An Experimental Study of the Influence of Social Background and Political Opinion on Literary Preferences

by

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Abstract of Thesis.

"An Experimental Study of the Influence of Social Background and Political Opinion on Literary Preferences."

A survey of some relevant researches showed that aesthetic appreciation has generally been studied either in terms of individual psychology or in relation to a standard determined by so-called 'art experts'. Neither of these approaches gave due consideration to the social aspect of aesthetic experience. It was concluded that, in order to explore this aspect, the problem of literary preferences could profitably be studied in a social psychological context.

The hypothesis which the present investigation proposed to test was that literary appreciation and preference, though highly individual in their nature, are influenced by two important social factors, namely, social background and political opinion, both being related to social values and attitudes.

An experiment was devised for this purpose, consisting of sixteen poems (most of which were selected by four groups of people, two with contrasting social backgrounds and the other two with contrasting political outlooks), a preference scale on which the poems were to be rated, and a questionnaire regarding the raters' social background and political opinion. The raters were also to give their comments on each poem.

Ratings and comments were obtained from a total number of 212 subjects, out of whom 164 completed the political opinion tests included in the questionnaire.

The subjects were classified into three social groups according to the types of their occupations and each group was again divided into political sub-groups on the basis of the subjects' political affiliations.

Analysis of variance was applied to the ratings of the sixteen poems taken together as well as separately in order to see if the three social groups differed significantly in their preferences. To study the relation between political opinion and literary preferences, correlation coefficients between political opinion scores and the ratings of each poem were calculated and their statistical significance determined.

The mean ratings of different social groups and political sub-groups for the sixteen poems were compared and contrasted and were represented graphically.

To interpret the differences among social groups as well as political sub-groups within them, a qualitative analysis of the comments was made with special reference to the social attitudes and literary values of the subjects in different groups on the one hand, and the theme and the style of each poem on the other.

The results of the experiment suggest that social background and political opinion, which involve certain attitudes and values on the part of the subjects, influence their preferences for certain types of poems, mainly in relation to the ideas, attitudes and sentiments expressed in them.
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Chapter I

Orientation of Problem

The general approach of psychology, both theoretical and experimental, to aesthetic experience has generally been either to interpret it in such terms of individual psychology as imagination (Griffith, 1932), empathy (Listowel, 1933), grasp of meaning (Richards, 1930) and power of judgment (Speer, 1929), or to study it in relation to some aesthetic values derived from the opinion of 'art experts'. The purpose of the first approach has been to attempt an analysis of mental processes involved in aesthetic experience, which have usually been treated in isolation from their functional relationship to the content of the art object. The second approach, on the other hand, has tried to study the ability of the individual appreciator in conformity with certain definite values and standards of art criticism. These values and standards are sometimes determined by the subjective experience of experts and sometimes by the consideration of objective qualities of the art object.

We shall consider the second type of approach first. Psychologists who have studied aesthetic experience in
accordance with definite standards and values have employed different methods according to the emphasis they give to objective qualities or subjective experience. The objectivists start from the objective factors (Peel, 1945; Martin, 1950) while the subjectivists draw on the subjective standard of experts (Williams, 1937; Dewar, 1937). These two treatments are not, however, separate from and independent of each other. On the contrary, they are complementary and mutually supporting.

The subjectivists, assuming that aesthetic experience is something unique and completely independent of our other experiences, assert that this experience is dependent upon a special capacity which is sometimes termed 'aesthetic sensibility'. According to them, this capacity is not, or should not be, influenced by or involved with such irrelevant factors as the content of art or the associations it might arouse in the individual appreciator. In this way, they would claim, the act of appreciation would lose all its aesthetic character. Naturally, when they try to be more concrete, their assumption leads them to select some formal qualities of art and literature in complete isolation from the content or the association it may evoke in the individual appreciator. These qualities, according to them, are objective and universal and can or should be the proper object of aesthetic enjoyment. Conversely, they
determine the validity of one's appreciation and enjoyment on the basis of these qualities alone, which are supplied for them by art and literary criticism.

Again, the objectivists who start from, and give more emphasis to, the object of aesthetic experience borrow similar qualities from art criticism and, considering them to be objective and universal, treat them as the basis of aesthetic appreciation. They too, like the subjectivists, detach these qualities from the content by ignoring it as irrelevant.

But a piece of art or literature is not simply a collection of images or metaphors and a combination of colours or rhythmic words and phrases. These things, though important, are not independent of what they communicate. They help to convey something. This 'something' may be an idea, an attitude or an emotional experience of the artist, which has been conveyed artistically. This 'something artistically conveyed' is the real aesthetic stimulus which cannot lend itself to being artificially dissected into various formal elements or reduced to purely subjective feelings. By such a process it is divorced from and stripped of all its content and meaningful associations. The content in art and literature is, in fact, related to the formal elements, on the one hand, and is closely associated with the attitudes and values of the artist and the appreciator, on the other.
Thus the above approach, whether subjective or objective, studies the relation between the subject and the object, by considering only the formal qualities of art and literature, detached from their content. Simultaneously it abstracts the subjective feeling of the individual from its meaningful associations and the possible influence of his own values and attitudes. Moreover, it seems to be eventually based on an a priori standard of aesthetic values and can only account for the varying capacity of individuals for appreciating those values. In fact, such an approach ignores the possibility that the individual appreciator may have values different from and even opposing to those held by this or that critic or group of critics. The result is that, instead of studying the functional relationship of subject and object on any empirical and scientific basis, it makes an attempt to derive the reactions of the individual from the 'sovereign ability', which from the very start appears to be the privilege of a gifted few, namely experts, who are usually persons of similar social background and education.

We can clearly see the dead end of such an approach to aesthetic experience and values. It is formal and authoritative, arbitrary and abstract. It fails to explain individual variations and the functional relationship of the appreciator to the object appreciated, beyond what can be termed temperamental differences and individual abilities.
As regards the other approach mentioned in the beginning, it is observed that psychology has been too much concerned with the analysis of individual minds, conceived and studied apart from the dynamic social factors, and psychologists have, consequently, interpreted aesthetic experience in terms of individual psychology such as imagination, empathy and power of judgment. These are undoubtedly mental processes of which the human mind is capable, but they do not and cannot take place in vacuo; they function only in relation to some stimulus conditions. For example, imagination in an individual is evoked by such a stimulus as is meaningful and potent for the individual concerned. Similarly, empathy is established for such objects as can move him. The functional relationship between mental processes and art stimulus can therefore be fully studied only in the light of the individual's past life, his social background, his attitudes and values, and the content or the theme of the art object.

It is now becoming more and more evident in psychology that man's experience and behaviour take place in relation to his social setting and therefore individual reactions of any sort acquire their full significance only in relation to the framework of social life. Thus the process of aesthetic appreciation in its 'pure form' may be the same but the actual contents and conditions of this
process may differ from individual to individual and from one group to another.

Social life, which exerts its influence on both the art object and the individual appreciator, and within which these two interact, has been, as it were, held constant by some psychologists (Burt, 1933; Eysenck, 1940), or else excluded altogether from consideration. The fact has often been ignored that the individual is not a mere individual; he is also a social being and as such is liable to be influenced in his aesthetic experience by definite social factors.

It is therefore clear that the relation between literature (stimulus) and literary appreciation (response), their interdependence, together with an explanation of differences in individual preferences and variation in literary tastes can be sought partly in the framework of social life.

Perhaps no one, whatever aesthetic theory he may hold, will disagree that aesthetic creation, literature being included, is an expression of human experience. It is a reflection of the real world in which the creator lives, not as a detached individual but as a social being. In fact, creation is the result of the creator's contact with the world and his love or hate for what he finds in it, his actual attitudes towards things around him. As such,
artistic creation embodies his sentiments, ideas, attitudes and values.

Similarly, aesthetic appreciation, the counterpart of creation is not passive; it is active in the sense that the appreciator's past experience, his sentiments and attitudes determine his liking or dislike for a particular piece of art or literature.

It follows, then, that the relation between creation and appreciation is largely determined by a common stock of experience, sentiments, attitudes and values. Looking from this angle, one can see how art and literature are based on the laws of sympathy and how they serve to bring the artist and the appreciator together. Art and literature are inexorably social both in their foundation and effect, and their final objective is the expression of human experiences and values.

Human experiences and values are not, however, uniform in our society; they not only vary from group to group in the same community, but also, sometimes, come into conflict with one another. Their variation and conflict are social in origin; as Sherif has pointed out, "With the differentiation of independent social units on the basis of organization and function in society, there will be different sets of values in each unit" (Sherif, 1943, p. 94).
Relating these differences of human experience and values to literary appreciation and preference, a German sociologist, Schucking, quotes Hettner who says, "The history of literature is the history of ideas and their scientific and artistic forms". Schucking adds that "if the conception of philosophy is assumed to be substantially covered by Dilthey's tripartition, as a view of the world, a valuation of the world and principles of action in life, the question arises at once: which sociological group is meant. For any observer of the community as a whole quickly sees that in respect of view and valuation of the world and principles of conduct, or in other words, ideology, the community varies very fundamentally within itself. The groups are too varied for their thinking to be brought so simply within a common formula" (Schucking, 1944, pp. 5-6).

What Schucking says applies to our present-day life and literature all the more. In our society, we find different social groups which have different views and valuations. These views and valuations have also found expression in literature and literary criticism. Those who acclaim the 'proletarian literature' and ally themselves with a particular ideology allege that 'bourgeois literature' has lost all its vitality and strength for the 'masses of people'. One of them is Thompson, who writes, "During the past half century capitalism has ceased to be a progressive
force; the bourgeois culture, including poetry, is losing its vitality. Our contemporary poetry is not the work of the ruling class - what does big business care about poetry? - but of a small isolated section of the community, the middle class intelligentsia, spurned by the ruling class but still hesitating to join hands with masses of the people, the proletariat .... and so bourgeois poetry has lost touch with the underlying forces of social change. Its range has contracted, the range of its content and the range of its appeal" (Thomson, 1945, p. 53).

Another supporter of 'proletarian literature' is of the opinion: "The experience of the mass of humanity today is such that social and political themes are more interesting, more significant more "normal" than the personal themes. Social themes today correspond to the general experience of men actually conscious of the violent and basic transformation through which they are living, which they are helping to bring about. It does not require much imagination to see why workers and intellectuals sympathetic to the working class - and themselves victims of the general social-economic crisis - should be more interested in unemployment, strikes, the fight against war and fascism, revolution and counter revolution than in the nightingale, the stream of middle class unconscious, or love in Greenwich village" (Freeman, n.d., p. 16).
On the other hand, those who subscribe to a different ideology and are against "left heresy" in literature believe that "the combining of political with poetic ends is a wilful falsification of the nature of poetry which can have no special interest in the moral mechanics of life at a particular time in a particular place. It is a transference of poetic seriousness to the practical urgencies, the use of poetry as an art of persuasion" (Kemp, Riding and others, 1939, p. 217).

It seems from these statements as though the values of contemporary literature, like contemporary life, are divided into different and opposing camps. We need not go into the details of what these critics say but will have to admit the importance of the conflict of values and ideologies in literature and literary appreciation.

This conflict of values suggests, at least, one thing: it is difficult for psychology to set any objective and universal standard for either creation or appreciation without getting involved in the conflicting social and political values of our time.

Philosophy or art criticism may have a right to set an objective and universal standard of art and literature. But psychology, being a science, cannot, as Harding has pointed out, "offer an answer to religious or philosophical question on the possibility of absolute values in ethics or
aesthetics*. He suggests, however, that "if there are such values the approach towards grasping them can only be through personal experience and conviction" (Harding, 1948, p. 16).

Taking a broader view of personal experiences, one can say that these experiences, apart from individual and temperamental differences, reflect different scales of values within the community itself and can be explained in their social context. This might enable us to gain an objective ground for resolving individual differences into some group values.

The problem why one likes or dislikes a particular piece of literature, or why one likes one piece better than another is difficult to explain fully unless due consideration is given to the social aspects of human experience. An individual is a member of one or another social group and, consciously or unconsciously, he may also hold definite social and political views. As such he cannot transcend the values and attitudes, aspirations and prejudices of his social group in his literary appreciation and preference.

Literature, too, expresses certain attitudes and values, which may coincide or clash with the attitudes and values of the appreciator and thus affect his appreciation. It follows that while studying literary appreciation and preference, we cannot ignore the theme and content of
literature and dismiss it as immaterial and irrelevant to the aesthetic experience.

A poem, for instance, is, as Lucas says, "the result of a collaboration between poet and reader. They are partners. And the reader is no mere sleeping partner - or if he is, the poem is not being very successful" (Lucas, 1951, p. 204). Lucas further points out that "Every work of art may be different for every percipient, since the percipient's own faculties, associations, interest, outlook must be in harmony with the poet's work to produce the artistic impression in favour of that work" (ibid., p. 212). This explanation clearly assumes a common bond between the reader and the poet on the one hand, and also among a group of readers, who share their preferences, on the other. This bond lies in their common associations, interests and outlook, that is, their common attitudes and values.

Thus the problem of literary appreciation and preference is not, as is sometimes supposed to be, concerned with individual psychology alone; the relation between the subject and the object, namely, an individual appreciator and a piece of literature, involves issues which can be studied by social psychology. A social psychological approach to the problem of aesthetic experience and values would be to study it in a social context. That is, while
studying aesthetic experiences of different individuals, social psychology would take into account the differences of their social values and attitudes, which are to be explained partly in relation to the economic and political aspects of social organisation.

In the light of these considerations it is proposed to make an experimental study of the influence of social background and political opinion on literary preferences. Such a study is likely to be significant because it may be expected to throw light on a very important aspect of aesthetic appreciation.
Chapter II

A Critique of Previous Researches

Before we proceed to our investigation it seems proper to give a brief and critical survey of the researches which have been made in the field of aesthetic appreciation. This, it is hoped, will serve to form a perspective for the present inquiry and will incidentally provide a justification for the problem of this research.

Aesthetic experience, whatever its nature is supposed to be, is rightly claimed to be a psychological fact and has always attracted the attention of philosophers, critics and psychologists.

The theories of aesthetics that have been developed in the past are diverse and even conflicting. They may however be classified into three distinct groups: metaphysical, artistic and psychological. In general the difference of metaphysics and psychology is that between deduction from a priori principles and an inductive science, and the difference between psychology and art is that between an emphasis on the person and that on the work of art. The first group of theories is mainly concerned with the possibility of the existence of beauty as a metaphysical category and therefore
its basic problem pertains to its universality, necessity and absoluteness. The psychological approach to aesthetics is essentially empirical, experimental and inductive, although, as we shall see later, the concepts of the metaphysical approach have constantly intruded into theoretical psychology and thus influenced the methods and findings of even experimental investigations. The third approach, that of artists and critics, is primarily concerned with and gives more importance to the art object independent of the subject who appreciates it. The theories of art criticism may be useful in studying the nature of art and literature but their actual effect on the subject, the individual, is not their primary concern.

It is therefore clear that the contributions from metaphysics and art criticism are not of great value to the present inquiry which deals with the actual reactions of the individual and is primarily empirical and experimental in its approach. Psychological theories too, except where they issue from experimental research, more often resemble metaphysics than scientific knowledge. It would therefore be wise to confine ourselves only to the empirical and experimental studies carried out in the past on aesthetic appreciation.

Of all the three chief branches of aesthetics, art, music and literature, it is the last we are concerned
with in the present inquiry. We shall therefore concen-
trate in the present survey more on the experimental work
done on literary appreciation and shall discuss only such
experiments in the field of art appreciation as in their
theoretical implications have a bearing upon our present
approach to aesthetic appreciation.

With the rapid growth of experimental psychology
in the later half of the 19th century, experimental methods
were introduced also into the field of aesthetics. It was
Fechner who first applied these methods in the study of
aesthetic responses (cf. Listowel, 1933). Since his time
many psychologists have been interested in aesthetics. But
in the beginning their interest was mainly confined to the
investigation of responses to formal elements of visual art,
like colour, lines and simple shapes, or, a combination of
these elements producing certain relational qualities, like
balance, symmetry or proportion (Pierce, 1894; Angier, 1903;
Puffer, 1903).

As we can see from their studies these early
workers were concerned more with perceptual than aesthetic
judgment. They, however, claimed their studies were on
aesthetics. It seems that it was not very clear to them
that the aesthetic whole was more than the sum of its
elements. It was not only an object of perception; it was
also something valuable. By dissecting the art object into
its primary or relational qualities they confused perceptual judgment with aesthetic judgment.

However narrow their conception of aesthetic experience, and however mechanical their approach to it may have been, it must be admitted that it is to these early workers that the introduction of scientific methods in the field of aesthetics is due. About the turn of the century, we find that for the first time these methods were applied in the studies of literary appreciation as well.

The psychologists who made these early studies in literary appreciation, strictly followed the example of those workers, who had confused perceptual judgment with aesthetic judgment in the field of art appreciation. They too, like their predecessors, singled out one or another element of literary form and studied it in isolation. Obviously they were not interested in the question of aesthetic theory or in the value of literary appreciation as a whole.

It was not until later in the 20th century that psychologists began to study literary appreciation as a whole. The purpose of these studies was however mainly to construct tests of literary appreciation. The study of single factors also continued side by side with the construction of these tests. These two kinds of studies were not mutually exclusive and have had a bearing on each other.
For it was assumed that a good test of appreciation must throw light on the factors entering into it, while investigation of these factors would facilitate the construction of a good test.

The purpose of these tests was to measure literary appreciation and so they were dependent on an objective aesthetic standard. "Tests of literary appreciation," says one of the constructors of such tests, D. E. Williams, "pre-suppose that pieces of poetry or of prose differ from one another in value objectively. They are founded on the belief that one poem is better than another, and does not merely appear good to one person, bad to another, according to his or her personal subjective 'taste'" (Williams, 1937, p.5). The counterpart of this assumption was that individuals vary in their capacity to appreciate the 'objective value' of literature. Thus the convenient explanation for those who could not appreciate this 'objective value' was that they were lacking in the ability to appreciate literature.

With these two assumptions "it was possible to construct tests of appreciation, by which individual differences of ability" were discovered. These tests set out to test ability to appreciate as a whole, or to test one or more of the particular factors entering into appreciation.
It was Thorndike (1916) who first tried to devise a method for investigating the ability of individuals to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' poetry. He constructed a test in which he presented the first line of a couplet, together with a few alternative versions of the second line, each one differing in 'merit' from every other. The subject was required to arrange the alternative lines in 'order of merit'. But this 'order of merit' was determined either by the experimenter himself or by some literary expert. Thus the process of literary appreciation was reduced to the mere exercise of skill in approximating to what, in the opinion of the tester or the 'expert', was the correct or best version of the second line. The basic question here arises whether the judgment made was in its essence a judgment of artistic form or a judgment of aesthetic value.

