 1916.

life and of people. It is seldom that we find a man who knows the common people as he knows them, their thoughts, their trials, their joys. He tells of these so simply and withal so truthfully and vividly that the subjects of his stories become real to us and we think, for instance, of Jimmie and his old mother as individuals, as friends, not merely as "a poor family down on the Bye Street".

"Down Bye Street, in a little Shropshire town,
There lived a widow with her only son:
She had no wealth nor title to renown,
Nor any joyous hours, never one.
She rose from ragged mattress before sun
And stitched all day until her eyes were red,
And had to stitch, because her man was dead.

Sometimes she fell asleep, she stitched so hard,
Letting the linen fall upon the floor;
And hungry cats would steal in from the yard,
And mangy chickens pecked about the door,
Craning their necks so ragged and so sore
To search the room for bread-crumbs, or for mouse,
But they got nothing in the widow's house." [1]

The poor are not always unhappy and Mr. Masefield tells of their joys as well as of their sorrows. We find the widow's son saying of this same room:

""We were so happy in the room together,
Singing at 'Binger-Bopper', weren't us, just?
And going a-hopping in the summer weather,
And all the hedges covered white with dust,
And blackberries, and that, and traveller's trust." [2]

His ability to enter into the lives of the lowly has

1. C. Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street", p.17
2. C. Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street", p.242

brought Mr. Masefield many readers and, likewise, his comradeship with the sailors makes them eager readers of his poems.)

Most poets have written poems of the sea, but it remained for Mr. Masefield to describe for us the sea as it is seen and known by the sailor. During his years before the mast he became familiar with the lives of the sailors, with the hardships they must endure, with the dangers they must face and with the games and stories of their leisure hours. And with his many, also, beautiful pictures of the sea he has described for us the everyday life of the seamen.

"Four bells were struck, the watch was called on deck,
All work aboard was over for the hour,
And some men sang and others played at check,
Or mended clothes or watched the sunset glower.
The bursting west was like an opening flower,
And one man watched it till the light was dim,
But no one went across to talk to him."[1]

Mr. Masefield has proved himself singularly able to give expression to the seaman's love of the sea, and several of his poems tell of the sailor's longing and homesickness for the sea. One of the best of these poems is "Sea Fever".

"I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,

1. C. Poems, "Dauber", p. 251.

And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the
white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn
breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the
running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls
crying."[1]

This same emotion is again expressed in "A Wanderer's Song".

"A wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels,
I am tired of brick and stone and rumbling wagon-wheels;
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limits of the land,
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand."[2]

He tells the old stories of the sea. He tells them for the landsman as well as for the sailor, tells them for boys as well as for men. What boy reading "A Ballad of John Silver", does not imagine himself, "with a brace of pistols and cutlass at the hip",[3] the captain of a pirate schooner sailing the Spanish waters?

"We were schooner-rigged and rakish, with a long and
lissome hull,
And we flew the pretty colours of the cross-bones
and the skull;
We'd a big black Jolly Roger flapping grimly at the fore,
And we sailed the Spanish Water in the happy days of yore."[4]

Stories of common life, tales of the sea, and narratives of adventure might have made Mr. Masefield popular, but they could not have made him a poet, had he not added to them a passionate love of beauty and a mastery of metrical form. It is the combination of his

1. C6.Poems, "SEA Fever", p. 31.
2. C.Poems, "A Wanderer's Song", p.32
3. C.Poems, "A Ballad of John Silver",p.37
4. C.Poems, "A Ballad of John Silver", p.36

knowledge of life, his love of beauty and his power to transform this knowledge and this love into beautiful verse which has made our author one of the most promising of living poets.

Mr. Masefield admires the sea, hills and meadows, but his greatest inspiration is received from the lives of men and women. He tells us in an article on John M. Synge that Mr. Synge "found the life of a man well worth wonder, even tho the man were a fool, or a knave, or just down from Oxford".[1] This may be said with equal truth of Mr. Masefield. It is the life in men which interests him, calls to him, holds him.

"Faces--passionate faces--of men I may not know,
They haunt me, burn me to the heart, as I turn aside to go;
The king's face and the cur's face, and the face of the stuffed swine,
They are passing, they are passing, their eyes look into mine.

I never can tire of the music of the noise of many feet,
The thrill of the blood pulsing, the tick of the heart's beat,
Of the men many as sands, of the squadrons ranked and massed
Who are passing, changing always, and never have changed or passed."[2]

Upon his return to England Mr. Masefield spent several months with Mr. W. B. Yeats.[3] He met Mr. Yeats through the latter's brother, Mr. J. B. Yeats, an artist who had been drawn to Mr. Masefield by their mutual love of the sea.[4]

1. Contemp.Rev., Vol.99, p.476; April 1911.
2. C.Poems, "All Ye That Pass By", p.49.
3. R. of R., Vol.47, p.370; Mar. 1913.
4. Lectures, p.369.

Mr. Yeats by his interest and encouragement and by many helpful suggestions aided Mr. Masefield in his first efforts at writing for publication. These suggestions were always given with the view of teaching the younger poet to find himself, never with a desire to cause Mr. Masefield to imitate him.[1] Mr. Yeats especially urged his new friend to write of his experiences at sea,[2] and we find, accordingly, that "A Wanderer's Song", one of his sea poems, has been dedicated to Mr. Yeats.[3] In speaking of his pleasure in reading the works of Mr. Thomas Hardy and some other modern writers, Mr. Masefield says "But I owe everything to Yeats. He influenced me, just as he influenced Synge. Yeats set us both in the right direction. What glory there is is due to him. He is a perfectly generous and sympathetic mind to all young writers".[4] Mr. Masefield also admired Mr. Synge. He has told us something of Mr. Synge and of their friendship in an article which appeared in the Contemperary Review for April, 1911. In writing of his talks with Mr. Synge he says; "Our talk was always about life. When we talked about writers (modern French and ancient English writers), it was not about their writing that we talked, but about the something kindling

1. Lectures, p. 370.
2. Lectures, p. 369.
3. Lectures, p. 370.
4. Ind. Vol. 73, p. 537; Sept. 5, 1912.

in them which never got expressed."[1] In view of this statement, it is reasonable to believe that Mr. Synge was one of the friends of whom he tells us in his "Biography".

> "Those friends who heard St. Pancras' bells strike two
> Yet stayed until the barber's cockerel crew.
> Talking of noble styles, the Frenchman's best,
> The thought beyond great poets not expressed,
> The glory of mood where human frailty failed,
> The forts of human light not yet assailed,
> Till the dim room had mind and seemed to brood,
> Binding our wills to mental brotherhood,
> Till we became a college, and each night
> Was discipline and manhood and delight,
> Till our farewells and winding down the stairs
> At each grey dawn had meaning that Time spares,
> That we, so linked, should roam the whole world round
> Teaching the ways our brooding minds had found,
> Making that room our Chapter, our one mind,
> Where all that this world soiled should be refined."[2]

Mr. Yeats and Mr. Synge helped and encouraged Mr. Masefield, but he did not imitate them. He is not an imitator, he belongs to no school, his poems are his own, and, in spite of the fact that he uses the metres and stanza forms which have been in use for hundreds of years, he tells his tales with so much life and energy, with so much directness and force, that he has created a style which is unmistakably his own. It is possible, however, to find in a few of his poems a certain likeness to poems of other writers. His "Spanish Waters" is perhaps the most noticeable instance of this.

1. Contemp. Rev., Vol. 99, p.474; April, 1911.
2. C.Poems, "Biography", p.62.

"Spanish waters, Spanish waters, you are ringing in my ears,
Like a slow sweet piece of music from the grey forgotten years;
Telling tales, and beating tunes, and bringing weary thoughts to me
Of the sandy beach at Muertos, where I would that I could be.

There's a surf breaks on Los Muertos, and it never stops to roar,
And it's there we came to anchor, and it's there we went ashore,
Where the blue lagoon is silent amid snags of rotting trees,
Dropping like the clothes of corpses cast up by the seas." [1]

Even the most casual reader of this poem cannot fail to discover its likeness to Mr. Kipling's "Mandalay", a likeness due chiefly to the similarity of the metre and emphasized by the resemblance of certain ~~of~~ ~~xxx~~ words and phrases in each such as "lagoon"and "langoon", and "Where I would that I could be" and "An' it's there that I would be". This poem, however, is the exception. As a rule, Mr. Masefield's poems are quite different in style as well as in subject-matter from those of Mr. Kipling. The poems of both are characterized by a certain movement and love of action, and sturdy strength, and both poets are sincere in their sympathy with the common people, but Mr. Kipling has written of the English soldier, and of the natives of India, while Mr. Masefield's story is of the sailor and of the poor of all countries.

"Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load.

1. C. Poems,"Spanish Waters", p.80.

"The sailor, the stoker of steamers, the man with the clout,
The chantyman bent at the halliards putting a tune to the shout,
The drowsy man at the wheel and the tired lookout.