Abbott and Trabue (1922), two American investigators followed Thorndike and constructed a new test. They took an original piece of poetry and composed alternative versions of it. In one version the emotion was falsified, the poem was made sentimental, in the second it was made prosaic, by reducing the imagery; in the third the metre was altered till it became awkward. The subjects were only required to choose the best, i.e. the original. This test was, no doubt, an improvement on the previous tests, as here the material used was treated as one complete unit. But in
other respects this test was not different from others. Here too the subject was required not to choose between two original poems, two different objects of aesthetic value, but to discriminate between different versions, or forms, of the same object.

Later Speer (1929) carried out an investigation into different fields of aesthetic appreciation with more particular reference to literature. The aim of this investigation was mainly to measure the capacity of individuals to recognise general 'merit' as distinct from specific factors. Although Speer went a step further and recognised the importance of the formal qualities within a complete whole, he too concerned himself with the judgment of artistic merit rather than that of aesthetic value. Speer is, however, conscious of the difference between the two. He admits that "recognition of merit does not guarantee appreciation, but it is basically essential to appreciation on the higher levels. One may recognise merit in a poem, a bit of prose, a landscape, or a symphony without appreciating it in an emotional sense" (ibid., p.2). This basic difference between artistic judgment, or judgment of artistic form and aesthetic appreciation, or judgment of aesthetic value was made clearer by another worker, Crane, to whom we shall come later (cf. p. 5) below.)
Here we should only bear in mind that what Speer intended to study was nothing more than what he himself calls 'recognition of merit'. Like others, he too treated poetry in its pure form detached from its subject-matter. It is of course possible to view the artistic form of a poem in isolation from its subject-matter, in order to judge its so-called purely 'literary merit', but it is difficult to conceive of a real aesthetic appreciation and evaluation of the poem which takes absolutely no account of its subject-matter.

Speer also made an attempt in a number of tests to study 'recognition of merit' in relation to the economic and cultural background of the subjects. The co-efficient of correlation between 'recognition of merit' and cultural and economic background which emerged in one of these tests was as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
    & r \text{ between prose and economic background } = \ .20 \\
    & r \text{ " " " cultural " } = \ .29 \\
    & r \text{ " poetry " economic " } = \ .0003 \\
    & r \text{ " " " cultural " } = \ .02 \\
\end{align*}
\]

Thus, his results show as far as 'recognition of merit' is concerned, that there is little correlation between appreciation and cultural or economic background. But this conclusion is open to serious objection, in that the test was given to children, and moreover children of the same
school. Children can hardly be expected to make a judgment on literary merit independently of what they are taught in class. Further, children studying at the same school do not generally differ very markedly in their cultural and economic background; as the experimenter himself admits, "a quite homogeneous family group was represented in the situation studied. If a more heterogeneous group had been studied it is likely that a clearer relationship between cultural and economic background and 'recognition of merit' would have been observed in the various tests" (ibid., pp. 74-75).

Speer's tests themselves, however, would have been of little use in studying the relation between cultural and economic background and 'recognition of merit', because his tests suffer from the traditional defect of being constructed on the selection of 'highly qualified experts'. The results of such tests could, at best, only reveal the degree of achievement of school children in recognising poetic merit as defined for them by a group of experts.

In fact such tests are constructed for school children; they are meant for educational measurement and can therefore be of little use in studying the nature of children's aesthetic appreciation, let alone the aesthetic appreciation and aesthetic values of adults in society at large.
The wide use of literary tests in the study of children's aesthetic experience gradually came to be questioned. Leopold (1929) in an experiment on children's aesthetic appreciation objected, perhaps for the first time, to the assumption underlying literary tests. We are not concerned here with the main object of her study, but an interesting point emerged from some of her tests of literary appreciation which is relevant to our problem.

Her subjects, who were mainly adolescent students, made some very significant comments upon their choices, throwing light on the basis of their judgment. Their comments revealed that although some factors, like rhythm and the sound of the words, were integral to the poem, and in a sense, constant for all readers, others were fluctuating, so that different readers could hardly be regarded as passing judgment upon the same thing. Some subjects expressed the opinion that a multiplicity of elements invalidates the judgment passed. Others indicated a conflict of values, particularly where the more intuitive, direct, personal judgment would not accord with the more intellectual process of evaluating the lines in accordance with certain principles of criticism. Still others questioned the possibility of ranking aesthetic experience in 'order of merit' and protested against the 'absolute' standard implied in the words 'order of merit'.
These different observations, supplied quite unsolicited by the subjects, raised the question: 'Can appreciation or aesthetic responsiveness be tested?'

Apart from these tests of literary appreciation as a whole, there were some tests which instead of measuring the ability to appreciate literary merit in general, concentrated on one element in it, for instance, comprehension, or appreciation of imagery.

Hartley (1930) set out to construct tests, suitable for teachers of English, of the ability to comprehend and interpret literature. She says of her own work that she is not concerned with appreciation or criticism, but only with meaning - a problem which was also studied by Richards. The method of research of these two workers differed, however, in that Hartley constructed a test for her study while Richards simply gave a few poems to his subjects and tried to analyse their comments.

In her research, Hartley found that the chief difficulties in the comprehension of poetry were divided into four classes: 1. Figurative language, symbols and metaphors, through which it was necessary to penetrate to the meaning; 2. Imagery, and the difficulty in responding to sensory appeals; 3. Suggestions and implications, involving the necessity to read between the lines; 4. Condensation and elimination and unusual sentence
formation, which make difficult the apprehension of the literal sense.

Of all the single factors entering into literary appreciation, it has been imagery which has received the most attention from psychologists. The pioneer in the field was Feers (1913) who investigated imagery in imaginative literature. Among the questions he sets out to answer were two important ones. Firstly, what proportion of boys have images of different types, and to what extent do they function in dealing with imaginative literature. Secondly, does imagery hinder, help, or in no way affect the understanding of literature.

In answer to the first question it was found that all the boys between the ages of 13 and 17 had at least one type of imagery. The second question was then considered as to whether imagery helped or hindered comprehension. For this, three types of poems were chosen - one in which the sense depended on the imagery, one which was full of imagery which however only enriched, and did not convey the sense, and one which was lacking in imagery. The results showed that on the whole strong imagery helped comprehension of the first type and hindered the comprehension of the second. In the third type, of course, the question did not arise.

The next contribution to the study of imagery was made by Wheeler (1923). The subject of her enquiry differed
slightly from that of Peers. Peers was mainly concerned with the effect of imagery on understanding, while Wheeler was interested in its effect on appreciation in general.

Wheeler's experiments were of three kinds; in the first the subjects read a poem and then recorded the images that arose naturally in the process and also stated whether these images increased or lessened their pleasure; in the second experiment the same procedure was followed except that the subjects were asked to make an effort to get as much imagery as possible out of the poem; in the third, the poem was read aloud and the subjects were asked to state what other factors besides imagery entered into their appreciation. Like Peers, Wheeler also found that in some cases imagery was an aid, and in others a hindrance to appreciation. She found that images were an aid when allowed to arise naturally; they were a hindrance only when they were more or less irrelevant and personal, not very closely connected with the poem, and not blending with one another.

Later, another study was undertaken by Valentine (1923) on the function of images in the appreciation of poetry. He made several experiments of much the same nature as those already described. The main conclusion - that imagery is sometimes of value and sometimes not - is drawn in this study as in others. But, in general he concludes
that there are wide individual differences and that images of all kinds are closely connected with the emotions of which they are sometimes not the cause but the effect.

All these studies show that imagery is not the basis of aesthetic appreciation, nor even a condition of it. It is always secondary to the sense and hence is effective only when it is fused with the sense and helps to convey it. On the other hand, in the individual reader, the function of imagery is bound up with the emotions: imagery enhances aesthetic appreciation only when it harmonises with the emotions of the reader.

In other words the answer to the question of whether imagery is an aid or a hindrance depends upon more than one factor. The individual and his emotions have to be taken into account, since the poem taken as a whole may or may not appeal to him. Secondly, the way in which the imagery is employed in the poem needs to be observed, since it aids the reader only if it is fused with the sense of the poem. Therefore, it seems that the study of imagery may be more profitable and sound if, instead of treating it as an isolated factor of the poem, we study it in its relation to the poem as a whole and to the total experience of the individual. This would be contrary to the practice hitherto, since the study of imagery has generally been carried out in isolation from the concrete experience conveyed by the poem.
on the one hand, and from the emotions of the individual for whom that experience may or may not have aesthetic value on the other. The isolated study of imagery, in short, does not seem to be of great value, at least to the understanding of aesthetic appreciation as a whole, which is a process involving both an individual and a poem, and depending upon their functional relationship.

All the studies considered above singled out one factor or another from the total experience and studied it in isolation. Further, they never referred to the content of the poem and to the different value of that content for different individual readers. In fact, the main concern of these studies was to construct tests of literary appreciation, as a whole, or in relation to one single factor. The tests so constructed measured only the individual's capacity to appreciate a set standard in literature or some of the elements of such a standard, and thus ignored the individual's own experience and values.

The first study in which emphasis was laid upon the appreciator and in which an attempt was made to analyse his aesthetic experience, was that of Feasey (1927).

In this study the subjects were elementary school girls; they were asked to say which of six poems (which they had lately been studying) they liked the best, and if possible why. The reasons given were then grouped under
various headings. The different reasons were found to correspond to some extent with the different types of judgment in art appreciation which Bullough claimed to have discovered (cf. Burt, 1933, p. 280).

Feasey's study is important for the present inquiry, because it gave due emphasis to the individual reader's own aesthetic experience. It was an important departure from the traditional way in which aesthetic experience had been studied, that is by measuring the reader's capacity for appreciation of poetry by a set standard. Although her experiment was devised to study the reasons for poetic preferences of a homogeneous group, i.e. school girls, her method can nevertheless be modified and adopted for the present study which relates to the literary preferences of diverse groups.

A similar study of adult's appreciation of poetry was carried out by Richards (1930), but before we pass on to this, it is important to mention an investigation undertaken by Mackintosh in an attempt to study "what is value and how it operates in literature with special reference to poetry" (Mackintosh, 1932, p. 21).

"The term value," Mackintosh writes in explaining the object of her study, "may be used to describe the total situation made up of the individual's awareness to the inter-play of selection, interest, choice, and preference
in his personal and social life" (ibid., p. 21). As in life so in literature. Mackintosh rightly assumes that "to be a valuable literature for a given age or group, a production must deal with life situations common to that age or group, and it must deal with them so as to give an interpretation which is in harmony with the moral and artistic taste of that age and group" (ibid., p. 23).

With these considerations she undertook a survey of children's preferences for poetry. Her aim was to make a selection of poems suitable for children's courses of study in terms of their own interests and values, which might entirely differ from those based on an arbitrary and objective standard of literature.

Some of the most important conclusions which she reached are:

1. Literary merit in the accepted sense is not necessarily an indication that a poem will be of value to children.

2. A study of those poems which ranked high in children's preferences seemed to indicate that those poems which offered them the most opportunities of vicarious experiences were the most popular.

Mackintosh's investigation points to the great importance of value (as interpreted in terms of the individual's own life experience) as a determinant of
literary preferences. She concludes that value is the main determinant of children's literary preferences. We may argue with even greater force that it is the main determinant of adults' literary preferences also, since adults' values are more crystallised and forceful than those of children.

 Entirely different is the approach of Richards (1930), whose main object in the study of aesthetic responses, unlike that of Mackintosh, is to study individual comments in an attempt to see how far people succeed in grasping the meaning of different poems. In other words, he is more concerned with the study of factors which help or hinder the understanding of the meaning of a poem, and only incidentally with the study of aesthetic experience in terms of the appreciator's own values. Thus, although starting from the individual, he gives more importance, in his analysis, to the meaning of the poems.

The problem of the deeper meaning in poetry undoubtedly needed serious research and Richards' contribution is outstanding in that field. But we are concerned here only with certain theoretical assumptions about aesthetic experience and taste which his conclusions and interpretations imply.

Employing the same method of recording personal reactions to poems as was employed by Feasey, Richards gave
thirteen poems, not to children, but to adults, most of whom were university undergraduates, and asked them to report their reasons for liking or disliking each poem.

Richards' method was to give to his subjects a sheet of four poems or so, of "varying merits" on which they were asked to comment. The responses of Richards' subjects are themselves indicative of the fact that the question of what constitutes "merit" is itself one of the most controversial questions of aesthetic appreciation, so that it would perhaps be impossible to determine a standard of "merit" which all would accept. But Richards had a fixed standard in view; he therefore had to conclude not only that there exists an extreme diversity of opinion, but also that men and women of high intellectual standing, most of them being students of English, could not be trusted to interpret a poem fully and to recognise its 'true merit'.

The poems which Richards included in his experiment were all selected by himself. And in his selection he does not seem to have given due consideration to the question of what kind of poems would be likely to appeal to his subjects. The question of values is so important in aesthetic experience that any selection which is arbitrarily made for an experiment on aesthetic appreciation and which fails to consider the possible scale of values of the subjects concerned, is bound to impose an external standard.
Richards' selection does imply his own standard, to which the "varying merits" of the poems are referred. With this set standard as the criterion of aesthetic appreciation, Richards could not explain why most of his subjects were unable to appreciate the poems of his selection in any other way than by saying that they lacked understanding. That is, they failed to go deeply into the meaning of the poems with the help of word analysis. This failure, Richards explained, was due to the subject's prejudices, stock responses, preoccupations etc.

After a thorough analysis of these major obstacles to understanding the meaning of the poems, he gives a summary of the current state of culture. He states that the protocol writers were the product of the most expensive kind of education and yet the gaps in their equipment were very significant. This gap, he explains, may be due in the first place to the general immaturity of the readers, i.e. their lack of general experience. Secondly, the gap is due to a lack of reading. In this connection, he writes further that "it is not only those with little experience of poetry who fail in this. Some who appear to have read widely seem to make little or no endeavour to understand, or, at least, remain unsuccessful..... This construing we must suppose is not nearly so easy and 'natural' a performance as we tend to assume" (p. 312). This statement clearly implies that the
construing and understanding of meaning is a cultivated discipline in which even those who are widely read need to specialise before they can understand and enjoy poetry.

Richards concludes, then, that stock responses, preoccupations, doctrinal adhesion etc. are nothing but individual weaknesses for which the individual himself is responsible. One can agree with him that an individual may fail to appreciate a poem because he has certain prejudices, preoccupations and doctrinal adhesions. But then these things are not necessarily weaknesses. They may be a genuine expression of a person's intellectual and emotional reactions to poems which did not appeal to him. In some cases they may be the cause of a lack of understanding, while in others they may be the effect of the poems themselves. They may be rationalisations of a genuine liking or dislike for a particular poem. If a poem is not in agreement with the reader's values and attitudes, he may not say so straightaway. He may try to rationalise his dislike in various ways. Therefore, instead of reproaching the individual for the excuses he makes in the form of ready made responses and other rationalisations, it would be better to try to ascertain the real reasons responsible for both his reaction to the poem and his rationalisations of that reaction.

In fact Richards, in spite of his claim that his book is the record of "a piece of field-work in comparative
ideology”, does not seem to study aesthetic experience in specific relation to the differences of values and attitudes among the protocol writers. He does not give any data about the authors of the comments, so that we have no objective basis on which to judge of any individual or group differences amongst them. The documentations are only a collection of opinions which do not indicate any basis of comparison. Moreover, the standard against which Richards compares the judgments of his subjects is his own set standard of the value of the poems which he has selected and this makes his approach rather onesided.

At one place Richards admits that “a difference in opinion may be due to a misunderstanding of the meaning of a passage, but it may also be due to an opposition of temperament, to some difference in the direction of our interest” (p. 347). It is, however, only the former possibility that is discussed throughout his analysis. It seems therefore that his main interest was not the study of the comparative ideology of his subjects, but their comparative level of understanding as measured by the experimenter’s own standard.

Discussing general values he observes that “there is no gulf between poetry and life. There is no gap between our every day emotional life and the material of poetry” (p. 319). Here the question arises as to whose life is meant.
Life is a vague and inclusive term. It means different things to different groups of people. These different groups, therefore, may well have different ideas as to what constitutes 'material of poetry'. Hence there may be a gulf between the emotional life of a certain group in contemporary society and the material of poetry employed by another group. As a result, there is every possibility of there being a gap between the emotional life of a particular group and the material used in a poem. And here comes in the question of differences of values and attitudes.

The only difference Richards is prepared to make in poetry is not between the values and attitudes it may express, but between good poetry and bad poetry. This brings us to the same old question: Who is to judge which is good and which is bad in poetry? and also: What is or should be the criterion of such a judgment? To these questions Richards seems to have no answer. He nevertheless seems inclined to accept the view that it is difficult to determine the goodness or badness of poetry on any objective basis acceptable to all, without getting involved in the conflicting values of our time. At one place he clearly admits that "there are reasons for thinking that this century is in a cultural trough rather than upon a crest" (p. 320). He is also conscious of what he calls "the betrayal of social and economic conditions" (ibid). Nevertheless, his final verdict
is: "Poetry fails not through its own fault, but through our ineptitude as readers" (p. 321).

It is interesting to note here that while discussing the relationship between the subject and the object (i.e. individual reader and individual poem) he says that the two are interdependent; that the quality of beauty is not a property inherent in the object. In other words, he rejects the objectivity of beauty independent of the individual mind. But in selecting the material and interpreting the comments he tends to ignore the individual and regards the poem as having an absolute objective value. He frequently complains of an ineptitude on the part of the individual for understanding the real and hidden meaning of the poem, and seldom mentions the possibility of explaining this lack of appreciation in terms of the different values of different individuals.

One positive outcome of Richards' experiment, as of that of Feasy, is a realisation that the most important thing in the study of aesthetic preferences is the individual's own reaction and comment. This study of individual reactions has, however, been regarded by some psychologists as an unreliable method of reaching conclusions absolutely and universally valid, if not an actual hindrance to reaching such conclusions. Those who believe that there exists an absolute value in art and literature have failed to resolve
those differences which emerged from subjective reports and comments. Their main contention has been that if one were to rely on the subjective reports of individuals it would not be possible to demonstrate that different readers had in fact passed a purely 'aesthetic judgment'. This has led them to lose confidence in the very method of subjective reports. These reports, they contend, have been so diverse, and even conflicting, that no objective factors (in the sense of an objective aesthetic standard) emerge from them, and thus no objective basis of appreciation is established.