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth;--
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth."[1]

Mr. Robert Saffer has remarked that Mr. Masefield is primarily pessimistic.[2] It is true that our poet has written of the humble, of the sinful, of the wretched, and of the degraded and he describes them clearly, minutely, accurately, but, because he sees clearly and is willing to describe all that he sees, his writings abound, also, in stories of the happy moments of the poor, of the good to be found in the sinner and of the spark of nobility which is hidden in even the most degraded. Only an optimist could say with Mr. Masefield's Jimmy:

"God dropped a spark down into everyone,
And if we find and fan it to a blaze
It'll spring up and glow, like--like the sun,
And light the wandering out of stony ways.
God warms his hands at man's heart when he prays,
And light of prayer is spreading heart to heart;
It'll light all where now it lights a part."[3]

Mr. Masefield has faith in the inherent nobility of mankind and, remembering this faith, we are not surprised to find that he does not consider death the end of the soul. He believes that death claims the body, but that the soul, in a new body, returns again to the

1. C.Poems, "A Consecration", p.3.
2. Atlantic M., Vol111l, p.293; April,1913.
3. C.Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street",p.243.

earth, where it suffers or is rewarded in accordance with its worthiness or unworthiness in its previous life. He has expressed this belief in his poem "A Creed".

"I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the roads again.

Such is my own belief and trust;
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust
And turned, as dust, to dust again;
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

All that I rightly think or do,
Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,
Is curse or blessing justly due
For sloth or effort in the past.
My life's a statement of the sum
Of vice indulged, or overcome."[1]

Mr. Masefield was greatly grieved over the death of Mr. Synge, but he comforted himself with the thought that "his(Mr. Synge's) interest in life would soon get itself into another body and come here again to look on and listen".[2] To our poet it is life that is important. Death is merely an intermission between various periods of existence on the earth, where, he believes, we are to seek and to find the great purpose of life, the reason for existence.

1. C.Poems, "A Creed", p. 101.
2. Contemp. Rev.,Vol.99,p.477; April,1911.

"My road calls me, lures me
West, east, south, and north;
Most roads lead men homewards,
My road leads me forth

To add more miles to the tally
Of grey miles left behind,
In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find."[1]

In his sonnets Mr. Masefield tells us that should he be mistaken in his belief that the soul returns to earth, and should one lifetime be all that each man is allowed upon the earth, that one lifetime is sufficient reason for wonder and for joy.

"Even if we cease, life is a miracle.

Man has his unseen friend, his unseen twin,
His straitened spirit's possibility,
The palace unexplored he thinks an inn,
The glorious garden which he wanders by."[2]

Mr. Masefield has written ballads and songs and short lyrical poems, but it was not until 1911 that his desire to write narrative poetry was awakened by reading Chaucer's longer poems. He himself says: "On the whole, I think there has been little English narrative poetry. There is Chaucer, but after Chaucer there is a big gap".[4] It was evidently his desire to break this "gap", and in May and June, 1911, he wrote his first narrative poem, "The Everlasting Mercy".[5] It was

1. C.Poems, "Roadways", p. 94
2. Ibid., "Sonnets", p. 410
3. Ibid., p. vii.
4. Ind., Vol. 73, p. 535; Sept. 5, 1912.
5. C. Poems, p. vii.

published in The English Review for October of the same year and immediately called forth much praise as well as abuse.[1]

"The Everlasting Mercy" is the story of a man named Saul Kane, who sums up the first twenty years of his life in this manner:

> "From '41 to '51
> I was my folk's contrary son;
> I bit my father's hand right through
> And broke my mother's heart in two.
> I sometimes go without my dinner
> Now that I know the times I've gi'n her.
>
> From '51 to '61
> I cut my teeth and took to fun.
> I learned what not to be afraid of
> And what stuff women's lips are made of;
> I learned with what a rosy feeling
> Good ale makes floors seem like the ceiling,
> And how the moon gives shiny light
> To lads as roll home singing by't.
> My blood did leap, my flesh did revel,
> Saul Kane was tokened to the devil."[2]

From '61 to '67 he lived "in disbelief of Heaven" and nineteen times he "went to gaol". He continues:

> "Now, friends observe and look upon me,
> Mark how the Lord took pity on me."[3]

He tells how he lied to an old friend and then fought to defend the lie, how his opponent's sprained thumb is displaced and Saul Kane wins the bout. It is during this fight that the conscience of Saul Kane is awakened and he begins to think of his past and of how his life will end.

1. A. of E. P., p. 79
2. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.121.
3. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.121.

"I wondered, then, why life should be,
And what would be the end of me
When youth and health and strength were gone
And cold old age came creeping on?"[1]

And, as Saul thinks, a desire grows within him for something cleaner and purer. For a time he drowns this doubt of his past life and his new desire for something better in drink, but one evening at closing time a quakeress comes to the saloon to talk to the men. This has been her custom for a long time, but this evening Saul Kane is rude to her and she turns upon him and tells him that all he says and all he does is an affront to the Christ who is waiting for him to change.

"She said, 'He waits until you knock.'
She turned at that and went out swift,
Si grinned and winked, his missus sniffed.

I heard her clang the Lion door,
I marked a drink-drop roll to floor;
It took up scraps of sawdust, furry,
And crinkled on, a half inch, blurry;
A drop from my last glass of gin;
And someone waiting to come in,
A hand upon the door latch gropen
Knocking the man inside to open."[2]

Saul Kane is converted and he goes forth to seek work and to spread the light which has come to him. The peace which has settled down upon him fills him with exaltation.

"I did not think, I did not strive,
The deep peace burnt my me alive;
The bolted door had broken in,
I knew that I had done with sin."[3]

1. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy",p.139.
2. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy",p.167.
3. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy",p.168.

I knew that Christ had given me birth
To brother all the souls on earth,
And every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast."[1]

"The Everlasting Mercy" is distinguished by its absolute sincerity, its warm sympathy for the sinner, and it shows again Mr. Masefield's great faith in the good which may be found in even the worst sinners. Saul Kane's life and thoughts are described to us in detail and each detail serves but to accomplish the one great purpose, namely, to portray the change which takes place in this reprobate, when he realizes the wickedness of his past life, experiences an indefinable longing for something better and decides to follow Christ. There are passages in the poem which are filled with a crude ugliness and which, if read by themselves, are apt to prove revolting.

"The room was full of men and stink
Of bad cigars and heavy drink.
Riley was nodding to the floor
And gurgling as he wanted more.
His mouth was wide, his face was pale,
His swollen face was sweating ale;
And one of those assembled Greeks
Had corked black crosses on his cheeks."[2]

Such passages, however, form only a part of the poem and lend emphasis to the florious transformation which takes place in Saul.

"O glory of the lighted mind.
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind.
The station brook, to my new eyes,

1. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.168.
2. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.134.

Was babbling out of Paradise,
The waters rushing from the rain
Were singing Christ has risen again.
I thought all earthly creatures knelt
From rapture of the joy I felt."[1]

Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", Scott's "Lady of the Lake",--indeed, all long poems--have here and there passages, the quality of which falls far below that of the rest of the poem. "The Everlasting Mercy" is no exception to this rule. We might wish that Mr. Masefield had omitted such lines as the following:

"'There's that Saul Kane, the drunken blaggard,
Talking to little Jimmy Jaggard.
The drunken blaggard reeks of drinks.'
'Whatever will his mother think?'[2]

But we forget strained and lumbering passages in reading the many lines which the writer has filled with a lyrical beauty that is seldom surpassed.

"By this the sun was all one glitter,
The little birds were all in twitter;
Out of a tuft a little lark
Went higher up than I could mark,
His little throat was all one thirst
To sing until his heart should burst
To sing aloft in golden light
His song from blue air out of sight."[3]

In speaking of the "The Everlasting Mercy", Cowningsby Dawson observes: "this is one of the biggest things that have happened since Bobbie Burns, and is among the very few really virile religious poems in our language."[4]

1. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.168.
2. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.157.
3. C.Poems, "The Everlasting Mercy", p.174.
4. Cur.Lit., Vol.53,p.457; Oct.,1912.

After writing "The Everlasting Mercy, Mr. Masefield started his second narrative poem, "The Widow in the Bye Street". He says: "When I had finished the story ("The Everlasting Mercy"), I felt that I ought to write something unlike it, that as I had shown one thing, which often happens in life, the seemingly unworthy man made happy for no apparent reason, so I ought to write the opposite, the seemingly worthy woman made heartbroken, for no apparent reason".[1] In "The Widow in the Bye Street" he has pictured this woman.

"The Widow in the Bye Street" is the story of a poor widow and her son Jimmie who live together in a little house "down Bye Street way". In the past she has earned their living by making shrouds, but, when the poem begins, her son has grown old enough to work and life has become a little easier for the widow.

> "So there was bacon then, at night, for supper
> In Bye Street there, where he and mother stay;
> And boots they had, not leaky in the upper,
> And room rent ready on the settling day;
> And beer for poor old mother, worn and grey,
> And fire in frost; and in the widow's eyes
> It seemed the Lord had made earth paradise."[2]

Jimmie takes his old mother to the October fair and there he meets Anna, a light woman, whose lover has failed to meet her as he had promised. Jimmie falls in love with her and from that time his mother is forgotten. At last Anna's lover, Shepherd Ern, returns, and Jimmie,

1. C.Poems, p. vii.
2. C.Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street", p.181.

finding them together, attacks Ern, but is beaten back. Later he returns and strikes Shepherd Ern with a spudder and kills him. Realizing what he has done, he gives himself over to the police. He is tried, found guilty of murder in the first degree, and hanged. His mother, too strong to die, loses her mind, and, believing that Jimmie is still alive, goes up and down the "Bye Street" singing "Binger", the song they had always sung together.