Earlier, Richards had explained that beauty is not a quality of external things. It is a feeling effect of a state of mind. Beautiful, like loveable, is used to describe a quality which we naively project into the object (p. 359, et seq). This approach was criticised by Burt in the following words: "As a matter of fact, however, all the arguments which prove that beauty is a state of mind and nothing else could be used to prove that the whole external world, all physical objects and their material qualities, colour, sound, taste and touch - are states of mind and nothing else" (Burt, 1933, p. 295).

Without going into the details of this controversy we should point out that Burt here does not seem to recognise the distinction between fact and value. Beauty is not a fact like material objects, which can be verified in the
outside world. It is a value. As such its validity depends neither on subjective feeling alone nor on so-called objective qualities. It emerges as a relation between the two. It cannot, therefore, be explained in any other way than the relation which obtains between the reader, or group of readers, and the art object in a framework of the reader’s or the group’s own values.

But since Burt believed in an objective standard of beauty his conclusion in summarising the results of past researches was that "the majority of people when asked to judge the beauty of an object, seldom really think of its beauty at all. They offer not aesthetic judgments but personal judgments. All kinds of irrelevant factors seem to affect them" (ibid., p. 283). Burt reiterated that beauty is objective, and in order to establish it as objective, independent of individual reactions, he had to go a little further: "Suppose that we could brush aside these irrelevant associations - the fashions, the fancies, and the fads that so obscure our sense of beauty, suppose we could completely detach ourselves from personal emotions and from private interests and sweep away the practical preoccupations and the intellectual question that the biological and business needs of daily life render so important: would there be any solid ground of preference left? Is there anything which everyone would find ugly, no matter whether he was civilised
or savage, adult or child, an ancient Athenian or a post-
war Londoner?--- I believe there may be, on experimental as
well as theoretical grounds" (ibid., p. 289).

With this theoretical assumption he devised a
test to study the artistic preferences of different types
of people. He collected a sample set of fifty picture
post cards of 'varying merits'. He first of all determined
the merit of these pictures for comparison by showing the
series to 'competent artists and critics'. The average
correlation was .9. This led him to conclude that there
was something fundamental guiding their general choice. But
when he turned from the experts to the untrained and the
young, and tried his pictures with them, he found the influence
of 'irrelevant factors' far more obvious.

What Lurt calls 'irrelevant factors' are really
personal factors which manifest, in large measure, one's
scheme of values. If aesthetic preference is not determined
by one's own values what else is it then determined by? His
answer to this question amounts to this: aesthetic judgment
is determined by perception and not by personal values. He
writes, "Our sense of beauty depends essentially on
perceiving objects or sensation - shapes, colours, sounds,
and even incidents and emotions - in certain relations....... It is the presence of an implicit structural pattern, of a
certain orderliness or arrangement, not forced or artificial,
but natural and alive, like the tendencies determining the growth of a plant, that constitutes the essence of beauty" (ibid., p. 302).

This conception of beauty bases itself on perception detached from personal values. The difference between perception and value is obvious. The former can be referred to the structural pattern or the formal qualities of the art object, while value in spite of being a relation between the art object and the appreciator refers more to the feeling of the individual and is influenced by his interest, attitude, and outlook. As such, value is also closely related to the content of an art object. But it seems that Burt, for whom aesthetic experience is based on the perception of structural pattern or formal qualities alone, would have no place either for personal values or the content of the art object. To him both are irrelevant in aesthetic appreciation.

Burt, under the influence of metaphysics, postulates beauty as something which "everyone would find beautiful in and for itself, no matter whether he is civilised or savage, adult or child, ancient Athenian or post-war Londoner". This conception leads Burt and most of his followers to adopt a position which reduces beauty to the formal qualities of the art object, to equate aesthetic experience with the perception of those qualities, and to regard appreciators as hypothetical individuals, abstracted from their concrete social and
historical circumstances. But it may be pointed out that an art object is not merely a pattern or an organisation of form; it comprises both form and content. Similarly, aesthetic experience is not only a perception of form but also an appreciation of content, and the individual appreciators are not mere individuals - individuals in general - but products of a concrete society, of a particular, historical period. As natural beings, they may be alike, but as social beings they are quite different. The failure to take these historical and social differences into account reduces Burt's whole approach to aesthetic experience to an abstract and metaphysical one.

Burt's metaphysical approach runs counter to the evidences provided by the history of art and literature. We do not find men agreeing about what is beautiful in all ages. We find on the contrary that conceptions of beauty have differed from age to age, and even in the same age from culture to culture and from group to group.

Burt's abstract and formalistic theory of beauty was later adopted and developed by a number of experimenters. William, Winter and Wood were the first amongst them, who devised an experiment on literary appreciation on lines similar to Burt's experiment on art appreciation.

The main objects of this experiment were, as they themselves state, "to devise practical tests of aesthetic
appreciation for purposes of educational and vocational guidance, and, incidentally, to ascertain how far the various manifestations involve a general aesthetic capacity entering into all" (Williams, Winter and Wood, 1938, p. 265). The general plan and method too were taken over from Burt's experiment. The subjects of this experiment, however, were all school girls.

Explaining the nature and purpose of the tests the experimenters write: "Preferences are relative. Hence in comparing the preferences of a given person with those which we regard as ideal, we cannot ask how many has he got right out of a total of so much: we can only ask, how closely does his order or his grading agree with the standard accepted. This means that our measurement of a person's ability will be obtained by correlating that person's grading with the ideal" (ibid., p. 266). As the purpose of this experiment, like other literary tests, was to measure capacity of literary appreciation, it had to employ a set standard. As such, it may have been useful for educational purposes, but it does not seem to be valid for the study of aesthetic experience in a wider sense.

The main theoretical problem which underlay this experiment was "to decide whether there is any common capacity that can be called literary appreciation — whether, that is to say, the judgment of the individual children
appear predominantly determined by a factor shared in differing degrees by each, or whether their specific interest, aptitude and prejudices outweigh any general influence that might affect them all" (ibid., p. 269). The experimenters do admit that neither "the quality judged nor the capacity for judging it can be simple; both are beyond a doubt, highly complex resultants." But since their theoretical approach to aesthetics was formal, they abstracted the form of aesthetic material and regarded it as the proper object of aesthetic experience. For them, as for Burt, aesthetic judgment was the judgment of aesthetic form.

The method adopted for the construction of tests was in complete harmony with this interpretation of aesthetic judgment. As the judgment was intended to be expressed on the aesthetic form in isolation from the concrete subject-matter, it was necessary to neutralise the influence of the subject-matter. This could be done either "by mixing a wide variety of subjects or by keeping the subject constant within each group of items to be compared" (p. 266). The latter procedure was however considered to be more suitable.

Now the main question was: "Do the various persons judging the test material base their judgment implicitly on much the same standard and criterion or do the grounds for their preferences vary so much from one individual to another that no comparable testing is possible?" To answer this
question gradings were statistically computed which resulted in the emergence of two factors: the 'general factor' and the 'bipolar factor'. By comparing the subjects' order of preference with that of experts, together with the evidence of the comments made by the subjects, it was proved that the predominance of a single factor accounts for their general capacity to judge, while the bipolar factor accounts for their temperamental or other individual differences.

As we have seen above, the experimenters had neutralised the influence of subject-matter not by mixing a wide variety of subjects, but by keeping the subject constant. What now remained for comparison was simply the artistic form. The readers therefore in determining their preferences could not take anything except form into account.

The experimenters in their conclusion confirm the theory of art expounded by Burt: "our own data, so far as they go, not only provide some verification for the general principle but also confirm the suggestion that the theory is applicable to other forms of appreciation as well. The appreciation of literary qualities, appears to depend essentially on apprehension of form. Now the apprehension of form demands a power of fixing attention, not on the concrete items that make up the content of the object apprehended, but upon the abstract relations between those items and upon the purely formal system into which the related whole is organised" (pp. 279-280).
The theory evolved by Burt and his followers is closely related to that of literary testers. The only difference between the two is that Burt's theory is more logical and elaborate and his method more statistical. But in spite of that his theory is nonetheless unacceptable as far as the nature of the aesthetic experience of adults in our society is concerned. It seems difficult to explain the aesthetic appreciation and preference of different groups in society by means of a single formula. Burt's theory is abstract and assumes absolute standards of aesthetic appreciation. It assumes that beauty is an inherent property of the object. This property he seeks in the structure of aesthetic form using such terms as 'unity in diversity', 'logical necessity in structure' and so on. Thus, the content of art is not considered to be of any significance in aesthetic appreciation and importance is given only to its formal and structural aspects.

Following Burt, some other workers worked out the above theory with aesthetic experience of visual art. These were Dewar, Eysenck, Peel and Crane.

Dewar's (1937) object of research was to construct a practicable test of artistic capacity. For this she carried out experimental work on girls from a Central School with three tests already available. In addition, a paired
comparison picture post-card test of her own construction was given to some of the same girls. The preliminary results obtained with these tests led her to construct a series of original tests which were likely to give still better results.

The main theoretical question before her was: "do the irrelevant factors have sufficient weight to obscure and overlay any general or universal tendency that may operate, or do the standards and criteria differ so completely from one competent judge to another that no single test is conceivable?" (1938, p. 32).

In her conclusion she states that on correlating the orders of preference of several persons, she found that all the chief methods of factor-analysis point to a single factor as mainly responsible for the orders of preference given.

A later investigator, Eysenck (1940) extends the work of Burt and Dewar. He uses a more 'heterogeneous' population than either of them and sets out to investigate the general and the bipolar factors. He first of all attempts to free his test from irrelevant associations in order to answer Burt's question: "if we could brush aside all irrelevant associations and take a completely detached view — would there be any solid ground for preference left?"

To gain a solid ground for preference, Eysenck rules out the influence of civilisation — "teaching, tradition,
general knowledge, and all the thousand and one things which make up our cultural background" (ibid. p. 24), as irrelevant for aesthetic judgment. If all these factors, which together produce human values, are ruled out from aesthetic judgment what is then left except an abstract form and its structural relations? Such a judgment is bound to reduce itself to a perceptive judgment as against a judgment of value. It could become a judgment of value only for those who attach an intrinsic value to the form itself independent of the content organised by that form. But many people do not attach any intrinsic value to form itself and therefore if it is desired to make an experiment of the value judgment of a heterogeneous group of subjects the experimental material presented to them must be such as will not exclude subject-matter from consideration.

Eysenck gave his tests, which were free from "irrelevant associations", to a small number of persons, eighteen in all, and applying factorial analysis to the results thus obtained, he discovered a general factor and a bipolar factor. The eighteen persons tested were taken from various walks of life - bank clerks, shorthand typists, painters, students, teachers, psychologists and a Professor of Aesthetics. But it seems reasonable to assume that the social background of the subjects, notwithstanding the diversity of their professions, was not essentially dissimilar. They were therefore liable to act as a homogeneous group.
Having found a general factor, Eysenck interprets it as "good taste" when applied to persons, as beauty in the case of pictures. It would appear in the light of earlier criticism that what he calls "good taste" is a measure of proximity to the ideal standard based exclusively on the structural relation itself. Beauty and good taste are thus reduced to structural relations and the appreciation of those relations independent of subject-matter and its importance to the appreciator.

Eysenck's experiment, like those of all other formalists, runs in a circle. The tests are first devised in such a way that social and cultural values are eliminated as "irrelevant". With this elimination, the only basis of comparison left for the subjects is the artistic form of the pictures (or poems). Naturally when the pictures of the test are ranked on the basis of artistic form alone, irrespective of their content, there is every likelihood, particularly when the population is homogeneous, of a general factor emerging. It would, however, be difficult to obtain any general factor if the group of subjects were large and heterogeneous, and if the content of the pictures (or poems), which are directly related to our culture, were varied.

We can see that Eysenck's and his predecessors' conception of aesthetic appreciation is formalistic. They isolate the form of art from its content and consider the
individual as an 'individual in general'. He is torn from his concrete social context and his reactions are abstracted from all meaningful relations. Thus, having set a number of tests, which dealt with only one aspect of aesthetic experience i.e. formal, they inferred a hypothetical quantitative factor underlying the results of these tests. This general factor can be described as a measure of proximity to the accepted standard which is based on formal considerations only. But apart from this standard, it cannot be explained in any psychological terms. In fact the 'g' factor in aesthetic appreciation is a mathematical index - an abstract statistical concept. It can, at best, be interpreted as a formal, rather artificial factor extracted from the aesthetic experience of a more or less homogeneous group of subjects.

After Eysenck's work, Peel devised a similar method for analysing aesthetic preferences. His contribution lies in the fact that he did not merely extract factors, but also identified them experimentally in terms of certain known artistic criteria such as naturalism, composition, colour, rhythm etc. But since the object of his research was to determine how far the aesthetic appreciation of a group of children and adults is influenced by these artistic qualities of pictures and designs, he too did not touch on the content of art and its corresponding associations.
Referring to his problem of research, Peel says, "The degree to which moral and utilitarian considerations might affect a work of art is not considered in the following experiment, which is limited to considering its sensuous, formal, naturalistic, and expressive characteristics" (1945, p. 31). At one place, however, he admits the influence which moral and utilitarian considerations may have in art appreciation. He says, "Although association is considered by many to be irrelevant in aesthetic appreciation, it is evident as a significant influence in the aesthetic response of laymen and children... and would appear to be present and more closely fused with formal qualities in the judgment of more expert opinion" (ibid, p. 18).

Later another experiment in aesthetic preferences was carried out by Crane (1946) to discover whether a general factor was discernible in the judgments of untrained adults. Unlike some previous workers, particularly Eysenck and Dewar, she found that her experiment afforded no evidence of a general factor of aesthetic judgment. This divergence is explained by the fact that she attaches a different meaning to the term "aesthetic judgment" from that given by previous investigators. Researches in aesthetic appreciation, Crane writes "range from investigation of responses to single colours, lines and simple shapes to responses to complex works of art. It is possible, however, that in using the
term Aesthetics to cover all these experiments, the
distinction becomes blurred between two very different types
of judgment, namely, a perceptual judgment of fact and an
aesthetic judgment of value" (ibid, p. 8). Thus Crane has
used the term aesthetic as applying to value-judgment while
Burt and others seem to have used it as applying to percep­tual judgment.

Employing the same method of experiment as Peel's,
a later worker, Martin (1950), studied aesthetic responses
of children to poetry. The background of her research is the
work of Burt and his followers. She made an attempt to
establish certain assumed criteria known as determiners with
the help of 51 judges, who ranked 11 poems for 1. basic
rhythm, 2. intellectual content, 3. pictorial content,
4. relation of sound to meaning, and 5. emotional effect.
She then gave these poems to children and applied a factorial
analysis on children's preferences. She extracted factors
running through the poems and made an attempt to interpret
these factors in terms of the above determiners.

In a pilot test the same determiners were used and
9 poems were selected on a variety of themes. The result of
this test, says Martin, "clearly showed that children's
preferences were heavily influenced by certain themes notably
war, love and any form of narrative". But as she was
interested more in their response to the above determiners
than in children's own aesthetic values, she eliminated the differences of themes by choosing poems on a similar theme. Thus she also, like so many other workers in this field, isolated the artistic qualities and held constant the content or the theme of poetry. Her method and approach to aesthetic appreciation are therefore open to the same criticism as levelled against all other formalists.

Having surveyed previous researches in literary appreciation and the relevant studies in the field of art appreciation, we are now in a position to divide them into four categories, under which we can sum up the main conclusions to be drawn from the foregoing discussion.

In the first category are included all those studies which were primarily intended to measure aesthetic appreciation by literary or art appreciation tests - either in an attempt to study certain factors singled out for this purpose, or to study appreciation as a whole.

The main criticism which can be levelled against these studies is that the very construction of tests implies some definite standard of aesthetic value which is either determined by the experimenter himself or is based "upon a consensus of sensitive and cultivated opinion" (Leopold, 1929). What is commonly argued for and implied in testing is that the best people do so and so and that everyone should do the same. Thus the implied "appeal to authority", to
quote K. Young, "is but the appeal to snobbery and prestige, and has little inherent in it to catch the imagination of the man in the street" (Young, 1949, p. 401), or to convince one whose aesthetic values may be opposed to those of the person or persons in authority.

These tests may have been useful for educational purposes or for the sidelights which they throw on some aspect of aesthetic experience, but basically they are not valid for an experiment which intends to study not only the uniformities of, but differences in the aesthetic appreciation and values of different groups. The purpose of the present inquiry being precisely that, it is justifiable to say that no single aesthetic standard, and no standard set by the representatives of any particular group, can be regarded as suitable for this inquiry.

Some literary testers have singled out one or more factors from aesthetic experience and have treated them in isolation from the total experience. But appreciation of art and literature is a whole, and the elements entering into it are related to and fused with one another. In aesthetic appreciation, melody, imagery, rhythm, and meaning do not play their role as distinct properties or parts in isolation but, on the contrary, they derive their quality from their functional relationship within the whole.
The second category includes the studies undertaken by Burt and his followers - the objectivists. The chief weakness of this group of psychologists has been that, under the influence of a metaphysical conception of beauty, they tried to establish by empirical methods (that is, methods which run counter to metaphysics) that beauty is universal and objective. Their peculiar combination of a metaphysical theory of beauty with scientific methods, compelled them to take a formalistic and abstract position in their assumptions and interpretations. Their assertion that form is the sole object of aesthetic pleasure led them not only to make abstract formulations (like the one which claims that there are 'general' and 'bipolar' factors in aesthetic experience) but also to dismiss as irrelevant the meaning of a work of art, its resemblance to life, and especially all the intimate personal suggestions which it may have for the appreciator. These workers have, in fact, failed to realise that, in the words of one critic, "a reader's response to a poem is a total response, a Gestalt in which aesthetic as well as ethical, psychological as well as historical factors are inseparably fused together." Thus,"it is," he continues, "a self-deception to try to separate them and to discover some alchemistical quintessence of isolated 'pure' aesthetics, to be judged only by certified 'pure' mandarins of criticism" (Viereck, 1951).
The position of Burt and his followers is similar to that of the literary testers, in that both believe in an objective standard of beauty and assert that aesthetic appreciation is or should be based on such a standard, which is set by the experts and is determined mainly by formal considerations. But, as we know, an art object consists not only of a form but also of a content and these two together determine its value for the appreciator. So instead of dichotomising form and content we should think of them together in a united whole.