> "Some of life's sad ones are too strong to die,
> Grief doesn't kill them as it kills the weak,
> Sorrow is not for those who sit and cry
> Lapped in the love of turning t'other cheek,
> But for the noble souls austere and bleak
> Who have had the bitter dose and drained the cup
> And wait for Death face fronted, standing up."[1]

The descriptions in the "Widow in the Bye Street" are as realistic, its characters are as well drawn as those in "The Everlasting Mercy", but the poem lacks something of the unity found in the story of Saul Kane.[2] In "The Everlasting Mercy" we are concerned with one character, Saul Kane, while in "The Widow in the Bye Street" our interest is divided about equally between Jimmy and his mother. We are interested in what is happening to Jimmie, but at the same time our sympathy is also drawn to his poor old mother.

1. C.Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street",p.245.
2. Ind., Vol. 73, p. ; May 23, 1912.

Parts of this poem are exceedingly beautiful, as will appear, for example, from the following description of the mother after the death of her son:

"And sometimes she will walk the cindery mile,
Singing, as she and Jimmy used to do,
Singing, "The parson's dog lep over a stile,"
Along the path where water lilies grew.
The stars are placid on the evening's blue,
Burning like eyes so calm, so unafraid,
On all that God has given and man has made.

Burning they watch, and mothlike owls come out,
The redbreast warbles shrilly once and stops;
The homing cowman gives his dog a shout,
The lamps are lighted in the village shops.
Silence; the last bird passes; in the copse
The hazels cross the moon, a nightjar spins,
Dew wets the grass, the nightingale begins."[1]

"The Widow in the Bye Street" is a story of the common people, of the ignorant and lowly, told clearly and with convincing fidelity to life. It owes its beauty and force to its subtle delineation of characters so varied as Jimmy and his mother and even Anna and Shepherd Ern--to the author's power of making them live for us in the light of his sympathy and love. Mr. Phelps has pronounced "The Widow in the Bye Street" "one of the best narrative poems in modern literature", and adds, "it is melodrama elevated into poetry."[2]

"Dauber" and "The Daffodil Fields", Mr. Masefield's next narrative poems, appeared in 1912.[3] These poems were

1. C.Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street", p.247.
2. A. of E. P., p. 83.
3. C.Poems, p. vii.

written, for the most part, at Great Hampden. "Dauber" is the story of a young boy who is fired with the ambition to paint the sea and put upon his canvas all the life and color that he has observed during his weeks at sea.[1]

> "'I want to be a painter,' he replied,
> 'And know the sea and ships from A to Z,
> And paint great ships at sea before I'm dead;
> Ships under skysails running down the Trade--
> Ships and the sea; there's nothing finer made.
>
> 'But there's so much to learn, with sails and ropes,
> And how the sails look, full or being furled,
> And how the lights change in the troughs and slopes,
> And the sea's colours up and down the world,
> And how a storm looks when the sprays are hurled
> High as the yard (they say) I want to see;
> There's none ashore can teach such things to me.'"[2]
>
> .....
>
> "'I cannot get it yet--not yet," he said;
> 'That leap and light, and sudden change to green,
> And all the glittering from the sunset's red,
> And the milky colours where the bursts have been,
> And then the clipper striding like a queen
> Over it all, all beauty to the crown.
> I see it all, I cannot put it down.'"[3]

"The character of Dauber", Mr. Masefield tells us "was partly suggested by a man once known to me, who fell from the lower topgallant yard of a ship, called(if I remember rightly) the Westlands, and was killed. This was many years ago. He would not have become a good painter, but he had courage and the will to succeed, and these things are in themselves a kind of genius."[4]

The Dauber tells us that he was reared on a farm "out

1. C.Poems, p. vii.
2. C.Poems, "Dauber", p. 252.
3. C.Poems, "Dauber", p.253.
4. C.Poems, p. vii.

past Gloucester",

> "'Not far from Pauntley, if you know those parts;
> The place is Spital Farm, near Silver Hill,
> Above a trap-hatch where a mill-stream starts.
> We had the mill once, but we've stopped the mill;
> My dad and sister keep the farm on still.
> We're only tenants, but we've rented there,
> Father and son, for over eighty year.'"[1]

His father tried to teach the Dauber to become a farmer, but the boy hated the work of the farm and neglected his work to wander up and down the banks of the mill stream. He made a little boat to sail upon the stream and his father, discovering it, whipped the lad severely. The boy "half mad with pain, and sick with guilt"[2] hides himself in the attic and here he finds his mother's sketch book. From that time on he spends his leisure time in painting. He finally decides to leave home and, after a short interval, ships as painter on a vessel which is bound for Valparaiso. The seamen despise the lad, who is reserved and shy and "neither man nor seaman by his tally". The Dauber finds comfort in his painting, but the sailors jeer at his efforts and smear his painting. He refuses to be beaten and says:

> "'You cannot understand that. Let it be.
> You cannot understand, nor know, nor share.
> This is a matter touching only me;
> My sketch may be a daub, for aught I care.
> You may be right. But even if you were,
> Your mocking should not stop this work of mine;
> Rot though it be, its prompting is divine.'"[3]

1. C.Poems, "Dauber", p. 268.
2. C.Poems, "Dauber", p. 271.
3. C.Poems, "Dauber", p. 281.

When the vessel approaches the Horn and meets the heavy snow storms, the Dauber is called upon to take his place among the seamen and go aloft. He does his part well and in the stormy days which follow wins the respect of the men.

> "'Why, holy sailor, Dauber, you're a man!
> I took you for a soldier. Up now, come!'"[1]

The ship nears Valparaiso Bay and the Dauber is sent aloft. He slips and falls from the fore top-gallant yard striking the deck and is almost instantly killed. He has overcome the prejudice of his companions and conquered his terror of the storms, but he dies without painting the pictures which he had longed to paint, and, dying, he clings to that divine something which has prompted him to try and give to the world the beauty which he has discovered in the sea.

> "Not knowing his meaning rightly, but he spoke
> With the intenseness of a fading soul
> Whose share of Nature's fire turns to smoke,
> Whose hand on Nature's wheel loses control.
> The eager faces glowered red like coal.
> They glowed, the great storm glowed, the sails, the mast.
> 'It will go on,' he cried aloud, and passed."[2]

It is not the narrative of "Dauber" that gives us the greatest pleasure, although the story is well told, but the many pictures of the sea which Mr. Masefield has revealed to us in this poem.

> "So the night passed, but then no morning broke--
> Only a something showed that night was dead.

1. C.Poems, "Dauber", p.304.
2. C.Poems, "Dauber", p.312.

A sea-bird, cackling like a devil, spoke,
And the fog drew away and hung like lead.
Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and red;
Like glowering gods at watch it did appear,
And sometimes drew away, and then drew near."[1]

And again:

"Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft,
And unbent sails in that most lovely hour,
When the light gentles and the wind is soft,
And beauty in the heart breaks like a flower.
Working aloft they saw the mountain tower,
Snow to the peak; they heard the launch-men shout;
And bright along the bay the lights came out."[2]

We cannot read "Dauber" without feeling that the vision of the Dauber has been fulfilled in the poetry of Mr. Masefield.

The plot of "The Daffodil Fields" was taken from a story in a footnote to Sir W. Mackenzie's "Travels in Iceland". The events described in the footnote are said to have taken place in Iceland in the eleventh century.[3] In "The Daffodil Fields" our poet, however, has transferred the story to the Shropshire of our own day, when newspapers are common and pedigreed bull-calves command a large price. It is the story of three old farmers, Grey of Ryemeadows Farmhouse, Keirs of Foxholes Farm and Occleve of "The Roughs", and their children. The three farmers have been friends for years, and, when Farmer Gray dies, he leaves his son, Michael Gray, in charge of his old friends. Michael, who has always been a bit wild, goes to live with Farmer Keirs of Foxhole Farm and falls in love with Keirs'

1. C.Poems, "Duaber", p.289.
2. C.Poems, "Dauber", p.316.
3. C.Poems, p. viii.

daughter, Mary, whom he has known all of his life and who has been in love with him for some time. Michael soon tires of Foxhole Farm and decides to go to Argentina to seek his fortune.

> "'And I have had enought of them; and now
> I make an end of them. I want to go
> Somewhere where man has never used a plough,
> Nor ever read a book; where clean winds blow,
> And passionate blood is not its owner's foe,
> And land is for the asking for it. There
> Man can create a life and have the open air.'" [1]

Occleve and Keir agree to let him go and arrange for his passage. He promises to return for Mary in three years, and the days slip quickly by until it is time for him to go.