In the third category may be placed Feary and Richards - those who are generally regarded as subjectivists. They have, contrary to the objectivists and literary testers, tried to give due importance to the individual appreciator and his own reactions. But their main weakness is an inability to resolve the dichotomy of subject and object in their treatment and interpretation. The result is that Feary could not go beyond individual differences in aesthetic appreciation to any firm basis upon which the subject-object relationship could be explained. Richards, although he finds such a basis in the 'grasp of meaning', is so much preoccupied with his own standard of poetry that he tends to interpret the criticisms of his subjects as merely due to a lack of understanding and not, as sometimes it may be, an expression of genuine dislike. If Richards had analysed the literary
appreciation of his subjects, not merely on the basis of poems of his own choice, but also in terms of individual or group values (if any group or groups could be formed of his subjects), it is likely that 'stock responses', 'preoccupations,' and 'doctrinal adhesions' would have been seen to be psychological mechanisms employed by the appreciator for the expression of his genuine liking or dislike for a particular poem, and not as mere hindrances to understanding.

Viewing the theories of the objectivists and the subjectivists from another angle, we may distinguish them according to whether they emphasise stimulus or response. Stimulus theories have attempted to treat the aesthetic preferences in terms of various characteristics of the stimulus object or event. In fact we may legitimately classify under this heading any work which places the criterion of aesthetic appreciation in some one or more of the formal or relational elements of the art object. Advocates of such stimulus theories (e.g. Burt and his followers) have usually overlooked the historical and sociological limitations of their theories. Their theories may indeed define the aesthetic object for some people at some particular period and place, but they inevitably breakdown if an attempt is made to apply them to the aesthetic behaviour of people of other cultures or other historical periods or other social groups within the same culture and historical period. The response theories on
the other hand have endeavoured to treat aesthetic behaviour in terms of individual reactions and so far their approach seems to be psychologically sound. But their analysis usually stops at purely individual differences (Feasy) or individual weaknesses, in case these differences are analysed in relation to a set standard of beauty (Richards).

It follows, then, that it is impossible to formulate basic principles of aesthetic behaviour either in terms of the formal qualities of the stimulus (the art object) alone, or merely in terms of subjective reactions of the individual. Such basic principles can be formulated only in terms of the functional relationship between the appreciator and the art object.

Under the fourth and last category comes the study of Mackintosh who has tried to resolve the dichotomy of the subject and the object on a third principle - i.e. value. "Value", to recall Mackintosh's own words, "may be used to describe the total situation made up of the individual's awareness to the inter-play of selection, interest, choice and preference in his personal and social life." It is this value which, according to her, is the fundamental principle operating in aesthetic appreciation and preference and which itself is a result of subject-object relationship. Thus we can see that beauty resides neither in the object nor in the subject; it emerges as a relation between the two and is determined by one's values. It is on the basis of value alone
that one can claim to offer an explanation for differences in aesthetic appreciation and taste not only in different historical periods but also among different social groups in the same culture and period.

Since Mackintosh's approach to aesthetic appreciation was based on the principle of value, which denies any absolute or objective standard of beauty, and also tries to go beyond individual feelings and subjective uncertainties, her method and material too were different from those of both the objectivists and the subjectivists. Her method was unbiased by any preconceived notion about beauty either in terms of objective qualities or in terms of subjective standard. In selecting the material to be presented to the subjects, too, her standpoint was strikingly different from that of the objectivist and subjectivist experimenters. Whereas they were concerned to ensure that their material should conform to a standard determined by 'experts' or by themselves, Mackintosh was concerned only with what her subjects would be likely to appreciate and with how their values would operate in the process of appreciation.

This approach clearly implies that there is no fixed or eternal standard of the beautiful. It is relative to the individuals and, in a social psychological sense, to different groups of individuals in different cultures and historical periods. The beautiful therefore cannot be
absolutely defined; it can only be understood in terms of its value to the appreciator or group of appreciators in so far as it satisfies the aesthetic sentiment of those who find it beautiful.

Before we discuss the importance of value in art and literature and their appreciation, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between two different kinds of judgments which have been associated with aesthetic appreciation: perceptual judgment and value-judgment. Perceptual judgments are those which "reflect the way a subject perceives an object or some characteristics of an object. A tone may be judged loud or soft, high pitched or low pitched. A design may be judged symmetrical or asymmetrical" (Postman and Egan, 1949, p. 218), a poem may be judged rhythmical or flat, full of imagery or devoid of it. "In all such cases the subject's judgment is based on a particular aspect or dimension of his perceptual experience" (ibid). Value judgments on the other hand are affective judgments. Such judgments express an individual's liking or dislike for an object, its pleasantness or unpleasantness for him. In such judgments it is precisely personal reaction which is made explicit and must inevitably be based on certain values. In other words affective judgments are not perceptive judgments "since they are based on our personal values and inclinations rather than on an attempt to gauge the
That aesthetic judgment is an affective judgment, has been recognised by some psychologists, for instance Speer (1929) and Crane (1946), but does not seem to have received adequate treatment. Aesthetic judgment is essentially an affective judgment, i.e. a judgment of value. This does not, however, mean that perceptual judgment has no place in aesthetic experience. Perceptual judgment is important, but only to the extent that it deals with the qualities of the form which organises the content. It is not, however, the determining factor in aesthetic appreciation and preference. The determining factor is always the value on which the relation of the subject and the object is based. A perceptual judgment may sometimes take the form of a value-judgment but it can do so only for those persons in whose aesthetic experience the form and its characteristics represent a value in themselves. To be more precise, perceptual judgment, unless it is in itself valuable, is always subordinate to affective judgment.

The central controversy about values in art and literature has been between objectivism and subjectivism. The objectivists hold that there are objective aesthetic standards, not in a social sense, but a priori. Good art is good in itself and failure to recognise it is merely due
to ignorance or other individual deficiencies. The
subjectivists, on the other hand, deny the existence of such
standards. For them good art is a matter of individual
taste and preference, and no objective standard exists.
As is quite apparent, the objectivists take an absolutist
view of aesthetic values while the subjectivists take a
relativist position and make beauty relative to the individual.
Thus the clash between objectivists and subjectivists is
reduced to the opposition of the absolute and the relative,
and consequently leaves us at a loss to explain the functional
relationship of the subject and the object. The objectivists
claim the 'true' standard as against the 'false' standard of
the others. The relativist subjectivists reduce aesthetic
values to individual impressions varying from person to
person.

The only way out of this dilemma lies in the
recognition of the fact that men are social beings. Their
interests, their outlook on life, their aesthetic satisfaction
are based on different values, sometimes mutually exclusive.
On what basis can these values be resolved into an objective
scale? We must agree with Harding (1943) when he rejects
the idea of an a priori basis on psychological grounds. The
only other basis possible is a social basis. It is sometimes
contended that aesthetic phenomena are an individual
experience and not subject to social influences. But upon
Further reflection it will be evident that aesthetic tastes and preferences do display a certain consensus and as such can be treated in terms of aesthetic values of a given group. Thus the approach of social relativism would claim that aesthetic values, like other social values, are never purely individual. On the contrary, they are group standards and are closely related to other social values of the group. They are not individual products but group values which influence the individual in the group and which have been incorporated into him in the social process. Like all other social values, aesthetic values exist as objective realities for the group. The objective here, however, is not absolute in the sense of having universal objectivity; the objective is relative and limited to the group, and within these limits it provides an objective standard of aesthetic judgment.

It follows from what has been said above that individual aesthetic experience, in spite of being personal, is socially influenced by group values. It is both personal and social. Personal experience derives its significance from social experience and is to a great extent the reflection of what is social in the individual. Thomas Mann has well expressed this point in the preface to one of his novels, "Man lives not only his personal life, as an individual but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries" (Mann, 1946, Preface). That is, each
individual has, as it were, a dual history, since he is at the same time a man with a social history, and an individual, a man with a personal history. The two, however, are functionally one—a unity. A man is an individual as well as a type—a social type—in whom the social characteristics constantly reveal the individual.

Here it should be made clear that the main argument does not deny individual differences in aesthetic appreciation and preference. The main point of contention, however, is that "though there are individual differences, these may be seen as variations over a range which is sharply contrasted with the range of groups having a different social background" (Sherif, 1936, p. 141).

Thus it can be safely concluded that aesthetic judgments and preferences are seldom purely individual. On the contrary, they always have reference to some group norms and values. These norms and values are in fact frames of reference which appear objectively real and are also open to scientific verification and study.

Seen in this light the realm of values—including aesthetic values—is neither an absolute realm nor a subjective chaos but an orderly realm of human values, i.e. values of concrete social groups. The relevant question for the study of aesthetic preferences is then not to ask what constitutes good and bad art or literature as such, but to
ask what are the standards of good or bad art for a particular social group. Recognising the limits of their social reference, aesthetic standards and values can be studied through personal experiences of individual members of the groups concerned. That is, we can study the phenomena of aesthetic experience and preference from a social psychological point of view in order that we may understand them in different frames of social reference.

Psychology has been primarily interested in the mental processes of aesthetic appreciation. Sociology, on the other hand, has tried to discover the relation of arts to society and has studied the contents of appreciation and their value for different social groups. The meeting ground of psychology and sociology would therefore be in a social psychological approach to aesthetic reactions of individuals in different social groups. This approach would draw upon both sociology and psychology in order to study aesthetic experience and preference in relation to the content of the art object and its value for the individual as a member of a particular social group. In short, the social psychological approach of the present research will undertake to study aesthetic reactions and values in a social context.
Chapter III

The Social Psychological Context

Many sociologists and social psychologists agree that certain economic and political (Centers, 1949; Anastasi and Foley, 1949), social and moral (Lynd and Lynd, 1937; Stagner, 1948; Sherif, 1948) and aesthetic and literary (Tomars, 1940; Schucking, 1944; Schuessler, 1948) values largely emerge and develop from different groups of society itself. These values, though themselves social in origin, take the form, on a psychological level, of common attitudes in the individuals of the group from which they arise. Sherif (1935) defines these values as social values, meaning that they are social products. "These values", he says, "come into existence as a consequence of the contact of individuals or groups of individuals. In their turn social values which have been so standardized as to reach the status of the common property of the group, may form or even standardize common attitudes, likes and dislikes, aversions and preferences in the individual members of the group" (p. 114). He further analyses the value-attitude relationship. "The social values" he writes, "shape attitudes in the individuals and these attitudes serve as standards
(frames of reference) in the preference of the individual" (ibid., p. 113).

The above formulation implies that once social values, which in fact refer to group values, are standardised, they give rise to the corresponding attitudes in the members of that group and make them more or less established psychological processes on the individual plane. Conversely, these attitudes, which are based on the standardised values of the group, are not assumed and discarded by the individual at will. He gets them from his concrete social experience as a member of a particular group or from the already existing social values of that group. In both cases the formation of these attitudes cannot be explained without referring to the group to which the individual belongs.

It is with these considerations in mind that some sociologists and social psychologists have advocated, and in some cases themselves attempted, the study of differences in social, economic, political and aesthetic values (and in the attitudes corresponding to them) with reference to social groupings. These values are in some respects related to one another, and are not entirely isolated and discrete items. The basis of this mutual relation too is to be explained in the framework of the totality of values held by the group, i.e., by its ideology. The totality of values or the pattern of ideology regulates the mutual relationship
of different types of values, in so far as they are standardised by the group and fulfil its actual or symbolic needs. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that certain basic similarities may sometimes be found in the attitudes of members of a particular group to such diverse phenomena as science, politics, philosophy, religion, art and literature.

It may be observed in this connection that the more crystallised is the ideology of a group, the more consistently and well integrated are the different types of group values. The development of the common ideology of a particular group takes place not only because of the need for internal consistency and because of the purpose that it serves for the group, but also due to the fact that many agencies which influence the basic values of the group tend to overlap. Referring similarities of different values to the structure of social classes, Young (1949) points out that "the activities around which a class structure develops may involve any of the major associations and institutions of a society, such as the economic, political, military, religious, intellectual or aesthetic or any combination of these" (p. 512). That is why basic values are but types: they are moulded in accordance with the total pattern of values or the ideology of the group.

In order, therefore, to study the attitudes or preferences in relation to the different types of values and
their actual content, together with the organisation of these attitudes in the psychological structure of the individual, it is necessary first of all to place the individual in his social group with its established and standardised values.

That social values and attitudes stem from social groups is not a mere theoretical assumption. There is a large body of experimental evidence which demonstrates that there are social groups which represent important values (Centers, 1949), ideas and even a consistent pattern of different values, ideology (Adorno, et al., 1950), which the individual members of these groups, consciously or unconsciously, accept, imbibe and assimilate, so that their behaviour and reactions accord with that ideology. Amongst such groups are social classes and political parties.

Thus, the social groupings in a society are of great importance in studying not only its culture as a whole (which includes art and literature) but also in studying the behaviour and tastes of its individual members who are divided amongst themselves by certain barriers imposed by the social structure. Further we notice that it is due to these barriers that the culture itself is not a homogeneous structure. The cultural differences which result from these structural barriers are sometimes so contrasting that many anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists have now begun to divide broad national cultures into sub-cultural
groups. Thus a social anthropologist, Linton (1945), referring to these sub-cultural groups remarks that "in more stabilized modern societies the functions of the simple primary community with respect both to the integration of individuals and the transmission of culture are performed primarily by social classes" (p. 39). Linton further observes that "in such a society as our own, no two communities have identical cultures. Beneath the superficial similarities due to mass production and such agencies as the cinema and radio there are frequently significant differences in attitudes and values" (p. 39). Social classes, in other words, are the most important agencies of both cultural dissemination and differentiation. Anastasi and Foley (1949) also agree with this view and support their argument with Murphy's observation that "the social classes show distinct 'psychological cleavages', or discontinuity and that these cleavages are reflected in personality structure" (cf. ibid., p. 790). "All surveys", Anastasi and Foley conclude, "have corroborated the fact that these classes represent distinct cultural units. The contact between the various classes is definitely restricted. Moreover, the class stratification is reflected in large differences in home life, education, recreational outlet, reading habit, religious observance and political activity" (p. 790).
These cultural and behavioural differences in the total life of different social classes, it seems, give rise to values and attitudes which are uniform within and diverse between these classes.

It has been demonstrated in a number of studies that the values and attitudes held by an individual are conditioned by the social class to which he belongs. Each of these studies adopts one or another of three approaches: the communal approach in which the social class is defined as an accessible association group in a community with special emphasis on face-to-face relationship (Warner and Lunt, 1941, 1942; Lynd and Lynd, 1937); the objective approach, according to which social classes are studied in terms of income or types of occupation (Kornhauser, 1933, 1939; Cantril, 1943); the subjective approach, which considers a social class to be primarily a subjective membership group (Centers, 1949).

Sociologists who have made a communal approach to the study of social classes report that a significant influence is exerted on the values and attitudes of the individual by his socio-economic status. In their "Middletown in Transition" the Lynds (1937) present a psychological interpretation of their observations in a chapter describing the dominant values and attitudes found in the community. In a similar investigation Warner and Lunt (1941, 1942)
studied the class structure of a "Modern Community". Besides describing the economic behaviour and group affiliations of each class, the investigators have also generalised about the major values of each group. In a third outstanding study, Davis and his associates (1941) examined social classes among the white inhabitants of an "Old City" and their findings confirm the first two studies in so far as they show that the three major classes in "Old City" have different patterns of behaviour and different attitudes.

All these community studies point to the same general conclusion, namely, that there exist differences not only in the material life, level of education and social status of different social classes, but also in their patterns of behaviour and in their values and attitudes.

Those social psychologists who have studied differences of attitudes in relation to social classes as objective groups, based their classification of social classes on occupation or income and made it their main purpose to undertake correlational studies of the correspondence between socio-economic status and certain beliefs and attitudes. Kornhauser (1938, 1939) studied political attitude in relation to socio-economic status. He found large differences between upper and lower economic groups with respect to the New Deal, Labour Unions, Governmental...
Control of Industry and Distribution of Wealth. This finding agrees with that of an earlier investigation by Hayes (1937, 1933) who had studied occupational differences in political attitude. In line with these studies, Stagner (1948), in his exploratory study of the difference in the attitude of students towards fascism, found that the students from a wealthier background attending expensive colleges tended to be more pro-fascist than students from lower socio-economic classes. Reflection of class differences is not confined to political attitudes only. Sanai (1949) in a recent study reports that middle class students are more conservative on religious issues than working class students.

Schuessler (1948), another social psychologist, perhaps inspired by such studies as mentioned above, carried out an experiment to study the influence of socio-economic background - as defined in terms of occupation - on musical taste. As this study has in some respects a direct bearing on the present investigation, it seems relevant to report it in some detail.

Schuessler carried out his study with the notion that "individual taste is not fortuitous but rather is controlled by cultural standards." He sought to determine if differences in socio-economic background are associated with a significant variation in musical taste.
The methodological problems of his study were,
firstly, to select such musical material as would, when
presented to the listeners, uncover variations in taste, and
secondly, to devise a scale which would permit an individual
to rate a given choice reliably. The material selected by
him included pieces from the following types of music:
classical, jazz, modern classical, old waltz, light classical,
popular and hilly-billy. The rating scale consisted of five
graded categories, two for liking, two for disliking and
the middle one for neutral reaction. The sample of subjects
to whom this test was given was divided into three main
occupational classes: Professional, Business and Clerical,
and Workers (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled).

With these three distinct groups it was found that
classical music had the greatest appeal for the upper classes,
while jazz and hilly-billy music had the greatest appeal for
the lower classes. That some music may have considerable
appeal for all social classes is indicated by the manner in
which listeners responded to the old songs, the old waltz
and popular music. The general conclusions which the
investigator arrives at in this study are that:

(i) musical taste is conditioned by persistent
biases or attitudes, which in turn, reflect the differenti­
ating force of occupation, age and sex on cultural experience.
(ii) the fact that musical preferences exhibit consensus confirms the social psychological view that musical taste is socially controlled and opposes the common-sense formula that it is conditioned only by training and personal taste.

(iii) any generalisation about esthetic judgments must take into account the specific social background and corresponding values and attitudes of the group or of the individual.

We may now turn to one of the most important studies of social classes, in which "class" is primarily regarded as subjective membership group — namely, that made by Centers (1949). Centers claims that the attitudinal composition of the individual is of primary importance in class differences. Classes, he asserts, are to be regarded as psycho-social groupings; they are psychologically based and may reasonably be regarded as part of a man's ego. While admitting that a person's occupational status is as good an index to his attitudes as his subjective class affiliation, Centers emphasises that psychologically it is the latter which is more important. He shows that when people of a given occupation differ from one another in subjective class affiliation, they also differ in attitude. He, however, finally concludes that class identification is determined by the status and role of the individual in
relation to the means of production and exchange of goods and services and that an individual's status and role also determine certain attitudes and values.