> "And fast the day drew near that was to take the lad.
>
> Cowslips had come along the bubbling brook,
> Cowslips and oxlips rare, and in the wood
> The many-blossomed stalks of bluebells shook;
> The outward beauty fed their mental mood.
> Thought of the parting stabbed her as he wooed,
> Walking the brook with her, and day by day,
> The precious fortnight's grace dropped, wasted, slipped away." [2]

For a time Michael sends home news of himself, but, as he becomes more and more accustomed to the life of the plains, he stops writing. Occleve's son, Lionel, who has long been in love with Mary, seeing her unhappiness, decides to find out why Mary no longer hears from Michael.

> "Spring came again greening the hawthorn buds;
> The shaking flowers, new-blossomed, seemed the same,
> And April put her riot in young bloods;
> The jays flapped in the larch clump like blue flame.

1. C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields", p. 337.
2. C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields", p. 339.

She did not care; his letter never came.
Silent she went, nursing the grief that kills,
And Lion watched her pass among the daffodils."[1]

Lionel, accordingly, goes to Argentina with a pedigreed bull-calf and finds Michael living on a ranch. He has forgotten Mary in his love for a Spanish beauty and tells Lionel that he does not intend to return to England, that he is happy in the free life of the pampas, and, that the narrow bounds of the farms of Shropshire would now stifle him. So Lionel returns to England, where he sadly relates to Mary the story of Michael's unfaithfulness.

"When Mary knew the worst she only sighed,
Looked hard at Lion's face, and sat quite still,
White to the lips, but stern and stony-eyed,
Beaten by life in all things but the will.
Though the blow struck her hard it did not kill.
She rallied on herself, a new life bloomed
Out of the ashy heart where Michael lay entombed."[2]

While she is in this mood, Lionel urges her to marry him and forget Michael. She at first refuses, but, when the three years have passed and Michael does not return for her, she agrees to marry Lionel. Moreover, she sends a newspaper containing the announcement of the marriage to Michael in Argentina. On reading this news, Michael, realizing his loss, goes back to England. The description of the old Foxholes Farm as it appears to Michael after his three years on the plains is replete with that gentleness of spirit which Mr. Masefield infuses into his poems.

"Soon he was at the Foxholes, at the place
Whither, from over sea, his heart had turned
Often at evening-ends in times of grace.

1. C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields", p.348.
2. C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields", p.362.

But little outward change his eye discerned;
A red rose at her bedroom window burned,
Just as before. Even as of old the wasps
Poised at the yellow plums: the gate creaked on its hasps,

And the white fantails sidled on the roof
Just as before; their pink feet, even as of old,
Printed the frosty morning's rime with proof.
Still the zew-tallat's thatch was green with mould;
The apples on the withered boughs were gold."[1]

Michael now persuades Mary to leave her husband and come with him, but he soon tires of her and goes to Lionel to tell him that Mary is coming back to him. Lionel does not wait to hear what Michael has to say, but, throwing him a brush hook, starts toward him with a stake. In the fight which follows both are mortally wounded and taken to Lionel's home. All that night Mary carries flowers to cover Michael and in the morning she dies.

With the exception of "Reynard the Fox", "The Daffodil Fields" is the longest of Mr. Masefield's narratives in verse. The story does not move with the rapidity of the "Everlasting Mercy" of of "The Widow in the Bye Street", for the action is halted here and there by descriptions of the country side, the plains of Argentina, the farms of England and, especially, the fields of golden daffodils. There is scarcely a stanza in which we are not reminded of the beauty of the country. The following examples will serve to show the way in which these glimpses of nature are woven into the story.

"He pocketed the love gift and took horse,
And rode out to the pay-shed for his savings.

1.C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields",p.368.

Then turned, and rode a lonely water-course,
Alone with bitter thoughts and bitter cravings.
Sun-shadows on the reeds made twinkling wavings;
An orange-bellied turtle scooped the mud;
Mary had married Lion, and the news drew blood."[1]

"The ground was level there; the daffodils
Glimmered and danced beneath their cautious feet,
Quartering for openings for the blow that kills.
Beyond the bubbling brook a thrush was sweet.
Quickly the footsteps slid; with feint and cheat,
The weapons poised and darted and withdrew.
'Now stop it,' Michael said, 'I want to talk to you.'"[2]

This careful picturing of the setting does not, however, obscure the narrative, which stands out clearly and distinctly from its beautiful background. Mr. Weygandt considers "The Daffodil Fields" "the finest of his (Mr. Masefield's) poems, though it may not at any one moment kindle to such fires as flare here and there in 'The Widow in the Bye Street' or 'The Everlasting Mercy'",[3] while Professor Quiller-Couch, of Cambridge, has been quoted as saying that "neither in the design nor in the telling did, or could, 'Enoch Arden' come within miles of the artistic truth of 'The Daffodil Fields'".[4]

In "Dauber" we find Mr. Masefield's love of the sea, his delight in ships and his joy in the picturesque beauty of the sailors. In "The Daffodil Fields" he tells of his home country, of the fields and streams of western England, with a tenderness and sweetness that testifies to

1. C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields", p. 366.
2. Ibid., p.394.
3. Lectures, p.383.
4. Cur.Opin., Vol.54, p.524;

his deep love for them.

"In the day's noise the water's noise was stilled,
But still it slipped along, the cold hill-spring,
Dropping from leafy hollows, which it filled,
On to the pebbly shelves which made it sing;
Glints glittered on it from the 'fisher's wing;
It saw the moorhen nesting; then it stayed
In a great space of reeds where merry otters played."[1]

After finishing "The Daffodil Fields", Mr. Masefield wrote two short narrative poems, "The 'Wanderer'" and "The River". "The 'Wanderer'" is the story of a ship which is caught in a storm on her maiden trip and returns to the harbor greatly damaged and with all her sails gone. She is refitted and sets sail once more, but is again forced to return to port. This time

"A spar was gone, her rigging's disarray
Told of a worse disaster than the last;
Like draggled hair dishevelled hung the stay,
Drooping and beating on the broken mast.

Half-mast upon her flagstaff hung her flag;
Word went among us how the broken spar
Had gored her captain like an angry stag,
And killed her mate a half-day from the bar."[2]

As she sails out of the harbor for the third time, a stay since "parted like a snapping reed" and the sailors, thinking it an ill omen, refuse to proceed, she is brought back to dock. A new crew, however, is found and she finally gets away. Many years pass and the author sees her coming into a southern port, one Christmas Eve:

"Come as of old a queen, untouched by Time,
Resting the beauty that no seas could tire,
Sparkling, as though the midnight's rain were rime,
Like a man's thought transfigured into fire."[3]

1. C.Poems, "The Daffodil Fields",p.400.
2. C.Poems, "Ship", p.440.
3. Ibid., "

Mr. Masefield tells us that the ship which has given his poem its name lingers in his mind "as one of the loveliest things ever made by men"; and in the simple story of her voyages we, too, learn to appreciate the great beauty of that unlucky vessel.

"The River" is, also, the tale of a ship--of one which struck upon quicksands at the mouth of a river and was held there until she finally sank. Her fo'csle was jammed so that all the hands inside were imprisoned and sank with the vessel, with the exception of one man, who, by digging away the lead from the cover of a manhole, succeeded in opening it and diving into the hold from which he escaped through the forehatch. Mr. Masefield has based "The River" upon a story which, he tells us, is "current among sailors as having happened in the Hugli River, not far from Calcutta, at some unknown time not very long ago."[1] The tale is interesting, but as a poem, this is, perhaps, the least successful of Mr. Masefield's narratives. The descriptions are not so clear and vivid as those of his other poems and the characters in "The River" lack the individuality which stamps the characters of his other works.

In "Daubor", "The Everlasting Mercy", "The Widow in the Bye Street" and "The Daffodil Fields", Mr. Masefield

1. C. Poems, p. viii

tells of people. Men and women are his theme and the meadows, the hills, birds and animals form the background. In the last narrative poem which he has written--"Reynard the Fox", published in 1919--the order is reversed. Reynard, the fox, chased by the hounds, is his theme, and the hunting party, with noisy shouts and bright-colored coats, serve as his background.

"The meet was at 'The Cock and Pye
By Charles and Martha Enderby,'
The grey, three-hundred-year-old inn
Long since the haunt of Benjamin
The highwayman, who rode the bay.
The tavern fronts the coaching way,
The mail changed horses there of old.
It has a strip of grassy mould
In front of it, a broad green strip.
A trough, where horses' muzzles dip,
Stands opposite the tavern front,
And there that morning came the hunt,
To fill that quiet width of road
As full of men as Framilode
Is full of sea when tide is in.[1]

In these fourteen lines Mr. Masefield has given us a complete picture of a bit of English landscape. In his earlier poems he had already proved his skill in characterization on a larger scale. In "Reynard, the Fox", on the other hand, we have a series of character sketches, each drawn in a few lines, yet each clear and distinct from the rest.

"The clergyman from Condicote.
His face was scarlet from his trot,
His white hair bobbed about his head

1."Reynard the Fox", p. 3.

As halos do round clergy dead.
He asked Tom Copp, 'How long to wait?'
His loose mouth opened like a gate,
To pass the wagons of his speech,
He had a mighty voice to preach,
Though indolent in other matters
He let his children go in tatters."[1]

In this manner a brief sketch is given of each member of the meet. There is Major Howe who "damned in half the tongues of Babel",

"The Major being hot and heady
When horse or dinner was not ready."[2]

Bell Ridden comes with her mother and father:

"A strange shy girl whose face
Was sweet with thought and proud with race,
And bright with joy at riding there."[3]

And Sir Peter Bynd, of Combe:

"Past sixty now, though hearty still,
A living picture of good-will,
An old, grave soldier, sweet and kind,
A courtier with a knightly mind,
Who felt whatever thing he thought."[4]

There are many others,--for example, "the Harold lads, from Tencombe Weir", "the Manor set, from Tencombe Rings" and

"John Hankerton, from Compton Lythitt,
Was there with Pity Hankerton,
And Mike, their good-for-little son,
Back, smiling, from his seventh job."[5]

The chase begins and in the rapidly moving scenes Mr. Masefield gives us again that sweep of action, that clearness of vision and freshness of color which mark his descriptions of the storms at sea. The hunters start out briskly.

1."Reynard the Fox", p.11.
2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Ibid., p. 35.
4."Reynard the Fox"p.62.
5.Ibid., p.42.

"Across the brook and up the bent,
Past Primrose Wood past Brady Ride,
Along Ghost Heath to cover side.
The bobbing scarlet, trotting pack,
Turf scatters tossed behind each back,
Some horses blowing with a whinny,
A jam of horses in the spinney,
Close to the ride-gate; leather straining,
Saddles all creaking; men complaining,
Chaffing each other as they pass't,
On Ghost Heath turf they trotted fast."[1]

Reynard, the fox, wakens from his sleep and is alarmed by the noise he hears.

"He moved to his right to clearer space
And all his soul came into his face
Into his eyes and into his nose,
As over the hill a murmur rose."[2]

And now the hunt begins in earnest, and, as we read, we become wide-eyed and breathless, a part of the hunt. Reynard is not easily caught, but strives pluckily to save his life.

"He trotted down with his nose intent
For a fox's line to cross his scent,
It was only fair (he being a stranger)
That the native fox should have the danger.
Danger was coming, so swift, so swift,
That the pace of his trot began to lift
The blue-winged Judas, a jay, began
Swearing, hounds whimpered, air stank of man.

He hurried his trotting, he now felt frighted,
It was his poor body made hounds excited
He felt as he ringed the great wood through
That he ought to make for the land he knew."[3]

At last, too tired to run farther, Reynard sinks down upon the ground and waits for the hounds to come up. But the hounds have caught the trail of another fox and

1. "Reynard the Fox", p.68.
2. Ibid., p. 86.
3. Ibid., p. 89.

follow it off across the meadows and hills. Reynard, exhausted, but free, listens to the sound of the hunt until it dies away.

"Then the moon came quiet and flooded full
Light and beauty on clouds like wool,
On a feasted fox at rest from hunting,
In the beech wood grey where the brocks were grunting.

The beech wood grey rose dim in the night
With moonlight fallen in pools of light,
The long dead leaves on the ground were rimed.
A clock struck twelve and the church-bells chimed."[1]

Mr. Masefield has made the hunt on Ghost Heath so real that we feel like saying with Tom:

"If they changed or not,
They've been few runs longer and none more hot,
We shall talk of to-day until we die."[2]

A writer in the Atlantic Monthly for December 1919, remarks: "The Ghost Heath Run is English to the core, in its theme, in its metre, in its diction; and its methods hark back, in their virility and directness to the Canterbury Tales."[3] Yet this poem which "is English to the core" is so instinct with the hunt that Americans who have never known the joy of the meet and who gain their knowledge merely of hounds and hunting-jackets from the "movies" find themselves filled with the zest of the chase as they read "Reynard the Fox" or "The Ghost Heath Run".

1. "Reynard the Fox", p. 165.
2. Ibid., p. 165.
3. Atlantic M., Vol. 124; Dec.,1919.

Mr. Masefield's five narrative poems have been given here somewhat in detail, because it is as a writer of narratives in verse that he is best known to the general public. Mr. Phelps has called him "a writer of sustained narrative, unscrupulous in the use of language, bursting with vitality, sacrificing anything and everything that stood in the way of his effect."[1] These poems he considers "'red blood' verse, raised to poetry by sheer inspiration, backed by a remarkable skill in the use of rime," and he adds that in this particular field our author has no rival.

But it would not be fair to Mr. Masefield to overlook those longer poems and lyrics in which he has given us more of himself, perhaps, than in his narrative poems. The fact that he has chosen to reveal to us so little concerning his own life has been mentioned above. In the brief autobiography in verse which he has composed he does not count the passage of time by the days of the year, but by those "golden instants and brief days"[2] which he has experienced at various times throughout his life. He tells of the happy moments he has spent watching as

> "Out of the mist a little barque slipped by
> Spilling the mist with changing glows of red,"[3]

or of the hours spent in communion with his friends:

1. A. of E. P., p. 90.
2. C.Poems, "Biography", p.59.
3. Ibid., p. 60.

"not alone the ships,
But men hard-palmed from tallying-on the whips,
The two close friends of nearly twenty years,
Sea-followers both, sea wrestlers and sea-peers,
Whose feet with mine wore many a bolt-head bright."[1]

One period of his life is distinguished by his friendship with men of letters--Yeats and others. Cutter races in which he took part mark other years. His tallies are memories and all of them are happy memories.

"Best trust the happy moments, what they gave
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,
And gives his work compassion and new eyes.
The days that make us happy make us wise."[2]

In "Ships" Mr. Masefield mourns the passing of the sailing vessel. He tells of his joy and pride in the beautiful ships he has seen, a joy and pride which are closely akin to his love for his country. He glories in

"That art of masts, sail crowded, fit to break,
Yet stayed to strength and backstayed into rake,
The life demanded by the art, the keen
Eyed-puckered, hard-case seamen, silent, lean,--
They are my country's line, her great art done
By strong brains labouring on the thought unwon,
They mark our passage as a race of men,
Earth will not see such ships as those again."[3]

The sailing vessel has given place to the steamship, but in the heart of Mr. Masefield the clipper ship will always hold first place.

Mr. R. A. Scott James observes: "Mr. Masefield was and is-- a lyrical poet, fitted to express the personal

1. C. Poems, "Biography", p. 61.
2. Ibid., p. 67.
3. Ibid., "Ships", p. 71.

emotions which lyrical poetry can support."[1] He believes our poet to be "nearer akin to the type to which Keats belonged" than to the present day writers. In our discussion of Mr. Masefield's narrative poems mention has already been made of the lyrical quality of certain portions of the poems and some of the best of these passages have been quoted. Nevertheless, it is desirable to give here one or two of the shorter poems which have helped to establish his fame as a lyrical poet. "Beauty", which was written as a tribute to a beautiful woman, is one of the loveliest of these lyrics.

"I have seen dawn and sunset on moors and windy hills
Coming in solemn beauty like slow old tunes of Spain:
I have seen the lady April bringing the daffodils,
Bringing the springing grass and the soft warm April rain.

I have heard the song of the blossoms and the old chant
of the sea,
And seen strange lands from under the arched white sails
of ships;
But the loveliest things of beauty God ever has shown to me,
Are her voice, and her hair, and eyes, and the dear red
curve of her lips."[2]

"Tewkesbury Road" is a song of gaiety and gladness and is full of the warm emotion of the wanderer as he takes to the road again.

"It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows
not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither
nor why;

1. N. Amer. Rev., Vol. 199, p.376.
2. C. Poems, "Beauty", p. 89.

Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the keen
cool rush of the air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue lift
of the sky;

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall green fern
at the brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the fox-gloves
purple and white;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop down to the pools
to drink,
When the stars are mellow and large at the coming on of
the night."[1]

In "Trade Winds" we observe his appreciation of the charm of the South Seas and the islands of the West Indies:

"In the harbour, in the island, in the Spanish Seas,
Are the tiny white houses and the orange-trees,
And day-long, night long, the cool and pleasant breeze
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

There is the red wine, the nutty Spanish ale,
The shuffle of the dancers, the old salt's tale,
The squeaking fiffle, and the soughing in the sail
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing.

And o' nights there's fire-flies and the yellow moon,
And in the ghostly palm-trees the sleepy tune
Of the quiet voice calling me, the long low croon
Of the steady Trade Winds blowing."[2]

Not here alone, however, but in many other lyrics has he expressed his passion for the sea,--for example, in "Christmas Eve at Sea", "The Galley-Rowers" and "Lyrics from 'The Buccaneer'", and his first published poems were songs and ballads of the sea. These were collected and published in "Salt Water Ballads". Most of the ballads are written in the rough language of the sailors and told with the

1. C.Poems, "Tewkesbury Road", p. 47.
2. Ibid., "Trade Winds", p. 30.

bluntness and directness which is characteristic of men who have spent their lives at sea.

"Jake was dirty Dago lad, an' he gave the skipper chin,
An' the skipper up an' took him a crack with an iron belayingpin
Which stiffened him out a rusty corp, as pretty as you could wish,
An' then we shovelled him up in a sack an' dumped him to the fish.
That was jest arter we'd got sail on her.