It may be noted that Center's definition of social class does not necessarily contradict other definitions, communal or economic. His definition tries to supplement the concept of social class as an objective group by the psychological factor of class-identification. The objective index to social class and subjective affiliation, specially of the upper and lower classes, are generally identical. But in a dynamic industrial society sometimes there occurs, particularly in the middle strata of the society, a disparity between the two.

The coincidence and disparity between the objective status and subjective identification has been fully discussed by Sherif (1948), who writes: "Ordinarily the attitudes, identifications, and loyalties of an individual are largely derived from the values, norms, status regulations of the group or groups of which he is an actual member. These groups to which a person actually belongs informally or formally may be designated as his membership group. Ordinarily his attitudes and identifications, and subsequently his diverse specific reactions, are regulated and determined by such memberships. But not always. He may actually be a member of a particular group but psychologically
refer himself to a different group and regulate his attitudes and aspirations accordingly" (p.123). Thus Sherif differentiates between actual membership group and reference group and emphasises that psychologically it is the latter which ultimately is more important.

In this sense Centers' formulation about class identification, instead of denying the objective basis of social classes only delimits it. When the objective or actual membership group and the reference group, or subjective class identification, coincide their effect on the formation of attitudes is greatly enhanced. This important point has been brought out by Centers' conclusions which are as follows:

(i) The data strongly support a conception of social classes as political and economic interest groups tending to be structured primarily along socio-economic stratifications though not entirely determined by such lines.

(ii) Substantial relationship is found between politico-economic orientation and class identification. Just as people who differ in socio-economic position differ in class affiliation, so people who differ in class affiliation differ in turn in politico-economic orientation.

1 Italics in original.
(iii) The objective and subjective differences are found to be additive in their effects on politico-economic orientation. It is shown that when objective position is high and class identification is likewise high, a conservative orientation is most likely of all to prevail. Conversely, when objective position is low and class identification is also low, a radical orientation is most likely to be found.

(iv) Classes can be described, less comprehensively, simply as politico-economic interest groups formed in response to the total life situation dominated by socio-economic position.

If these conclusions are sound, Centers is fully justified in asserting that "man's economic, occupational and socio-political positions are practically responsible for most of the traits of his 'acquired' personality. Directly or indirectly three quarters of such traits as education, manners, customs, ideas, traditions and so on are decisively determined by these three statuses" (Centers, 1949, p. 25). Thus Centers in his concluding remark observes that "not only are the middle and working classes in our social order tending to split into two different 'ideological' camps along economic and social lines, but they are also tending to have different views with respect to many other matters" (p.153 Referring to these other matters, he suggests that "there is a need for a great deal more research and for an exploration
and inventory of the whole of culture and ideology before a well rounded picture of our era can be drawn" (pp. 153 - 159).

The above mentioned observations, experiments and surveys all confirm in different ways the view that different social groups to which the individual belongs, objectively, subjectively or both, provide values and attitudes which serve him as more or less lasting frames of reference, determining his preferences, likes and dislikes.

Not only this, there are data which provide evidence that such frames of reference not only determine one's tastes and preferences but also largely influence one's cognitive processes. The way in which these frames of reference influence the cognitive processes - like perception, learning, memory, and judgment - has been demonstrated in a number of experimental studies.

In a series of experiments where coins were used as stimuli, Bruner and Goodman (1947) studied the influence of social values upon perception with children of widely differing economic status (from a private school and a settlement house). Among other things, they found that the tendency of overestimation is significantly greater among poor than among rich children. That, like perception, judgment too is intimately related to one's values and attitudes has been shown by Lewis (1940) in her study of
the influence of political attitude on the organisation and stability of judgment.

The close relationship between memory and attitude has been exhaustively studied by Bartlett (1932). His investigation established that a person's perception in a given situation and the remembering of what he has perceived are influenced by the social origin of his attitudes. It showed how these attitudes and consequently observation and recall varied according to the cultural background of the individual. Similarly, Edward (1941a) discovered that the political attitudes of his subjects significantly influenced their recognition of items contained in a speech they had previously heard about the New Deal. Edward (1941b) also demonstrated the extent to which a person's attitude stimulates him to rationalise his answers to factual statements with which he disagrees.

Levine and Murphy (1943) have shown that both the learning and the forgetting of passages from speeches, both favourable and unfavourable, are significantly affected by a person's attitude.

These experiments sufficiently show that psychological processes take place in relation to a setting, a framework, the understanding of which is very important if the actual psychological functionings of the individual are to be accounted for.
When in this context of social psychology, we turn to the specific problem of the present study, we find that aesthetic taste and preference cannot be fully explained in terms either of aesthetic stimulus only or of merely psychological processes. The individual himself mediates between the stimulus and response - the individual who, being a member of one or another social group, is essentially a complex of interests, values and attitudes, which provide him with a definite frame of reference. The individual in an aesthetic situation is not merely a reader or spectator; he is also a member of some group, formal or informal, and therefore acted upon by the religious, social, economic and political values of his group or groups.

Thus, the most important aspect of an individual's life in almost all industrial societies today, which may have an important bearing upon his aesthetic values, seems to be his relationship to the structure of the society and to the movements which aim at changing or preserving this structure. These two relationships which sometimes overlap, may be expressed most clearly and concretely in the objective terms of a reader's (1) social background and (2) his political opinion, with corresponding class identification and political affiliation. Keeping these relationships in mind it would seem probable that a reader's response to an aesthetic stimulus, his taste, his preferences and his aesthetic values
are influenced by his social and political position. The purpose of this study is to find out to what extent this actually is the case.

So far we have been concerned with the individual. Turning to the object of aesthetic appreciation and preference - a piece of literature in the case of the present study - we find that it consists of a subject matter - a theme, i.e. what it is about, and a style or form, i.e. the mode or quality of its expression. These two are bound up with its function, i.e. its intended effect, and are often themselves determined by it. Further, a poem expresses certain ideas and emotions, which implicitly or explicitly convey an attitude or even an ideology.

The theme of a piece of literature may be, amongst others, social, individual or personal, philosophical, or religious. The social theme, again, may be characterised by revolt, discontent, escape, or distraction and consolation. The style may be simple or complicated, emotional or restrained. Its function may be spiritual contemplation, intellectual reasoning, personal introspection, consolation, distraction, expression of social discontent or social revolt, or a combination of these. Similarly, its over-all attitude or, in other words, its ideology may be philosophical, religious, political or a mixture of these.
A combination of these features may play an important part in the literary appreciation and preference of an individual. These features would therefore add to the perspective provided by the individual's values and attitudes and help us to understand the functional relationship between a piece of literature and the reader.

Although we have split up these features, they are however functionally related and mutually interactive. These features are sometimes regarded as reflective of certain group values current in a society. Discussing the relation between group values and different features of art and literature, a sociologist, Tomars (1940), claims that the class system influences art and literature in the direction of 'realism', 'individualism' and 'purism'. "Realism", he explains, "stresses subject-matter, being essentially an attempt to reproduce actual facts as faithfully as possible.... Realism strives for fidelity to subject-matter, to the world as it is apart from art." Thus, he further says, "in realism the emphasis is always laid upon content, upon fidelity to the subject, as known in actual life. A realistic art, by its emphasis on subject-matter, may also stress directly the social function, which dictates its subject-matter" (p. 213).

Opposite to 'realism' is what Tomars calls 'purism'. "Purism", he writes, "tends to the opposite direction from subject-matter and emphasises the stylistic aspect of
form and technique. It stresses not the subject of a work but what is done with it aesthetically. Such an art dissociates itself from its social function. But, however the art may become 'pure', it never entirely loses meanings and values derived from life; the emphasis is nevertheless given to the formal values created by its own categories."

And "between these two tendencies of realism and purism stands individualism, which throws its weight now to the one, now to the other" (p. 214).

With this analysis of different aesthetic values Tomars asserts that "in an individualistic and competitive society fine arts become an upper class device for diversion, entertainment and refined pleasure rather than a means for social group symbolism. This shifts the emphasis from realistic representation to the free exploitation of decorative and pleasing patterns" (p. 216).

What Tomars has tried to analyse is important for the present study, at least, in so far as it shows that different features of art - style, subject-matter and function - are closely interrelated; every poem, for instance, expresses to some extent its aesthetic theory, its purpose and its ideology. Tomars' analysis is also helpful in that it explains that different features of art and literature are interpreted, emphasised and appreciated differently by people holding different aesthetic values.
It may however be stated here that Tomars' assertion regarding the relationship of a particular aesthetic value to the 'upper class' or, for that matter, to any other class would not be acceptable on the psychological plane, because no experimental data on this problem are available. It is for this reason that we need to study experimentally how people of different social groups differ in their aesthetic preferences, or, to be more precise, in their reactions to different themes, styles, functions and ideologies, as well as in their expressed attitudes to these various features of literary art.

Before embarking upon the actual experiment, it seems appropriate to give a brief account of the social situation as it prevails today, and of the psychological outcome of this situation in life and literature.

Contemporary social life is not homogeneous. There are conflicts and contradictions not only on the economic and political plane but also in other spheres of culture. Since these conflicts and contradictions manifest themselves at all levels of social and cultural life, they are bound to be reflected in contemporary values and consequently in contemporary attitudes. Therefore, in order to understand the values and attitudes of our time one must understand the contemporary social and cultural situation.
The present age is characterised by technological and scientific developments and by mass-production in the field of material and non-material culture, including art and literature, and these have entailed certain social and political changes. The present situation does not seem to have unequivocal implications for all sections of the population. Referring to social and cultural differences within the same society, Cantril (1941) says, "As members of the middle or upper economic classes, we may glibly assume that ours is the best of all possible worlds, with a high standard of living, its automobiles, its colleges, its substantial homes, its abundance of food, its recreational facilities, its security. Yet if we walked across the tracks and visited the slums, we would see a world of poverty and malnutrition, of insecurity and despair, which in many important aspects, might differ from our own environment, much more than if we visited the better sections of Hongkong, Moscow, Singapore or Ankara" (p. 4).

It is observed that social and cultural differences affect the individual both in patterns of behaviour and in patterns of thought. The psychological implications of these differences in terms of values and attitudes have been discussed by Katz and Schanck (1939). It would be relevant to present here a few broad features of these implications.
First, in one section of society there is a desire to maintain status quo. Members of this section disapprove of any change that would affect their own position in the society. Another section believes in a radical change in the present state of affairs for a 'better future'. In the present age, where there is a prevalent sense of insecurity, frustrated emotions are projected onto society. Some blame the machine and science for their misfortunes; others blame 'capitalists'; still others believe that the present system of production and distribution is the root cause of all the ills and wrongs of society; while some others, having no clear-cut attitude of their own, oscillate between different views.

Secondly, instability of conditions has produced different attitudes towards social change. Some revere the past, and wish for a return of the 'glories' of the previous epochs, some cling to the present, and some visualise an 'inevitable and better future'. These different attitudes are reflected in different social and political ideologies. Interest in politics has increased and different political parties find followers in different sections of society according to the attitudes and ideologies which they represent. The older parties, Conservative and Liberal, appeal relatively more to the upper strata, and the newer parties, Socialist and Communist, to the lower strata of society.
Thirdly, there are differences in attitude towards science. In some quarters there is a reaction against science and intellectualism, which is reflected in a growing trend towards mysticism. Some others believe in science but are critical of its basic assumptions in relation to social and political problems of the present society. In this connection, Schanck and Katz observe that mysticism has little appeal to industrial workers, because their lives are related to machine. Zweig (1952) has also expressed similar opinion. According to him, "the working man is a great realist and he has a great common-sense. He is not governed by theories but by facts and common-sense. He knows life as it is, with all its harshness, its cruelty, and its constant conflicts" (p. 224).

Fourthly, there are differences in attitude towards the means of solving the problems of present-day life. Some believe in the individual, some in collective effort. The differential attitude of collectivism and individualism, the former being sometimes attributed to the working class and the latter to the middle class (Zweig, 1952), have been analysed by Tansley (1952) on an ideological level. He holds that there are "two opposite conceptions of the proper organisation of society, generally known as socialism and individualism". Referring to the conflict between these two ideologies, Tansley adds,
"Traditional religion tends to be replaced by the deadening philosophy of materialism, often, though not of course necessarily, allied with the social philosophy of communism" (p. 171).

These observations lead to certain broad conclusions, namely, that a member of the working class, as a social type, is a realist, more inclined to believe in science than in mysticism, and in collectivism and socialism than in individualism, while a member of the middle class, as a social type, is by contrast more conservative, individualist, mystical and traditional in his outlook. Here it is interesting to note that a study by Harding (1944), although undertaken for a different purpose, shows that two contrasting outlooks respectively group together a number of values similar to those which have been attributed to the working class on the one hand and to the middle class on the other. Thus he finds as component parts of one outlook the following values:

1. Naturalism, as represented by a scientific view of man in the Universe, viewing mind as a function, man as-an-animal, the Universe as "open", morality as relative, conception of beauty also as relative, and so on.

2. Socialisation, as represented by a belief in group improvement, collectivism, equality of classes, etc.
3. Progress, as represented by a belief in initiative, aggressiveness, "dynamic" improvement-for-the-future etc.

4. Activism, as represented by belief in "learning by doing" and in critical thinking.

As against these the following values are also associated together within a single over-all ideology:

1. Transcendentalism, as represented by a belief in mind as a substance, in man as "spiritual", in a "closed" universe, rigid morality, an absolute conception of beauty, a messianic attitude etc.

2. Personal Security, as represented by a belief in individualism.

3. Status Quo, as represented by a belief in a "static" attitude, by satisfaction-with-the-present, and by a desire to preserve existing balances.

4. Passivism, as represented by a belief in passive learning and in rigid and uniform standards.

Whether or not in fact these different values characterise one social class more than another, they do find expression in contemporary art and literature and thereby affect their themes, styles, function and ideology. Thus, we see that today it would be more than ever difficult to characterise or establish what may be termed 'the spirit of the age' on a sociological or psychological basis. The
thoughts and feelings, attitudes and values of such diverse social types as, for example, a manual worker and a member of a professional class, or a Communist and a Conservative will be quite different from one another. Sociologists like Kohn-Lamstedt (1937) and Schucking (1944) writing about these differences in literature have explained how the complex attitudes which result from class consciousness or from political views are reflected in literature, but their influence on appreciation and preference is in the main still to be studied.

Summarising the main line of argument in this chapter it may be observed that two of the most important kinds of group to which most individuals in an industrial society belong seem to be (i) social classes and (ii) political parties, which provide anchorage points or frames of reference in the form of definite values or set of values to the individuals who objectively or subjectively belong to them.

Aesthetic values, like all other values, seem to be largely related to different social and political groups, and may shape the aesthetic attitudes of the individual members of these groups. In order, therefore, to study the attitude and preference of an individual it is of the utmost importance to place the individual in his social group with its well established values.
Considering the aesthetic stimulus - a piece of literature in the present case - it is observed that this consists of a theme and a style, both of which are determined by the intended function of the work. It may express an idea, an attitude or even an ideology. These different features taken together with the established values of the group to which individual readers belong provide a proper perspective for the study of the functional relationship between the literary piece and the reader.

In this context of social psychology it is proposed to study how people belonging to different social groups and holding different political opinions differ in their literary preferences, or, more precisely, in their reaction to different aspects of literature.
Chapter IV

Method and Plan

In an aesthetic situation, as Lainwaring (1941) has pointed out, there are three elements: "an object regarded as constituting the aesthetic stimulus; a subject stimulated into some kind of reaction; and the relation between them" (p. 120). The present investigation was directed towards the last of these three elements, i.e. the relation between subject and object, in a social psychological context. Its purpose, as already stated, was to investigate experimentally the influence of social background and political opinion on literary preferences. This necessitated three things: (1) to select literary material - the object - which could be submitted to a number of people - the subjects; (2) to secure the subjects' preferences and reactions; (3) and to obtain necessary information regarding their social background and political opinion, and some other relevant details.

Selection of Material

The first problem before the investigator, therefore, was the selection of material. Poetry was decided upon in preference to any other form of literature because
it is considered to be a more concentrated form of literary expression and is usually a short unit which can be used as a whole. Other forms of literature such as, for example, novel, drama or short story cannot be used in full for experimental purposes, as it would be practically impossible for any one to read a number of these within a short period of time and make comparisons. Extracts from these forms of literature, on the other hand, would become meaningless out of their context. Complete poems were selected as far as possible, and only such extracts as are self-contained and deal with a complete experience were included.

Care was taken to select poems which would not be too familiar to the subjects since familiarity is considered to be an important factor in aesthetic preference (Koffka, 1935). Eysenck (1941) has mentioned that familiarity has a great influence on the liking for a work of art. According to him the very fact that one has seen an aesthetic object before disposes one more favourably towards it. Moreover, familiarity with a poem would most probably mean the knowledge of its authorship and this would introduce an element of prestige which is most likely to influence the readers' preference in one way or another. If one knows a piece of art to be 'accepted', or the author to be 'esteemed', one would tend to rate it high. Examples of such an influence have been quoted by several
psychologists (cf. Murphy, Murphy and Newcombe, 1937; Sherif, 1935). The introduction of such an extraneous element would colour the preferences and it was therefore considered important to select unfamiliar poems as far as possible and to submit them to the subjects without indicating the name of the author.

A third criterion applied to the selection of poems was that they should be of contemporary origin; or should deal with a theme which could be interpreted in terms of contemporary life. The contemporary period was chosen for more than one reason. Contemporary poetry treats a variety of themes in a variety of ways and it was expected that comparatively unfamiliar poems would be more easily found among the new writers than among the older and more or less classical ones. This would also exclude the possible influence of accepted and established literary traditions. Another, and more important, consideration was that contemporary writings have greater appeal for the general reader. It has been suggested by some investigators that people tend to appreciate poetry which is meaningful to them in terms of their own experience (Weeks, 1929; Mackintosh, 1932). As Chandler (1934) has pointed out, "contemporary work has a special claim upon our sympathy since it is a product and expression of the same social forces that have modelled ourselves" (p. 355).
All the poems chosen for the experiment were contemporary writing except for an extract from Shelley's poem "The Mask of Anarchy". This extract was selected, in the first instance, because it was considered to be of contemporary interest. It has a social, and to a certain extent political, theme which might be taken as relevant to certain social and political values of today. As the present experiment was concerned with the study of the possible influence of such values on literary preferences this extract seemed particularly suitable material for it. Moreover, in the pilot experiment this extract proved to have a great appeal for some of the industrial workers and for the Communists.

In the selection of poems no fixed standard was applied because, as has already been pointed out, it would be impossible on psychological grounds to determine a common standard of literary appreciation for people belonging to different social groups and holding different attitudes and values. What may be 'beautiful' or 'agreeable' for one group may be 'ugly' and 'disagreeable' for another. Whether or not a selection of poems would be appreciated by a group of people depends, to a large extent, on the type of poems included in that selection, on the one hand, and the attitudes and values of the group, on the other. Appreciation, in other words, seems so closely tied up with attitudes and values on the part of the readers.
that any arbitrary selection of poems which fails to take into account their possible scale of values would not be valid material for an investigation which is particularly planned to study the influence of these very attitudes and values on literary preferences. It was, therefore, deemed important for the present investigation to use material which was selected by representatives of contrasting social and political groups and not by any arbitrary classification made by literary experts.

Initially thirty poems were collected from different anthologies, collections, and periodicals, which were likely to appeal to readers of different social experience and political outlook. These were then submitted to four groups of people for their selection. Two of these groups were respectively composed of people belonging to two contrasting social backgrounds or 'classes', namely professional or 'middle class' and industrial or 'working class'. (1) Of the other two groups one consisted of people with Conservative affiliation; and the other with Communist affiliations.

In the professional group there were eight persons - two University teachers, three school teachers, one solicitor,

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(1) The basis of these classifications is discussed later in this chapter.
one journalist and one inspector of schools. In the industrial group there were ten persons - two factory workers and eight railway workers; the latter were contacted through a Railwaymen's Club. The investigator had to obtain membership of the club and had to spend a number of evenings there before the Club-members could be persuaded to read the poems and give their preferences. At the beginning they appeared to lack interest and their remarks - "What is the good of doing this?", "Poetry? Oh, no, not in our line!" - suggested that they regarded poetry as something foreign to them. They commented on the poems with some interest, however, after they had read them. They were impressed by some poems and rejected others which they did not like.

The group of Conservatives comprised five persons whose co-operation was obtained through a Conservative Bureau in London. The Communists, who were six in number, were approached through a Literary Group run by Communist writers and poets.

Each person in these four groups was given a set of thirty poems and was requested to select eight which he liked best. Thus, certain poems were eliminated as no one chose them; some appeared more frequently in one group than in another and some others were chosen by almost all the groups. The poems were then arranged in order of the
frequency of choice in each group separately and the first eight poems chosen most frequently within each group were taken and the rest discarded. In this process eleven poems were eliminated and nineteen remained.

From these nineteen poems, four combinations of eight poems each were again submitted to the members of the respective groups and they were asked to rank them in order of their preference from one to eight. Twenty nine rank orders were thus obtained (8 for the professional group, 10 for the industrial group, 5 for Conservatives and 6 for Communists). These were averaged separately for each group, thus being reduced to four average rank orders.

Poems 2, 6 and 14(1) ranked first, second and third respectively in the professional group and 3, 15, and 7 in the same order in the industrial group; similarly 8, 12, and 16 were the first three poems in the Conservative group and 13, 11, and 9 in the Communist group. These twelve poems were selected for the final experiment.

Apart from these, there was some overlapping among the groups for a few poems out of which poem 4 appeared fairly high in the professional, the industrial and the Communist groups and was therefore included in the final selection.

(1) These numbers were assigned to the poems after they had been finally selected for the experiment.
This selection, though made by people of different social and political groups, cannot be claimed to be representative of the possible choices of these groups in poetry. In the first place, the initial selection was made by the investigator himself, which had to be limited to only 30 poems for practical reasons. Secondly the number of persons in each group was so small that their choices could, at best, only tentatively represent the literary and other values of the group. What was expected, however, was that the poems thus selected would be more likely to be appreciated by the subjects of different social and political groups than any selection arbitrarily made either by the investigator himself or by some literary experts.

Besides the poems selected by the representatives of the contrasting social and political groups, three other poems - 1, 5, and 10 - were included by the investigator after the selection had been made. These three poems were by a popular writer and the purpose of their inclusion in the experiment was to study the reactions of widely differing groups to 'popular poetry'.

Construction of Rating Scale.

Pleasure feeling is commonly accepted as a criterion of aesthetic appreciation. Hence it may be gauged

(1) The sixteen poems finally selected and used in the experiment are given in Appendix A, pp. 1 - x.
by degrees of liking and non-appreciative disliking. For the purposes of the present investigation, rating of the poems according to different degrees of liking or dislike they evoke appears to be a method both useful and legitimate.

A rating scale of the type called 'intensity scale' was devised on which the subjects were to rate the poems according to their liking, dislike or indifference (Likert, 1932). The scale consisted of seven graded steps. The subjects were to place the poems which they liked 'very much' on the first step of the scale, the poems which they liked 'a good deal' on the next step and the poems which they liked 'a little' on the third. The poems disliked by them were to be graded similarly on three steps from 'dislike very much' to 'dislike a little'. The poems which they 'neither liked nor disliked' were to be placed on the middle step or the neutral position of the scale. (1)

These qualitative categories of the intensity of liking and dislike were scored in descending order from +3 to -3, the neutral position being scored 0.

The subjects were also asked to rearrange the poems on each step of the scale so as to give an indication of the varying degrees of their liking or dislike for the different poems placed at one step or another. From this

(1) cf. Rating Scale in Appendix A, p. xi.
it was intended to obtain a rank order given to the sixteen poems by each person. For all statistical purposes, however, use was made only of the scores allotted to the seven point scale. As the rank order obtained from the average ratings of the poems was found to be almost identical with the rank order obtained from the rearrangement of the poems, the latter was regarded as unnecessary and was therefore excluded from the analysis and discussion of the results.

Here it may be emphasised that the numerical values assigned to the rating scale are regarded only as appropriate symbols for the degrees of the aesthetic preference and not as indices of exact quantitative measurement. The quantitative treatment of the data may, however, be of great value in an experiment on aesthetic preferences if used in cooperation with other methods.

Fox (1938) holds that statistical results should be interpreted by recorded introspection because much useful knowledge of aesthetic phenomena, especially subjective, has been obtained by introspective method. Valentine (1923) has also combined statistical with introspective method in an investigation of the function of images in the appreciation of poetry. Introspective evidence was regarded in the present experiment as 'expressed reaction' to an aesthetic stimulus and hence comments on the poems, on lines similar to Richards' were also invited from the subjects.
This, it was expected, would help in studying the underlying reasons of the preferences of individuals as well as of groups, and in analysing some of the psychological processes involved.

**Determination of the Themes of the Poems.**

It has been suggested by Chandler (1934) that "battles about literature are often disguised contests over social and moral issues ....... However great the value of style or organization, what most charms the majority of us in literature is the story it tells, the characters it depicts, the thoughts and feelings it expresses" (pp. 293 - 94). To say this does not, however, mean to minimise the importance in appreciation of what is termed form or style of a piece of literature. Any consideration of aesthetic appreciation should necessarily be concerned with the whole of a work of art, which includes both the form and the content - what is said and how it is said. Still it seems obvious that apart from differences in form there are certain types of differences between the ideas and sentiments that a poet has to express.

He can talk about himself, his own ideas and subjective state of mind or about other people. He might attempt a more or less philosophical explanation of life, or he might concern himself with simple description. He might attempt to escape the contemporary situation through
the organisation of imaginary incidents or he might attempt to come to grips with the contemporary situation, with or without a didactic purpose. Social values and political attitudes might be reflected with varying degrees of sympathy or dislike. Religious, spiritual and mystical ideas and experiences may also be presented in poetic form.

The theme of a poem may thus be classified as philosophical, social, individual or religious. These categories of themes are however not mutually exclusive and a combination of two or more of them can be present in a poem. The poet may, for example, be clearly or vaguely conscious of the present social conditions and may attempt to offer a philosophical explanation of them; or he may present an evaluation of them in accordance with his religious beliefs. Similarly individual and mystic themes may coincide in that the poet may feel nostalgic for eternal and spiritual life and may express his experience in a way that appeals to religious sentiments.

The reaction of an individual to a poem, his preference or dislike for it, may be influenced by its theme; by his reaction to the ideas and feelings, attitudes and values expressed in it. A study of literary preferences therefore involves a consideration of the themes, the attitudes and values embodied in the poems, and requires an interpretation of individual and group preferences in relation to them.
With the above considerations in view, it was deemed necessary to determine the themes of the poems used in this experiment. A list of possible categories of themes applicable to the 16 poems was prepared and each category was fully defined so that the poems could be classified according to them. It may be mentioned here that the poems were not fitted into a number of preconceived and arbitrarily defined categories. Instead, an examination of the poems themselves suggested certain categories of themes which were described as fully as possible.

The classification of the poems according to these categories was then referred to three groups of judges - one of students and the other two of people belonging respectively to professional and industrial backgrounds. There were seventeen judges in the student group, nine in the professional group and twelve in the industrial group.

The uneven number of people in the three groups made it necessary, for purposes of comparison, to raise the frequencies in the smaller groups, for each category, in proportion to the comparative size of the largest group, that is, by \( \frac{17}{9} \) in case of the professional group and \( \frac{17}{12} \) in case of the industrial group. Any statistical treatment of the data thus collected was not feasible because of the

(1) The list of categories and the form for classification are given in Appendix C, p. xix.
small number of cases. It was, therefore, decided to present it in the form of histograms, one for each poem, the frequency columns of the three groups being superimposed on each other so as to make a visual comparison possible. The results are presented in the following chapter. (1)

**Questionnaire on Social and Political Background.**

To secure information regarding the subjects' social background and political opinion a questionnaire was constructed which included two political opinion tests and a number of questions on their age, sex, religion, education, occupation, income, class identification and political affiliation.

Of the two political opinion tests included in the questionnaire, one was of the 'Opinion Poll' type. In this test the subjects were required to record their answers to different questions in the category of 'yes', 'no' and 'doubtful', or to endorse one of the three or four alternatives provided, two of which expressed two extreme opinions, the other one or two being the middle step or the doubtful response.

It may be mentioned here that this test although constructed on the lines of the "Public Opinion Poll", was scored not by counting the percentages of the answers, as

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(1) cf. pp. 144-154 below.
is commonly done in this type, but assigning the values of 1 to 5 to the alternative answers.

The other test was a rating or 'intensity' scale of the kind most widely used in attitude measurement. In this test, a number of statements were given and the subject was asked to rate the intensity of his attitude in the form of agreement and disagreement. He was asked to choose on a five step scale of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'doubtful', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree', the one that best expressed his attitude to the statement. By assigning weights of 1 to 5 to the alternatives, each statement was treated as a scale on its own. This method of scoring attitude scales has been called the "Method of Summated Rating" by BIRD (1940) as the values for each statement would be summed to find a score for the whole test. It has more commonly come to be known as the "Likert Method" since LIKERT (1932) compared its validity as an instrument of attitude measurement with the other methods, especially "Thurstone's Technique" of equal appearing intervals.

Likert's simple method of scoring was used in the present investigation because it is much less laborious, and, as Likert himself has shown, will yield results as reliable and as valid as those obtained by more intricate methods. He found that scales scored by the simple method correlated "almost perfectly" with the same scale scored by other techniques (ibid.).
In constructing the tests most of the statements and questions were chosen from attitude scales and inventories which had previously been used. This point was especially emphasised as it was considered important to use statements whose reliability and validity for the investigation of political opinion had already been established.

One of the main sources was a questionnaire drawn up and used by Sanai (1949) for the investigation of social and political attitudes carried out in Britain. Sanai's questionnaire itself was based on a number of other questionnaires and attitude scales used in Britain and America. Besides Sanai's questionnaires some American inventories and attitude scales were also consulted and certain statements from them included in the political opinion tests used in this experiment. Of these the main were those of Centers (1949) and Rosenthal (1934). While consulting these sources, care was taken to choose only those statements or questions which would suit a British population; and in some cases the wording was changed in order to make the statements more suitable for subjects used in the present study.

The two political opinion tests were given to 23 Conservatives and 18 Communists for a preliminary trial. The replies received suggested certain alterations and a few questions and statements were dropped. These replies,
however, showed that the two tests could be successfully used to gauge differences in political opinion.

The tests consisted of statements and questions mainly on political issues and on such social and economic affairs as are closely related to politics. The statements in the five step scale were so worded that in some cases a strong agreement with a statement signified an extreme conservative opinion and a strong disagreement an extreme radical opinion, the two adjacent steps denoting opinion according to the direction of the statement; whereas in other cases the position was reversed - a strong agreement denoting an extreme radical opinion and a strong disagreement an extreme conservative opinion. The form of the statements was varied in this manner in order to prevent the subjects from being prejudiced against the test. It was also expected that in this way the interest of the subjects would be kept alive and they would not be likely to endorse or reject all statements mechanically.

All the statements in the two tests were scored for radicalism on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 showing the extreme conservative, 5 the extreme radical and 3 the middle or the neutral position. The statements with five alternative responses had the scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 while those with two extreme and one or two neutral responses were scored 1, 3, and 5.
As for the justification of deciding that a statement expressed a conservative viewpoint rather than the other and scoring it accordingly, it may be recalled that the majority of the statements had been tried out in earlier investigations and some of them had even stood the rigorous test of factorial analysis as regards their validity (Sanai, 1949). Strictly speaking there is no objective or external criterion against which the validity of an attitude scale can be tested; it can only be inferred from other indications of the efficiency of the instrument. Porter, for example, established the validity of his scale for measuring opinion on war by correlating it with assessments obtained from the testees' friends (cf. Murphy et al. 1937). Thurstone (1929) found that on his "church scale" Catholic students had a significantly lower mean than the Jewish students, and this was considered a satisfactory validity index for his scale. It follows from these examples that if significant differences between the mean scores of different political groups could be found in the present case, the validity of the tests used would be further established. As has already been mentioned the pilot experiment with these tests gave an indication of such differences. These differences are finally established by the statistical treatment of the results obtained in the main experiment.(1)

(1) cf. Chapter VI p. 162 below.
The question of the reliability of the tests is not so difficult to decide as that of their validity; in fact reliability is closely related to validity and if a test has been shown to be valid it will, in all probability, be reliable (Vernon, 1940). Besides, the statements were chosen from tests which had been shown by their authors to be satisfactorily reliable. In order that the reliability of the tests in their present form could be ascertained the two tests were regarded as two parallel forms and the product-moment correlation between them was calculated. The coefficient of correlation between the two tests was found to be +.97, which is sufficiently near unity to be accepted as a satisfactory index of their reliability as consistently measuring the same thing.\(^{(1)}\)

Classification of Subjects.

As the purpose of the present enquiry was to study the influence of social background, as well as political opinion, on literary preferences, some criterion or a set of criteria was needed in order to classify the subjects as regards their social background.

The term social background as used in this thesis is an inclusive term which covers almost everything that defines a person's position in a given society as, for

\(^{(1)}\) cf. Chapter VI p. 161 below.
example, his occupation, income, educational level, standard of living and so on. A glance through sociological literature will show that with little variation these indices have been included in the definition of what has been called "social class" or "socio-economic status". To the list of these objective criteria, social psychologists in recent years have added the subjective elements of "status feeling" and "class-consciousness" or "class identification" (Warner and Lunt, 1941; Centers, 1949).

At this point it seems important to mention that the question of class has been controversial, and it is out of the scope of this thesis to enter into the controversy. An attempt is therefore made to avoid the use of class terminology, although it has not been possible to do so entirely, especially when most of the discussions on social background or socio-economic stratification make use of the term "class".

Different sociologists and social psychologists have defined the concept of class in different ways, and there is a lack of general agreement among them as to what factor, or combination of factors, delineates a social class - or a person's social background. Those who have offered one definition or another may, however, be divided into two broad categories, namely, those who base their definition on objective factors such as income, occupation, education and
so on, and those who are concerned more with the subjective criterion of class-identification.

Some recent discussions on this subject have drawn attention to the convergence of different factors, showing that the objective factors are closely related not only to each other (Kornhauser, 1950) but also to the subjective factor (Newcomb, 1952; Centers, 1949). Thus in the words of Kornhauser "the income and occupation criteria of class are indirect measures of prestige and power, living standard and tastes, levels of skill and education. They thus provide not a picture of pure economic class but of socio-economic stratification" (ibid., p. 333). Centers (1949) on the other hand, has shown that people's attitude about a great many questions may be predicted with almost as much certainty from their subjective class-identification as from their occupational status, though Centers himself places more emphasis on subjective identification than on an objective index of occupation or, as he calls it, "role-status" criterion. Warner and his associates (1941, 1942) further demonstrate that there is a close relation between the social class position of a person defined in terms of his association group and the objective criteria such as income, occupation, education, living standard etc. Warner's study also indicates a close correspondence between objective position and subjective identification.
Newcomb (loc. cit.) reviewing these studies concludes that a person would fall in much the same social group or 'class' whichever of the above mentioned criteria, subjective, objective or associational is used.

In order to avoid the controversy as to what is meant by the term class and as to how many classes exist in a given society - in the present case Britain - Newcomb's suggestion is followed and an "operational" meaning is given to the term social background as used in this thesis. It refers to the common way of life of a group of people who generally follow one or another of restricted sets of occupation, have an income within a certain range and attain a certain level of education. Occupation, by virtue of its accepted central position amongst the criteria discussed above (Kornhauser, 1950; Martin, 1950; Davis, 1942; Form, 1946), was taken to be the best index of social background for the purposes of this investigation.

Once it has been decided that occupation may be taken as an index of social background, some kind of grading or classification of occupations is necessary in order to determine the social background of the subjects. Different classifications have been suggested. In America Cattell (1942) divided professions into five main grades which he called classes. These classes were again sub-divided each into two social grades, thus making ten grades in all,
under which he listed the occupations included in each grade. It is not necessary here to go into the details of this classification, as many occupations mentioned in it are not represented in the present sample. It may, however, be mentioned that only a little shifting was necessary in order to make the broad classification useful for the present study.

Centers' (loc. cit.) classification of "status" and "role" divides urban occupations into seven categories: large business, professional, small business, white collar, skilled manual workers, semi-skilled manual workers and unskilled manual workers.

As Sprott (1949) has pointed out the official recognition of the existence of an occupational hierarchy in Britain may be said to date back to 1911, when in a report by the Registrar General occupations were classified in five grades, the order being as follows:

Class I capitalists, managers, scientists, artists, professionals, etc.;

Class II small shop keepers, lower professionals, farmers, etc.;

Class III skilled labour;

Class IV semi-skilled labour;

Class V un-skilled labour.