Josey slipped from the tops'l-yard an' bust his bloody back
(Which comed from playing the giddy goat an' leavin' go the jack);
We lashed his chips in clouts of sail an' ballasted him with stone,
'The Lord hath taken away' we says, an' we give him to Davy Jones.
An' that was afore we were up with the Line."[1]

Some of the ballads relate to superstitions of seamen and to the stories and legends which Mr. Masefield learned during the years he spent at sea.

"Mother Carey? She's the mother o' the witches
'N' all them sort o' rips;
She's a fine gell to look at, but the hitch is,
She's a sight too fond of ships.
She lives upon a iceberg to the norred,
'N' her man he's Davy Jones,
'N' she combs the weeds upon her forred
With pore drowned sailor's bones.

She's the mother O' the wrecks, 'n' the mother
Of all big winds as blows;
She's up to some devilry or other
When it storms, or sleets, or snows.
The noise of the wind's her screamin',
'I'm arter a plump, young, fine,
Brass-buttoned, beefy-ribbed young seam'n
So as me 'n' my mate kin dine.'

She's hungry old rip 'n' cruel
For sailor-men like we,

1. C.Poems, "Mother Carey", p. 26.

She's give a many mariners the gruel
'N' a long sleep under sea.
She's the blood o' many a crew upon her
'N' the bones of many a wreck,
'N' she's barnacles a-growin' on her
'N' shark's teeth round her neck."[1]

Another collection of poems which our author has published is entitled, "Good Friday and Other Poems". In addition to "Good Friday", a play in verse, it contains a series of sonnets on beauty and life. This series, although not so widely read as his ballads and tales in verse, has, also, won the poet many admirers. One writer says of them: "There are sixty-one sonnets in the sequence, and they voice the highest thought and the deepest feeling any poet has given us since Tennyson wrote his 'In Memoriam'".[2]

With the coming of the world war the people looked to the poets to express for them the surge of feeling which swept over the civilized world. Mr. Thomas Hardy in "The Man He Killed"[3] gave utterance to that questioning and doubt which settled down upon the hearts of many people.

"'I shot him dead because--
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

'He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like--just as I--
Was out of work--had sold his traps--
No other reason why.

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1. C.Poems, "Mother Carey", p. 26.
2. Cur. Opin., Vol. 60, p.282; April,1916.

'Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.'"[1]

In his "Battle"[2] Mr. Gibson gave us snap shots of the scenes at the front.

"Out of the sparkling sea
I drew my tingling body clear, and lay
On a low ledge the livelong summer day,
Basking, and watching lazily
White sails in Falmouth Bay.

I felt a sudden wrench--
A trickle of warm blood--
And found that I was sprawling in the mud
Among the dead men in the trench."[2]

But readers have turned from both the irony of Mr. Hardy and the absolute realism of Mr. Gibson to the gentle encouragement of Mr. Masefield. Mr. Masefield, it is true, has been compared to both Mr. Hardy and Mr. Gibson, respectively both of whom are known as writers of the peasants and the poor of the cities. But Mr. Masefield's "August 1914" has little in common with "The Man He Killed" or "Battle". In "August 1914" he has sketched the English landscape, recalled to the minds of the people the many years that they and their forefathers have held the land, the wars which have been fought to keep it for them and he urges them on, as they fight, to keep the trust.

"A muttering from beyond the veils of Death
From long-dead men, to whom this quiet scene
Came among blinding tears with the last breath,
The Dying soldier's vision of his queen.

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1. T.N.P., p. 133.
2. Ibid., p. 124.

All the unspoken worship of those lives
Spent in forgotten wars at other calls
Glimmers upon these fields where evening drives
Beauty like breath, so gently darkness falls."[1]

It is Mr. Phelps' belief that "of all the poems published in the early days of the struggle, none equalled in high excellence "August, 1914".[2]

Mr. Masefield has not confined himself to short poems and narratives in verse. He has written some eight or nine plays in prose, and two, "Philip the King" and "Good Friday", in verse. Of the prose plays "The Tragedy of Nan" and "The Faithful" are of greatest interest.

In "The Everylasting Mercy" Mr. Masefield has depicted the inner life of a man, who tries to find his place in the world. But in none of his narrative poems has he described the heart of a woman, as she struggles to follow the tiny spark of good, which is within her own soul. Anna, in "The Widow in the Bye Street", dismisses the attempt with a shrug:

"'I shall bring sorrow to those eyes of blue.
He asks the love I'm sure I never meant.
Am I to blame? And all his money spent,'"[3]

while Mary, in "Daffodil Fields" refuses to struggle, choosing always the easiest way, turning from one lover to the other with little resistance. But in Nan Mr. Masefield has given us a woman whose heart is strong and

1. C.Poems, "August, 1914, p. 448.
2. A. of E.P., p. 90.
3. C.Poems, "The Widow in the Bye Street", p.216.

pure and who strives to follow her vision of a perfect life and who, when she finds herself defeated by the character of her lover, seeks death rather than accept less than her dream.

Nan is the niece of William Pargetter, the daughter of his sister, who, when the play opens, has been dead for several years. Nan's father has been hanged for sheep stealing and she comes to live with her uncle. She is hated by Mrs. Pargetter, who makes life as miserable for Nan as her husband will allow. Mrs. Pargetter has decided that Jenny, her daughter, shall marry Dick, a village lad who has fallen in love with Nan. Nan, on the other hand, loves Dick and has given him her whole heart, rejoicing in the giving. She promises to marry him, but says she has something she must first tell him. She is interrupted, however, before she has time to relate to him her father's disgrace. When she leaves the room, Mrs. Pargetter, hearing of her engagement to Dick, tells Dick that, if he marries Nan, his father will disown him. She tells him, moreover, that Nan's father was hanged for stealing sheep and reminds him that Nan has no money. Furthermore, she urges him to marry Jennie, and this he finally agrees to do. About this time, however, a government official come to the house to tell Nan that, through the confession of the

real culprit, her father's name has been cleared. This still official, further, gives her fifty pounds to compensate her for the death of her father. Dick, now that Nan is wealthy, wishes to return to her. She has learned of his unfaithfulness, but for a moment she believes in him again. Then, by a few brief questions she discovers the cause of his return:

DICK: Miss Nan. I want just to say. Some'ow, it be 'ard to explain. But I ask--I ask your forgiveness. 'Umbly I ask it. Oh, Miss Nan. My beauti-vul. My beautivul as I wronged.

NAN: As you wronged. Yes?

DICK: I was--I dunno--I was led away, Miss Nan.

NAN: Yes, Dick. You were led away. How were you led away? Why?

DICK: I was that. When I 'eard as your dad was. I mean when I 'eard of your dad. I doan' know. It seemed--I felt some'ow. I be that dry I can't 'ardly speak. Miss Nan---

NAN: You felt some'ow? Yes?

DICK: As your 'air was, was a cord round my throat. Choking. I was sick. I couldn't--no--I couldn't.

NAN: And was that the only reason why?

DICK: Yes, Miss Nan.

NAN: And why did you choose Jenny? My kiss was still warm upon your lips. (Going to him.) Your blood was singing in your veins with me, when you turned--Why did you turn to 'er?

(A pause)

She was not a--a gallus-bird. Eh?[1]

.....

1. C.Plays, "The Tragedy of Nan", p. 252.

NAN: Is that the only reason? You love me, then?

DICK: Yes. That's the only reason. I love you, Nan.

NAN: And what will my aunt say?

DICK: Damn 'er. It's 'er that came between us.

NAN: I know what you can say to 'er.

DICK: What?

NAN: Go to her now. Take her that bag of money. Tell her she may have that. But that you will marry me, not Jenny.

(DICK, rather staggered, takes up the bag and walks slowly to door)

DICK: Wouldn't it be better, Miss Nan, if us--if us just told 'er, without--without bein'--

NAN: I knew it. I knew it.

Nan's spirit is broken and[1] from this point on she plans her own death and the death of her lover. In a few words our author conveys to us how Dick, unconscious of what he is doing, kills the faith in the nobility of his love which has partially returned to Nan and unwittingly leads her to utter despair. In the "Tragedy of Nan" we have the struggle between idealism and materialism, between Nan, with her wish "to help", and Dick, who thinks only of his own comfort. Throughout the play, "Gaffer", the old fiddler, by his word-pictures and by the prophecies which have shaped themselves in his half-crazed brain, leads us up to the point where Nan, defeated by the selfishness of her lover, kills him and throws herself into the

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1. C. Plays, "The Tragedy of Nan", p.255.

sea. Mr. Wilson Dodd sums up the "Tragedy of Nan" by saying: "It is a play so grim in outline, so tersely and surely wrought to its piteous end, that one lays it down a little breathless, wondering how so authentic a spirit of beauty and terror could have been evoked by such simple means."[1]

The "Tragedy of Nan" has proved itself the most successful of Mr. Masefield's plays, but "The Faithful" possesses for us a special interest, because the author has written it with a view to its production on a stage of the Elizabethan type, which, he believes is superior to the modern stage. In an interview with Mr. Cournos Mr. Masefield once said: "What we want is a stage that will place the actor in a much more intimate relation with his audience."[2] He, accordingly, adapts "The Faithful" to this type of stage. In the preface to his "Collected Plays" he explains that he did not, at first, arrange it for such a stage, but that,upon seeing the productions of Mr. Granville Barker's "Twelfth Night" and "The Winter's Tale", he was so impressed with the effectiveness of the older stage construction that he changed "The Faithful" to a play "with 'continuous performance' for a double or platform stage." [3]

The play opens at dawn on the morning of March 10,1701,

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1. Yale Rev. Vol. ; April, 1914.
2. Ind., Vol. 73, p.537; Sept. 5, 1912.
3. C.Plays, p. vi.

in one of the more remote provinces of Japan.[1] Asano, a daimyo of the province kneels on the floor praying.