Similarly in the Social Survey of Merseyside (cf. Jones, 1934), occupations were divided into ten grades
very much comparable to the social grades in Cattell's classification. The Survey report also suggests an amalgamation of different grades so that they may be reduced to a smaller number of three or four.

Again, in a Lancashire election analysis, occupations have been classified into different grades which closely resemble those of Merseyside classifications (Martin, 1952).

With certain minor differences in nomenclature and a few variations in the mention of some occupations there is a strikingly close resemblance among these gradings whether made in relation to America or Britain. They all agree that business, administrative, managerial and professional occupations are "upper middle class" or "high grade" occupations; that lower professions, commercial, clerical and similar non-manual occupations, may be graded as "lower middle class" or "intermediate grade"; and that manual occupations, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, all come under "working class" or "lower grade".

According to the "operational" definition given to the term social background in the present study the above three broad classifications are taken to represent three different social backgrounds. These classifications and particularly the "upper" and the "lower" grades seem to result also in more or less uniform levels of income and
education. Thus, they may be said to stand Sprott's test of useful classification in that the "resultant categories display distinguishing regularities of conduct" (Sprott, 1952).

The subjects were divided into three groups A, B, and C. The Registrar General's and other British gradings of occupations served as the main basis for the present classification. The types of occupations falling under "high grade" were included in group A, those under "intermediate grade" in group B, and those under "lower grade" in group C.

Students, not having an occupation of their own, were classified according to the occupations of their fathers. Housewives were classified according to their husbands' occupations and working wives according to their own.

**Collection of Data.**

The experiment was conducted in two parts. In the first part the subjects were asked to rate the poems on the rating scale and to write comments on them. The second part comprised the questionnaire and the two political opinion tests. The two parts were given separately, the second part being given only when the first was completed and returned. This was done in order that the subjects should not become unnecessarily conscious of the nature of the experiment and rate the poems to fit their responses to
the questionnaire. They were, however, told beforehand that the purpose of the experiment was to study the possible relation between literary appreciation and social values, and that besides rating the poems they would also be requested to fill in a questionnaire including questions on certain factual details and social attitudes. In the instructions heading the different forms used in the experiment they were assured that the purpose of the experiment was purely academic and that their replies would remain confidential. In order to gain confidence the subjects were asked not to mention their names in any part of the experiment. Both parts of the experiment given to a person bore the same code number and it was by this number that the two parts completed by one person were identified.

For an experiment involving social background and political opinion as variables, widely differing groups of people with regard to both social background and political opinion, were needed. Various types of institutions and places of work were visited. Workers in different factories, on building sites and in offices were approached, sometimes personally and sometimes through friends, and were requested to cooperate. Student bodies and college unions proved to be of great help, but apart from them, the response was slow.
It was found rather difficult to persuade those who were not particularly interested in literature to take part in this experiment. Besides, many people seemed hesitant to disclose personal details and political opinion and affiliations, probably because the investigator or one through whom they were approached was personally acquainted with them. Thus only a small number of replies to the experiment could be obtained apart from those completed by students of different colleges and evening institutes.

If the experiment was to be satisfactorily conducted, a cross-section of population, with people representing different types of occupations and various shades of opinion, was required, and this appeared well nigh impossible to achieve through personal contacts only. To overcome this difficulty requests inviting volunteers for the experiment were published in different national, provincial and local papers, either in the advertisement column or in the form of a letter to the editor. The papers were so chosen as to reach different groups of people such as, for example, Labour Party organisations, Conservative organisations, Trade Unions, industrial workers, educated middle class, literary circles and, of course, the common public with all shades of opinion. The respondents were asked to write to the investigator if they were willing to cooperate.
The response was quite satisfactory, although in a few cases the second part, particularly the political opinion tests, was returned blank, or no response to it was made at all. These cases, therefore, had to be discarded.

The data obtained by the methods discussed above are described and analysed in the following chapters.
Chapter V

The Population and the Poems.

In this chapter it is proposed to present the data on the subjects as obtained from them by means of a questionnaire\(^1\), and also to describe the poems in terms of external judgment. These details are expected to give a clear background to the experiment, in the context of which the results may be discussed.

The Population.

A full description of the Population is important in the present study especially because no rule-of-thumb method could be followed either for obtaining the sample of subjects or for checking its representativeness. In the absence of any such method McNemar's (1940) advice of resorting to logical considerations is followed. He suggests that "in the absence of an obviously valid scheme for drawing the sample, the only thing one can do is to describe the sample as completely as possible with regard to known characteristics of the Universe from which it was drawn. If the sample is typical of the Universe in several variables

---

\(^1\) cf. Appendix A, pp. xii-xiv.
which are related to the variate being studied, it is safe to assume that it is representative" (p. 343).

The variables which were considered to be relevant in this investigation were subjects' occupation, income, educational background, class identification, political opinion and affiliation, and religious profession. Age and sex, generally given importance in other kinds of psychological experiments, were not considered of direct relevance here; they were regarded as being "outside the cluster of variables that make up the vague concept of class" (Harding, 1953, p. 95), or the concept of social background as used in this experiment.

The sampling of population for the present experiment may be called random in that the majority of subjects were not "handpicked" or selected personally by the investigator, but were obtained by the relatively mechanical means of inviting answers to notices published in newspapers.

As mentioned earlier, the number of subjects obtained through personal contact was small. At the beginning 66 rating scales (the first part of the experiment) were distributed, out of which 51 replies were received. Of these 51 volunteers only 24 responded to the second part, the questionnaire regarding social background and political opinion. In 19 cases out of the 27 who did
not reply to the questionnaire, the occupations of the respondents were known and, as they could be classified into one or another of the three social groups formed on the basis of occupations, their replies to the first part were included in the analysis of ratings. The remaining 8 had to be discarded due to lack of essential information. Thus, in all, 43 replies obtained through personal contact were included in the experiment, 24 being complete in the sense that in addition to the rating of the poems the second part was also responded to, either wholly or partly. The notices published in newspapers brought answers from 201 volunteers to whom the first part was despatched by mail, together with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the experiment and mentioning the second part which was to follow after the first part had been received back. By this means 190 replies to the first part and 169 to the second part were obtained, 11 volunteers having dropped in the first instance and 21 in the second. Only the 169 cases, where the subjects had responded to both parts, could be included in the experiment. The remaining 21 replies to the first part had to be discarded because the necessary information regarding the respondents' social background was not available.
To give a clearer picture of the number of replies to the first and the second part of the experiment obtained through personal contact and the publication of notices, the following table is presented.

Table 1
Response to the Experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Part I</th>
<th></th>
<th>Part II</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Notices</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Personal Notices</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discarded</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subjects, 212 in number, were classified into three social groups A, B, and C according to the types of occupation followed by them. Table 2 gives the number of subjects falling into each of these groups and the number of men and women in them.

---

1 Cf. Chap. IV, pp. 111-117.
Table 2
The Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be seen from the above table that the number of men and women in group A and group B was almost equal, but in group C there were about five times as many men as women. This may be taken to suggest, first, that there are fewer women in manual or industrial than in clerical and professional employment and, second, that the comparatively less educated women of the lower strata of society, working or otherwise, do not feel sufficiently interested in such questions as those involved in the present research to volunteer to be subjects in an experiment.

Most of the subjects who took part in the experiment were from 25 to 50 years of age; the ages of the students ranged between 19 and 25, and there were a few persons who were over 60. The average age was 33.8 for group A, 34.8 for group B and 34.2 for group C. Thus the subjects in the three groups were, on the whole, mature
adults who could be trusted to have an independent outlook with regard to social and political issues.

Since social background was defined in this experiment in terms of the type of occupation followed, it seems relevant to give the occupational composition of the three groups A, B and C.

The subjects in group A, as will be seen from Table 3, were chiefly drawn from business, professional and administrative occupations. In this group there was a preponderance of school and university teachers, authors, journalists and editors, business representatives and managers. Women respondents who did not have an independent occupation were wives of people following one or another of the higher professional or business occupations.

In group B, most of the subjects were in secretarial and clerical occupations; some followed lower professions, and some others held small executive and commercial posts.

The occupations of the respondents in group C were mainly of the types falling under the category of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled industrial and manual work.

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(1) cf. Classification of subjects in Chap. IV, pp. 111-117 above.
### Table 3

**Occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or Property Owners*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Art and Drama Instructors*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife of Business Owner*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Optician*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Representative*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pharmacist*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wives of Business Representatives*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chiropodist*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works and Administrative Managers*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nurse*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Lining Trainers*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Commercial Travellers*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army and Colonial Officers*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wife of Commercial Traveller*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife of Colonial Officer*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Advertising Agent*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Teachers*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Despatch Manager*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife of University Teacher*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Training Supervisor*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspector of Schools*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Surveyors*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teachers*</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Radio Inspector*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian and Archivist*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trade Union Official*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers and Journalists*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Electricity Board Official*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitor*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wife of Political Organiser*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wives of Lawyers, Chartered Surveyors and Chartered Accountants*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Office Clerk*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Secretaries*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial and Chief Chemists*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Civil Servants (Clerical)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naval Ensign*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clerks and Typists*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wife of Clerk*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife of Fuel Technologist*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Housekeeper*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (Father following one or another of the Business, Administrative or Professional occupations)*</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Wife of regular Soldier*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student (Father Clerk)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wife of Warehouseman*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handiman*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building and General Labourers*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wife of Building Labourer*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invalid (Father Labourer)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disabled and Retired Workers*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students (Father following one or another of the Industrial or Manual occupations)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | **83** | **49** | **7**
The concept of social background is related not only to a person's present position in society but also to the type of home and family in which he was born and bred, and whose attitudes and values he is supposed to have imbibed. It was, therefore, thought profitable to obtain information about the occupations of the subjects' fathers. The occupations mentioned by the respondents of group A as having been held by their fathers were more or less similar to those held by themselves, except in a few cases where the father was reported to have been a clerk, a policeman, a factory foreman, a joiner or even a labourer. These cases, five in number, may be regarded as examples of what is called "class mobility". This phenomenon was more marked in group B where people seemed to have moved up as well as down on the scale of social stratification seen in terms of occupation. In this group skilled and unskilled manual work was often mentioned as the father's occupation, while in some cases the father was reported to have held a higher professional or business position such as, for example, that of a doctor, a managing director, or a financier. It seems that the social background of subjects in group B was more mixed than that of subjects in either group A or group C. In group C the occupations of fathers were in most cases similar to those followed by the subjects themselves.
Besides occupation, other objective factors which are often considered to be related to social background are amount and source of income, and education. The subjects were asked to indicate their income on a given scale, and also to mention their source of income. Table 4 gives the percentages of subjects in different groups falling at different steps of the scale, and the average income for each of these groups.

Table 4
Weekly Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Income</th>
<th>Group A (n = 71)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 43)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 61)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Income</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to £5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between £6 and £8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; £9 &quot; £11</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; £12 &quot; £14</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; £15 &quot; £17</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; £18 &quot; £20</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; £21 &quot; £23</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; £24 &quot; £26</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £26</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Income</td>
<td>£14.18</td>
<td>£8.56</td>
<td>£7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 There was no provision in the questionnaire for indicating a complete absence of income, but as a few subjects in group C specifically mentioned that they had "no income", it has been added here.
There is not much difference between the average incomes for groups B and C, but the average income for group A is almost twice that for either group B or group C. The range of income for groups B and C is also the same - if the 3.2 per cent cases in group C with no income of their own are ignored - and in this respect the difference between either of these groups and group A is still more marked.

The modal amounts of income for the three groups show observable differences and here the difference between groups B and C is almost similar to that between groups A and B. The differences between the adjacent groups are not, however, as marked as is the difference between the extreme groups A and C.

The lack of marked difference between groups B and C with regard to income may, to some extent, be accounted for by the fact that the occupations classified in group B, being "white-collar", are relatively high in prestige but are not as highly paid as some of the skilled occupations in group C. A foreman or an engineer in a factory, for example, would receive higher wages than a routine clerk in an office, though on occupational basis the latter would be placed in "lower middle class" while the former would be regarded as belonging to "working class". The present classification of subjects, therefore,
is more of a "role-status" classification as defined by Centers (1949) than one based on the amount of income; the two, though overlapping to a considerable degree, are not quite identical.

Source of income is perhaps more closely related to the status or prestige attached to different types of occupations. Information regarding the sources of income of subjects in different groups is given below.

Table 5
Source of Income(1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Group A (n = 72)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 72)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 72)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None(2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows notable differences among the three groups with regard to the main source or sources

(1) Percentages add up to more than 100 as a few subjects mentioned more than one source of income.

(2) This category was added in the questionnaire by some subjects in group C.
of income. Group A may be said to be occupying the top, group B the middle, and group C the bottom position, if income through salary or investment is regarded as of higher prestige than income through wages. The category "Other Sources" was included so that the respondents could add any other source of income not mentioned on the questionnaire. Respondents in group C specified "son's earning", "pension", "sickness benefit" under this heading but no such specifications were made either in group A or group B.

Factors of income and occupation, although accepted by many sociologists and psychologists as being the main basis of social stratification, give only the economic side of the differences among the three groups. For the purposes of the present study, the economic picture needs to be supplemented by an examination of the educational background of the subjects as well. Education, apart from being an integral part of social background in that it determines, to a large extent, the type of work, the associations, and the leisure time activities of an individual, is particularly relevant here because a person's intellectual training would have a considerable bearing on his reaction to literature. It is, therefore, important to see whether the three groups, found to be more or less different in occupation, income and source of income, also differed in their educational background.
Table 7
Educational Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A (n = 80)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 49)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 66)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary or Primary School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary or Grammar School</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As regards the level of academic education of subjects in the three groups, it will be observed from Table 7 that group A contains the highest proportion of people with University education, that is 61.2% as against 10.2% in group B and 15.1% in group C. The high percentage of subjects with University education in group A is not unexpected in view of the fact that the majority of this group follows one or another of the higher professions.

1 In group A 12.2% out of the 16.3% cases with Public School education are included in the percentage of those with University education. Similarly percentages of cases with Professional, Commercial or Technical training are included in the percentages of cases with Elementary, Secondary or University education in different groups.
In group C, the proportion of subjects with University education consists mainly of students who were classified in this group according to their fathers' occupations.

For the majority of subjects in group C, general education seems to have ended at the Elementary or Primary stage. In group B, on the other hand, the proportion of such cases is much smaller than in group C, while in group A there is no such instance. The relation between groups B and C is reversed with regard to Secondary education, 48.9% of the former group as against 25.7% of the latter reporting to have attained that level. The smaller proportion in group A, as compared with group B, of those who have been educated up to the Secondary level only is also significant when viewed in relation to the much higher proportion of subjects with public school and University education in the former than in the latter group. Here, again, as elsewhere the difference between groups A and C is very marked.

Taking an over-all view of the differences among the three groups regarding the objective factors considered to be related to social background, it is observed that the subjects in group A, on the whole, follow higher business or professional occupations, earn larger amounts of income and have attained a much higher level of education than the subjects in group C. Group B, occupying a middle position between groups A and C, contains cases some of
whom were nearer in these respects to Group A and some to group C.

The objective picture of the social background of the subjects in different groups may now be compared with their class-identification. The four classes named in the questionnaire, from which the subjects were asked to choose the one to which they thought they belonged, were: Upper Middle Class, Lower Middle Class, Upper Working Class, and Working Class. Those who did not identify themselves with any of these classes were regarded as having no identification and are classified as such.

Table 8
Class Identification (by Present Position)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Group A (n = 80)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 49)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle Class</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle Class</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Working Class</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Identification</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[1] The percentages add up to more than 100 as a few respondents identified themselves with more than one class.
The figures in Table 8 indicate that the classification of the respondents in different groups on the basis of occupation, which was also observed to be related to some other objective criteria of social background, largely corresponds with their subjective class-identification. More than half of the subjects in group A identify themselves with Upper Middle Class, and a little over 25 per cent. with Lower Middle Class, whereas in group C over 75 per cent. of the subjects identify themselves with Working Class. In group B, more than 50 per cent of the identifications go to Lower Middle Class and about 30 per cent. to Upper Working Class. The category of Upper Working Class was included in the questionnaire in order to see if the skilled manual workers, who in some cases draw higher wages than many clerical workers, regarded themselves as belonging to a class higher than mere "Working Class". It is, however, observed that a considerably higher proportion of respondents in group B identified themselves with this category, and it is interesting to note that, proportionately, there are nearly as many identifications with it in group A as in group C.

Students, as mentioned earlier, were classified into the three groups not according to the nature of occupation they were likely to follow but according to their
fathers' occupation, and therefore, it was realised, their identification with one class or another by present position would not quite agree with their objective classification. Besides, in view of the movement of individuals from one stratum of society to another in the course of a generation, it was considered relevant to see whether in the three groups there was any difference in the class identification of the subjects by present position and by origin.

Table 9
Class Identification[^1](By Origin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A (n = 80)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 48)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle Class</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle Class</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Working Class</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Indentification</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison of Tables 8 and 9 will show that in group A there is not much difference between the subjects' perception of their class by present position and by origin. In group B, the subjects have identified themselves with

[^1]: The percentages add up to more than 100 as a few respondents identified themselves with more than one class.
Upper Middle Class, Upper Working Class and Working Class
more frequently, and with Lower Middle Class less frequently,
by origin than by present position, but the frequency of
identification with Lower Middle Class and Upper Working
Class taken together is over 75 per cent. in both cases.
Thus, although some of the subjects in this group perceived
themselves to have moved down from a higher position in
class hierarchy and some to have moved up, the majority
placed themselves in the middle by origin as well as by
present position. In group C, on the other hand, the
majority of subjects identify themselves with Working Class
both by origin and by present position, there being fewer
subjects who identify themselves with either Upper Working
or Lower Middle Class by origin than by present position,
though a very small proportion trace their origin to Upper
Middle Class as against the total absence of identification
with this class by present position. This comparison shows
that, with slight variations, most of the subjects in
different groups identify themselves with the same social
class or classes by origin as by present position.

The question arises here as to what the subjects
meant in terms of occupations when they identified themselves
with one or another social class. In order that this could
be ascertained, a list of people in different types of
occupations was given and the subjects were asked to place
a tick beside the "types of workers" they thought they could include in the social class to which they themselves belonged.