> "Light that my soul has followed, bless this beloved land, where I work with my men to make life nobler. For now my work here is threatened by an evil man, who draws nearer daily, violating Right and Law."[2]

As Asano finishes his prayer, Kurano, his counsellor, enters and tells him that he has lost his suit against Lord Kira, a rival daimyo, and that the pastures in the hills, which up to this time have been free land, have been given to Lord Kira. Kira is the son of a steward, but by his craftiness and force he has become a powerful daimyo and has encroached upon the lands of his neighbor daimyos. Lord Asana and his people are greatly distressed over this decision, for it deprives them of all the mountain pasture land and further provides that all of the inhabitants of this land and their possessions shall be Lord Kira's property. Realizing that Lord Kira is determined to ruin him, Lord Asano wishes to lead his men into exile, but Kurano urges him not to do this. A messenger now arrives with the news that the Emperor's envoy has been sent to the province to hold court and settle all disputes. The messenger tells Asano that the envoy wishes him to act as host, but that he must first learn the ceremonial which

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1. C.Plays, p. 380.
2. C.Plays, "The Faithful", p. 381.

is required on the reception of the Envoy. This ceremonial he is to learn from Lord Kira. Kira, however, teaches Asano the wrong ceremonial, and Asano, stung by the laughter of the nobles, and realizing that Kira has purposely deceived him, in order to shame him before the court, draws his dirk and strikes Kira in the face. This act constitutes a sacrilege and Asano's property is, consequently, confiscated and he is forced to commit hari-kiri. Kurano now carries the news of Asano's death to his ronins and, greatly incensed against Kira, they form a league, for the purpose of avenging Asano's death. Kira, fearing Kurano, sends Sagisaka, his counsellor, and the captain of the guard to kill him, but Kurano, to save his life, feigns madness.

SAGISAKA: I believe he is pretending.

CAPTAIN: He pretends unusually well, then.

SAGISAKA: Captain, can you take a hint?

CAPTAIN: Yes.

SAGISAKA: He would be better out of the way.

CAPTAIN: I've no orders about that; that is life and death.

SAGISAKA: Kira would be grateful.

CAPTAIN: I've no means of knowing that.

SAGISAKA: I will answer for so much.

CAPTAIN: Do you order me to kill him?

SAGISAKA: Come, these are harsh words, Captain; "order" and "kill".

CAPTAIN: It's a harsh subject.

SAGISAKA: Supposing he were to talk in his cups, excitedly, provocatively....Or rave against us... inciting to riot...

CAPTAIN: Well, what then? I could only arrest him for...being drunk...or out of his mind.

SAGISAKA: Of course...What more could you do? You would arrest him.

CAPTAIN: That would not help you.

SAGISAKA: Supposing he were to resist arrest, to struggle with you, or to try to get away?

CAPTAIN: The guard would bind him.

SAGISAKA: If he were violent. One of them might... in self-defence?

CAPTAIN: I see what you mean.

SAGISAKA: Kira would not forget it.[1]

.....

CAPTAIN: The man is only a madman. He is harmless.

SAGISAKA: Madmen are not harmless, and I do not believe that he is mad.

CAPTAIN: Drunken, then.

SAGISAKA: He is neither one nor the other. He is pretending.

CAPTAIN: If he is pretending, I will see to him.

SAGISAKA: You promise?

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1. C.Plays, "The Faithful", p.474.

CAPTAIN: Yes, but that is not pretence. Watch him there as he comes.[1]

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CAPTAIN: It is not like mad to me, it is more like one of these frenzies.

SAGISAKA: Well, end it. Kill him.

CAPTAIN: I have half a mind. Kurano; do you see the house on fire?

KURANO: Do not. Do not. You are always interrupting. I am going to sing to you.

Once, very long ago,
When there was still the sun,
Before these times, before
The light was darkened,
One whom we used to know
Made life most noble; one
Who would have changed the world
Had people hearkened.

It was a dream. Perhaps
Time drugs the soul with dreams
To all but blind desire
For high attempt;
Then the intense string snaps;
The project seems
A hearth without a fire;
A madness dreamt.

SAGISAKA: I think that decides it. Now, Captain.

DURANO: (To Sagisaka) What can it decide? Do you think I blame yom? You are stupid, you are vulgar, you play into life's hands. It is life that I blame, life is the enemy--life, who takes my friend and leaves you, the usurer, and you, the bully, and you, the doll. Come on then, for I will fight with life till I drag him from behind his veil. He is behind you and behind you and behind you and I will have him from his hiding-place. No, you shall not escape. I will have you. Out of my way. And you, the doll, the clog, to be left when my friend is taken....(He

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1. C.Plays, "The Faithful", p. 477.

beats them with a cloak.) No. No. Forgive me. I am not settled in my wits. You had better give me wine. For I'm going to law, and must have my wits about me. Wine will steady me. I fill to you and to you and to you, and then I fill to myself. Then we will drink and fall asleep.

CAPTAIN: There can be no mistaking that.

SACISAKA: I was wrong. He is mad.

CAPTAIN: A raving madman.[1]

A year passes and the death of Asano has not yet been avenged. His ronins have worked and starved in order to procure the equipment necessary to break through the guard which surrounds Kira's palace, but they are not strong enough to make the attempt. Kira is to be appointed Duke of the province, and, believing it futile to try to overcome so powerful a man, many of the members of the league have deserted. Worn out and discouraged, the remaining members meet together for the last time. They throw their equipment down and are about to depart when Kurano arrives and tells them that the military guards of Kira's palace have been dismissed for the night and that only the servants have been left to protect their master. The ronins hasten to the palace where they overcome the servants and kill Lord Kira. Their mission performed, they next go to the grave of Asano. Thither a herald brings the order to them to kill themselves as the penalty for the

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1. C. Plays, "The Faithful", p. 480.

murder of Kira.

HERALD: I have a message for you.
That you are to kill yourselves here, on this spot for the murder of Duke Kira. (He presents the order.)

KURANO: We accept the order. You shall witness our obedience to it.

HERALD: I salute you, faithful ones.

KURANO: You trumpeters, who call the faithful to death in all the armies of the world, blow a long point

That long-dead heroes
Manning the ramparts of God
May hear us coming,
Baring our hearts to the sword
For him we loved so.[1]

The prayer of Asano, which opens the play, would lead us to expect the struggle between the men who are working "to make life nobler" and the "evil man" who violates "Right and Law". We expect the motive of the struggle to be better conditions and better laws. This desire for better laws for the people of the province does, indeed, act as an incentive in the struggle of Kira's enemies against him. One of Asano's ronins says in his death poem.

"We are outlaws, going to die like outlaws.
The flowers from our bones will be better laws."[2]

Nevertheless, we feel that Kira was killed by Kurano and the ronins, not because he did not improve the condition of

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1. C.Plays, "The Faithful", p.528.
2. Ibid., p. 505.

the people in the province, but because he was the cause of Asano's death and Asano was their friend and master. After reading the play we think of the beautiful fidelity of the ronins, not of their noble struggle for better laws. The final impression which is left upon us is that they die, not in order that the flowers of their bones "may be better laws", but, as Kurano tells us in his last words, "For him we love so."

Mr. J. Rankin Towse, writing in 1915, expresses the opinion that "The Faithful" might be successfully produced but he remarks that "the fine spirit of fearless and tireless revolt against unjust tyranny with which it is animated would scarcely, in the managerial mind, compensate for its lack of a love story and its gloomy pessimism."[1] Nevertheless, the play has been presented in both England and America; in neither country, however, was it an unqualified success. The two principal reasons for this seem to be that "The Faithful" is a tragedy and a very gloomy one. Miss West avers that it "is gloomier than anything else on earth, with the possible exception of some of Mr. Masefield's poetry."[2] We are, consequently, not surprised to learn that "the early audiences of "The Faithful" at the Garrick Theatre felt a perceptible estrangement and chill".[3]

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1. Nation, Vol. 101, p. 604; Nov. 18, 1915.
2. Liv. Age, Vol. 301, p. 719; June 21, 1919.
3. Nation, Vol. 109, p. 591; Nov. 8, 1919.

The play is criticised, also, by students of Japan, who declare that the author does not understand the psychology of the Japanese people[1] and cannot, therefore, write a really good Japanese play.

Besides the above, Mr. Masefield has written several shorter dramas, two of which, "The Campden Wonder", a short play arranged in three scenes, was produced at the Court Theatre in London, on January 8, 1907, under the direction of Mr. H. Granville Barker.[2] Like "The Faithful", it is a very depressing and gloomy play. It is the story of two brothers, John and Dick Perry. John, the older of the two, is envious of his brother, because Mr. Harrison, their master, has promised to give Dick twelve shillings a week after Michaelmas. John is receiving but nine shillings a week and the thought of his brother's advancement so angers him that he plans to disgrace Dick. Mr. Harrison has been missing for several days and John tells Mrs. Harrison and the parson that he, his mother, and his brother killed their master for his money and hid the body. Dick and his mother insist that they are innocent and plead with John to admit that he has lied. This he steadfastly refuses to do and they

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1. New Republic, Vol. 20, p.326; Nov.12,1919.
2. C. Plays, p. 2.

are all three sentenced to be hanged. Dick and his mother are the first to be led from the jail.

JOHN: There he do go, him and his twelve shillin'. Ah, you godly one! They got you. Lower than the dirt, like as I said I'd do. Afore all Campden! You and your twelve shillin'! Make un a speech, Dick. Make thy speech and confession. O! if only door were open. Thee be looking pale, you and your twelve shillin! You that thought to be high in the world. Aha! Aha!

(A cry without and drums.)

There he do go! Aha! Aha! (A pause.)

(Re-enter Parson and Tom)

PARSON: O! the pity of it, the pity of it! O! Lord strengthen me.

JOHN: Mr. Parson, Sir, might I speak to 'ee, sir?

.....

PARSON: Come, John Perry. (Tom undoes chains) There is yet one thing, John. Tell us this, that he may have Christian burial.

JOHN: It were Dick and Mother took his body, sir. I don't know where it be, I don't. But perhaps one day you'll find 'en. You'll be wiser on that day, Parson.

PARSON: You talk strangely, John.

JOHN: A dying man have a right to talk strange. I be ready, Sir. Will you say a prayer for me, Sir? "Our Father" or summat.

John is hanged and the parson goes to tell Mrs. Harrison that her husband's murderers are dead. He finds, however, that Mr. Harrison has returned home and realizes now for the first time that the story of his murder was a lie.

In "Mrs. Harrison" the story of "The Campden Wonder" is continued. Mrs. Harrison questions Mr. Harrison as to where he has been during the past few days. He tells her that he was never farther than twenty miles from home and that he knew all about the trial, but that he was paid three hundred pounds to leave town and did not return to save the Perrys, because he feared he would lose the money, if he returned before the time agreed upon. The Parson arrives as Mr. Harrison finishes his confession, and,to save her husband, Mrs. Harrison lies about his absence and tells the parson of the distant cities her husband has visited during his wanderings. The parson, greatly impressed by this story, asks Mr. Harrison to go with him to the church, in order that they may return thanks for his safe return. When they have gone,Mrs. Harrison, overcome by sorrow at the unhappy fate of the Perrys and disappointed in her husband, takes poison and dies. Few scenes in the English drama produce such a feeling of horror as that which is evoked by the closing lines of "Mrs. Harrison".

> MRS. HARRISON: I been wife to a murderer....I been wife to a murderer.... I've been to bed with a man as done murder; and I've helped un clear after.... (She rocks in her chair; then gets up and goes to cupboard.) But never no more, William Harrison, you've had your last of me....(She opens cupboard.)

> I be the lowest of the low. O Lord, I be the lowest of the low.... I feel as I'd been spat on. (She rummages among bottles.) But never no more, William Harrison.... God have mercy on a sinful woman.... You've had your last of me, William Harrison. You can go to your Jennies, you can.... (She takes out a paper.) This is it. This is it,--is the cure. I bought it for the rattens as ate my chicks. What'll kill rattens'll kill folk. Where be my thimble? (She pours powder into thimble and drinks.) Ugh! it be bitter (She pours again and drinks.) Ugh! (She puts thimble and paper into fire. The fire spurts up.) Ah, pretty it be! (She goes to table and begins to read the Bible; she spells it out slowly.)
>
> "But when Jesus saw it, he was displeased, and said unto them: Suffer the little children to come unto me. Suffer the little children to come unto me." Us be little children--"And forbid them not"... It be a long road for poor folk.... It be a cold road for us, poor children.... (dies). [1]

Both "The Campden Wonder" and "Mrs. Harrison" are depressing. We rise from both plays with the feeling that it is useless to struggle against wrong, for in both evil overcomes good and we are given little reason to hope that good will eventually prevail over evil. In "The Campden Wonder" John's purpose is accomplished, and his innocent brother and mother are disgraced and hanged; in "Mrs. Harrison" a drunken reprobate lives and becomes the hero of the village, while his wife, a good and kind woman, is forced to commit suicide. When we think of the misfortune of Dick and his mother and of Mrs. Harrison, we are apt to say, as Mrs. Harrison said, "They be happy to be out of such a world." [2]

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1. C.Plays, "Mrs. Harrison", p. 58.
2. Ibid., "The Campden Wonder", p. 40.

"The Tragedy of Pompey the Great" is the outgrowth of a one-act play called "The Death of Pompey the Great" which Mr. Masefield wrote in 1907. It is based on the story of the death of Pompey the Great as told in North's "Plutarch".[1] Of"Philip the King" and "Good Friday" Mr. Masefield observes: "After finishing "The Faithful", I began the verse play, in one act, of 'Philip the King', about January, 1914. Soon afterwards I began a second one-act play in verse, on the subject of Good Friday. Both of these play were begun at Hampstead. Philip was finished at Lollingdon in May of that fatal year. "Good Friday" was interrupted by the war and never completed. I had hoped in a rewriting to make the play a clash between Christ and the High Priest. This was one of the many millions of human hopes destroyed in that year."[2]

The first of these two plays in verse, "Philip, the King", is the story of Drake's defeat of the Spanish Armada. As the play opens, King Philip of Spain is praying for victory over the English. He finishes a petition with that his friend, De Leyva, may return unharmed. His daughter, the Infanta, tells him that she is distressed by dreams of a disaster which has overcome the Armad. After reassuring her, Philip sends her away to rest. He, himself, falls asleep, and, as he sleeps, the voices of

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1. C. Plays, p. vi.
2. Ibid., p. vi.

people, who have died in order that he might satisfy his ambition to become the greatest ruler in the world, reproach him and perdict the defeat of his navy. At length he is awakened by shouts of victory. An English prisoner is brought in and tells King Philip that Spain is victorious. In honor of the event cannon are fired, bells rung, the people cheer and the monk's chant of thanksgiving is heard.

MONKS: Let us give thanks unto the Lord of lords,
Who saves His faithful from the Egyptian swords.

VOICES: Amen. God save the King.

MONKS: He made the Red Sea waters to divide,
And led our Israel through with Him for guide.

VOICES: Amen. God save the King! Philip the King!

PHILIP: O God, I thank Thee for this marvellous thing.

MONKS: He whelmed King Pharaoh's army in the sea,
And of His mercy gave us victory.

VOICES: The famous kings are blown like chaff
Before Thy fiery car.
Thou smit'st th' ungodly with Thy staff...
Philip the King! God save our prudent King!

PHILIP: My subjects, whom God gave me for His ends...

PRINCESS: Whatever pain you bore, this makes amends.

VOICES: Speak to your loving hearts, your Majesty.

PHILIP: I do His will; to God the glory be.

MONKS: Praise Him, O sun and moon, morning and evening star!
The king who mocked His word are broken in the war.
Praise Him with heart and soul! Praise Him with voice and lute!

VOICES: The King! God save the King! Silence! He speaks. Salute!

MONKS: In the dark night, ere dawn, we will arise and sing
Glory to God on high, the praises of our King.[1]

As the King starts to speak to his subjects, he hears the sound of men singing. A band of ragged seamen advance toward the palace singing a dirge. They are sailors from the Spanish fleet and they sing of the loss of the Armada. Their leader is admitted to the king's presence and tells the story of their defeat. When the story is finished, King Philip says:

PHILIP: I, from my heart, thank God, from whose great hand
I am so helped with power, I can still
Set out another fleet against that land.
Nor do I think it ill
If all the running water takes its course
While there are unspent fountains at the source.

He sendeth out His word and melteth them.
Take back your standard, Captain. As you go,
Bid the bells toll and let the clergy come.
Then in the city by the strike of drum
Proclaim a general fast. In bitter days
The soul finds God, God us.

(Exit Captain)

PHILIP: (Alone) De Leyva, friend,
Whom I shall never see, never again,
This misery that I feel is over Spain.
O God, beloved God, in pity send
That blessed rose among the thorns--an end:
Give a bruised spirit peace.[2]

This one-act play in verse has dignity and courage, which Mr. Masefield's prose plays do not possess; and, while it contains few incidents and the action of the entire play takes place in a few hours, it

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1. C.Plays, "Philip the King", p. 561
2. Ibid., p. 580

has a beauty and a dramatic force that make it one of the best of our author's plays.

Mr. Masefield's fame, however, has been won, after all, not by his plays, but by his poetry, and, while it is seldom wise to try to decide the literary standing of contemperary poets, remembering his narrative poems and bearing in mind his many beautiful lyrics, we may well agree with Mr. Milton Bronner who declares that "there is no reason for timidity in awarding to him(Mr. Masefield) a laurel wreath."[1]

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1. Bookman, Vo. 33, p. ; August 1911.