Table 10
Reference Occupation for Class Membership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A (n = 72)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 42)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 59)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factory Workers</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porters</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dockers</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck Drivers</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conductors</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firemen</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Lathers</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitters</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Sergeants</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesmen</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Clerks</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Clerks</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Agents</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teachers</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Managers</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servants</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Teachers</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Executives</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners of Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners of Small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factories</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the figures presented in Table 10 it will be observed that a considerable majority of subjects in group A (about 85%) agree in including, among others,
professional and administrative occupations in their class. Over 50 per cent. of the subjects in this group also include Business Executives and round about 40 per cent. include Owners of Commercial Concerns and Owners of Small Factories as well. Going towards the other end of the scale Bank Clerks and Insurance Agents are also included by more than 50 per cent. of the subjects in this group, but the percentage decreases considerably as one passes from commercial and clerical occupations to manual work. In group B, the subjects refer most frequently to the clerical and commercial types of occupation and to some of the professional and administrative posts as belonging to their class. The types of occupations which are included in their own class by most of the subjects in group C are mainly manual, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. A smaller proportion of the subjects in this group also include with varying degrees of agreement different types of commercial and clerical occupations and some, though in diminishing proportions, also mention a few kinds of professional workers, particularly school teachers.

It emerges from the above discussion that the subjects in each of the three groups have greater agreement in identifying their class with those types of occupations which were regarded in the present study as the basis for the classification of subjects into the respective social
groups A, B and C. These groups, then, may be said to represent three "social classes" or social backgrounds which are not only, more or less, distinct from each other with regard to certain objective factors, but are also perceived to be so by most of the individuals placed into them.

As regards political opinion and affiliation, the subjects taking part in this experiment were asked to fill in two political opinion scales and also to state with which political party they would feel inclined to affiliate. The parties mentioned in the questionnaire were Conservative, Liberal, Labour or Socialist and Communist; a fifth alternative "None" was provided for those who did not feel inclined to affiliate with any of these parties. Table 11 gives the percentages of subjects in the three social groups affiliating with different political parties.

Table 11
Political Affiliation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A (n = 80)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 48)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour or Socialist</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These percentages, it is realised, may not be taken as representative of the political affiliations of people in society at large. At best they may be regarded only as a rough indication of the tendencies of political affiliation in different social groups. The tendencies shown by the above table, on the whole, point in the same direction as some other investigations (Sanai, 1948; Centers, 1949) which agree that people belonging to the upper strata of society tend to be "conservative" in their political views and hence in their political affiliations, whereas people of lower socio-economic strata are relatively more "radical", tending to affiliate with so called "leftist" parties. The numerical results obtained from the political opinion scales also suggest that the subjects in group A are, on the whole, more on the "conservative" side and the subjects in group C more on the "radical" side; group B in this respect differs significantly from group C but not from group A.  

Sanai (1948) has pointed out that an individual's religious belief has an important place in the total pattern of his attitudes and values. It would not be out of place here to see if there are any differences among the social groups regarding the subjects' religious profession.

(1) These results are analysed in Chap. VI.
Table 12
Religious Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A (n = 78)</th>
<th>Group B (n = 48)</th>
<th>Group C (n = 62)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 shows that subjects in group A are, on the whole, more inclined towards religion than subjects in group C and that group B in this respect is nearer to the former group than to the latter. If the lack of a positive belief in organised religion may be interpreted to mean a relative freedom from, or indifference to, religious traditions and related moral values, it may be inferred from the above figures that subjects in group C are less bound by these values than subjects in groups A and B.

The aim of the above analysis was to determine whether the three social groups formed on the basis of occupational differences were also distinguishable from one another in some other related characteristics. The results indicate that group A differs from group C in a number of respects and that group B occupies a position in between the two groups.
The Poems.

The sixteen poems used in the experiment, which were selected by the representatives of contrasting social and political groups (namely, professional and industrial workers, and Conservatives and Communists) were submitted to three groups of judges - who were not given the main experiment - for classification of themes in terms of certain defined categories. Of these three groups, one, group A, consisted of professional people, another, group C, of industrial workers, and the third was a group of students.

A classification of themes was considered necessary, firstly, because it was thought that the reaction to the themes of the poems would have a bearing upon the subjects' preferences. Secondly, for a reliable interpretation of results in relation to the content of the poems, it was important to see if there was a reasonable degree of agreement among different groups of people as to what each poem was intended to convey. The classifications obtained from the three groups of judges are represented in Figure 1 in the form of a histogram.

The judges were asked to give their comments on the categories and also to state their reactions in applying

(1) cf. Appendix C, p. xix.
(2) cf. Chap. IV, pp. 103-106.
Figure 1
Classification of Themes\(^1\)

\[\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{abcda}_{abcdab}\text{c} & \text{abcdab}_{abcdab}\text{c} & \text{abcdab}_{abcdab}\text{c} & \text{abcdab}_{abcdab}\text{c} \\
\hline
1 & 1 & 9 & 1 & 10 & 1 \\
2 & 1 & 11 & 1 & 12 & 1 \\
3 & 1 & 13 & 1 & 14 & 1 \\
4 & 1 & 15 & 1 & 16 & 1 \\
\hline
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{abcda}_{abcdab}\text{c} & \text{abcdab}_{abcdab}\text{c} & \text{abcdab}_{abcdab}\text{c} & \text{abcdab}_{abcdab}\text{c} \\
\hline
\text{1. Social Theme} & \text{2. Individual Theme} & \text{3. Religious Theme} & \text{4. Philosophical Theme} \\
1a. Revolt & 2a. Hyperbolic & 3a. Devotional & 4. \text{Philosophical Theme} \\
1b. Discontent & 2b. Nostalgic & 3b. Grief over Loss of Spiritual Values. & \\
1c. Consolation & 2c. Introspection & 3c. Appealing to Religious Sentiments in any other way. & \\
1d. Escape & 2d. Projection & & \\
\end{array}\]

\(^1\) The highest possible frequency in each group is 17 (cf. Chap. IV, p. 105 above).
these categories to the themes of the poems. Only a few comments were received from judges in groups A and C, but many judges in the Student group commented on the categories in some detail.

Most of the comments agreed that the categories served the purpose of identifying the main ideas expressed in the poems and were adequate for classifying broad themes, but it was sometimes mentioned that they did not allow for subtler distinctions of themes particularly with regard to the tone and the emotional force of the poems.

As regards the application of the categories and their subdivisions, distinction of la (social revolt) from lb (social discontent) was often reported to be difficult. Some of the judges pointed out that "social discontent" would imply the consciousness of "social ills and wrongs" and hence a kind of "emotional revolt" against them. The examples of poems 9 and 13 were especially quoted in this connection. These poems, it was commented, did not clearly envisage a change in social conditions, yet "bitterness" of tone implied a wish to revolt. It was suggested in some comments that one possible way of making distinctions among poems expressing social discontent or revolt was to distinguish between those which had "emotional force", or "strength of emotional protest", and those which lacked such a force. On this basis poems 3, 11, 9 and 13
were distinguished from poems 4, 7 and 15, the latter being described as "mild" and "sensitive" in tone. Another means suggested for drawing distinctions was to differentiate between those poems which envisaged or advocated more or less clearly a change in certain social conditions, and those which confined themselves to just registering a protest against these conditions.

As will be seen from the definitions of the two categories, 1a and 1b, it was the latter distinction which was kept in mind while defining them, and the emphasis was laid more on the thought content rather than on the tone or the "emotional force" of the poems. It, however, appears from the histogram, and was also suggested by the comments, that the categories of social discontent and revolt, not being exclusive of each other, were applied with reference to both the content and the tone of the poems. The poems which are classified under one or the other, or both, of these two categories by most of the judges in the three groups are poems 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

Poems 3, 7, 11, 13 and 15 are placed under the category of revolt with more or less agreement among the judges. The highest degree of agreement occurs over the theme of poem 11 which is classified under this category almost unanimously by judges in all the three groups. There is considerable agreement also on the theme of poem 15 as
being one of social revolt; some of the judges placing it under the category of social discontent as well.

Some differences, however, arise between the groups over poems 3 and 13. While the majority of judges in the Student group and group C place these poems under the category of revolt, most of the judges in group A regard them as implying discontent. This difference may, to some extent, be explained in terms of the mutual in exclusiveness of the two categories, as noted above.

The theme of poem 7 presents another example of disagreement among the three groups of judges, especially between the Student group and group A. Although the majority of judges in the three groups agree that the poem comprises a social theme, the students regard it as expressing revolt and, though less frequently, also consolation, whereas most of the judges in group A place it under the category of escape. The judges in group C, on the other hand, seem to be divided among themselves, some agreeing with the Student group, some with group A, while a small proportion also place it under the categories of individual and philosophical themes.

The comments of the judges suggested that a "vision" of a changed society was the basic theme of the poem. Some of those who placed it under the category of revolt emphasised that the poem expressed "optimism" and a desire for change
but occasionally it was mentioned that it lacked emotional force and that it presented a "mere dream" which might be a source of consolation but did not "appear to be a serious substitute for the present society". Reference was made to this aspect of the theme also by some of those who regarded it as expressing escape. One of the judges in group A commented: "The poet is trying to escape from the realities of the present into a dream world and is looking to the future for consolation".

It appears from these comments that, although the poem expresses a desire for a changed society, and to that extent comes under the category of revolt, it does not evoke an emotional protest, nor does it clearly express discontent with the present. This, together with the vision of an imaginary future world, gives the poem an implication of escape.

Poems 9 and 4 are, on the whole, classified by most of the judges under the category of social discontent, and by some of them also under revolt, there being a greater agreement among the three groups regarding the theme of the latter poem. The comments of the judges indicated that poem 4 expressed a clear disapproval of and discontent with certain social conditions in a "mild" and "sad tone" while in poem 9 discontent with social conditions was expressed in a tone which added "irony" and "satire" to it. The satirical tone
of the latter poem, as some of the comments mentioned, made its classification somewhat difficult.

Poems 1 and 5, two other poems classified as having a social theme, are predominantly judged to be expressing consolation, with some implication of escape. Some of the judges, mainly of group C, have also applied the category of philosophical theme to both these poems. These poems, though to a large extent similar in theme, appear to be slightly different in that poem 1 is indicated as having an implication of social discontent while poem 5, which is placed by judges in group C under the category of philosophical theme more frequently than poem 1, is also judged by a few judges in the three groups as being contemplative.

Another poem judged to be expressing a social theme is poem 14. Most of the judges agree that it implies escape from social realities. One striking point about this poem is that almost all the categories of social, individual, religious and philosophical themes have been applied to it by some of the judges, which shows that its theme is slightly complex. It was mentioned in a number of comments that "escape" was most clearly apparent in this poem. Two of the judges in group A remarked that escape as expressed in this poem implied some form of consolation. In one comment it was noted that the poem expressed not merely a desire for
escape from social realities but also a philosophical attitude to "the unpleasant realities of the material world". One of the judges also noticed in the poem a contrast between the material and the spiritual aspects of life in that "Beauty - spiritual - is being compared with the bitter world - material".

The theme of poem 10 is judged as one which appeals to religious sentiments and also, though by fewer judges, as expressing social discontent. It appeared from the comments that the judges - although they agreed in many cases that the phrase "Christ hanging on a Cross" gave the poem a religious appeal - differed mainly with regard to the implications of the images presented in the two stanzas. The comparison involved in the two images was sometimes interpreted as a comparison between the spiritual and the material aspects of life, sometimes "between the natural order and the social order", and sometimes between "the apparent and the real conditions of life". Thus, it seems that the discontent implicit in the contrast between the happy and the sad pictures portrayed in the poem was viewed in a social as well as a religious or spiritual context.

There is greater agreement among the judges of the three groups in applying different categories of the religious theme to poems 6 and 12, the latter being almost unanimously judged as expressing "religious devotion".
Poem 6 is also classified under the category of philosophical theme by some of the judges in groups A and C, and by most of the judges in the Student group. This poem was commented upon as expressing in the form of a philosophical argument discontent with, and grief at, the loss of spiritual values.

Two other poems judged as having a philosophical theme are poems 2 and 16. Other categories which have been applied to the theme of poem 2 are those of social consolation and escape, and also a category of the individual theme, which emphasises the introspective and contemplative aspect of individual experience. The comments indicated that the contrast of good and evil and the argument that one is seen against the other was considered by the judges to be the philosophical content of the poem. The attitude underlying this argument was regarded by some of the judges as implying a possible source of consolation, and by a few as suggesting escape.

Poem 16 appears to be of a mixed theme in that besides being classified under the category of the philosophical theme, it is frequently placed, especially by the judged in group A and in the Student group, under different categories of the individual theme. The histogram shows that many judges have noticed a nostalgic feeling in the poem and some also consider it to be amorous. In the comments it was emphasised that in this poem personal experience was
combined with certain philosophical ideas. Referring to the nostalgic element of the poem, one of the judges commented that "due to a difficulty in social relationship the poet may be looking back to an earlier, more simple society, or to his own childhood"; another suggested that "amorous" could be applicable to its theme if the term could be interpreted "to include sympathetic human relationships".

Thus, it appears that poems 2 and 16 are similar in so far as both have a philosophical theme, but in the latter poem the philosophy is linked up with some kind of personal experience which is as noticeable as the philosophical content.

Poem 8 is the only poem which predominantly expresses an individual theme, with little or no reference to social, philosophical or religious ideas. In the comments the poem was described as "reflective" and "introspective", portraying the picture of a "mental state".

Summarising the description of the themes of the poems, it may be observed that with the exception of poem 8, which does not seem to be committed to any ideology, all the poems included in the experiment imply some definite attitude - social, religious or philosophical - as represented by their dominant theme or themes. Further, the attitudes conveyed by the poems with a social theme may, to a large
extent, be differentiated in terms of the specific reaction to "social realities" expressed in them, whether discontent, revolt, consolation or escape.
As has already been mentioned, the total number of subjects to be considered in the present investigation is 212 out of which only 164 completed the two political opinion tests. In order, therefore, to study the influence of political opinion on the rating of the poems it is necessary to treat these 164 cases separately as well as with the total population. This would enable the investigator to compare the results obtained from the two analyses, and to follow up the 164 cases in a further analysis of the ratings for each poem in relation to the subjects' social background and political opinion.

The method employed in analysing the ratings is Analysis of Variance. First an analysis of the ratings for all poems taken together is carried out. The object is to determine (1) whether the groups A, B and C, which are considered in this investigation to have different social backgrounds, differ significantly in the rating of the poems, that is, whether the differences between groups are more important and contribute more to the total variance than the differences between individuals within
groups; (2) whether the differences between individuals within groups are also significant; (3) how far variation in ratings could be attributed to differences among the poems; and, after the differences 'between groups' and 'between poems' have been accounted for; (4) to what extent the variation in ratings is due to 'group-poem' interaction.

Since the subjects were asked to rate the poems on an 'intensity scale' according to the degree of their liking or dislike for each poem, it is assumed, for the purpose of the present analysis, that ratings given to the sixteen poems are independent of each other.

Taking the main sources of variance to be considered here, it may be mentioned that the total variance of the ratings of all subjects for all poems includes (i) variance between groups, (ii) variance between individuals within groups, (iii) variance between poems, (iv) variance due to group-poem interaction, and (v) residual variance, or the reaction of each individual to each poem not accounted for by any of the other variances. (1)

After the mean variances due to the four main sources have been calculated, and the mean residual variance

---

(1) The formulae and the calculations are given in Appendix D, pp. xxii.
obtained, the next step is to test their significance. To test the significance of differences between groups, the ratio of the mean variance between groups to the mean variance between individuals within groups is calculated and tested against the expected variance ratio, $F$, as estimated from a table of $F$ values (Snedecor, 1946, pp. 222-225). This test is appropriate if interpretation of differences between groups is regarded in terms of the actual poems used in the experiment. Here it may be mentioned that these poems, though selected from a larger number of poems, are treated, for statistical purposes, as a particular set of poems and not as representative of all possible choices of poems.

The significance of the other three mean variances is tested by calculating their ratios to the mean residual variance and comparing them with the expected variance ratios.

As Tables 13 and 14 indicate, there is a close similarity in the results of the analyses of ratings for the total population of 212 subjects, and for the 164 subjects who completed the political opinion tests. The mean variances due to different sources in the latter analysis show reduced figures as compared to the mean variances in the former in a notably uniform manner, the $F$ ratios obtained in the two analyses being closely
comparable. Hence a single interpretation would be applicable to the results of both the analyses.

Table 13

Analysis of Variance of the Ratings of 212 Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Variance</th>
<th>F(obtained)</th>
<th>Degrees Freedom</th>
<th>F(expected)</th>
<th>5% level</th>
<th>1% level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3391</td>
<td>11309.554</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>148.009</td>
<td>74.004</td>
<td>10.803</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Individuals Within Groups</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1431.107</td>
<td>6.847</td>
<td>2.625</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Poems</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>668.832</td>
<td>44.539</td>
<td>17.097</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group-Poem Interaction</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>835.311</td>
<td>29.510</td>
<td>11.315</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>3135</td>
<td>8176.295</td>
<td>2.608</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14
Analysis of Variance of the Ratings of 164 Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Fo(Obtained Degrees Freedom)</th>
<th>Fe(expected ratio) Freedom $5%$ level $1%$ level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2623</td>
<td>8902.957</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>135.103</td>
<td>67.551</td>
<td>11.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Individuals</td>
<td>Group Poems</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>578.267</td>
<td>38.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>986.041</td>
<td>6.124</td>
<td>2.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group-Poem Interaction</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>649.085</td>
<td>21.636</td>
<td>7.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>2415</td>
<td>6554.461</td>
<td>2.714</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variation between groups is significant at $1\%$ level. This indicates that there are greater differences between the groups than there are between the individuals within the groups as regards the rating of all poems taken together. Considering the mean variance between poems, it is observed that there are gross differences
between the poems as rated by subjects in the three groups, and that these differences are significant at 1\% level. But since these differences are not independent of group reactions it is difficult to interpret them apart from the differences between groups. After the variances 'between groups' and 'between poems' have been accounted for, the variance due to group-poem interaction is also found to be significant.

The variance due to group-poem interaction is of particular importance for the present study, but, since the above analysis was applied to the ratings of all poems taken together, it is not possible to explain precisely the interaction between each group and each poem. An examination of the influence of political opinion on the rating of each poem also requires a more specific treatment. It is, therefore, proposed to analyse the differences between the three social groups, and the relation between political opinion scores and ratings for each poem separately.

Before embarking on the proposed analysis, it seems necessary to mention some of the results gained by a statistical treatment of political opinion scores, which are relevant here. As described in Chapter IV above, two political opinion tests were given to the subjects. In order to determine whether the two tests were comparable and the scores on them could be combined together, the
The coefficient of correlation between them was calculated and was found to be .97. As the correlation was very high and significant, it was concluded that the two tests reliably and consistently measured the same thing. The scores on them were, then, combined together to obtain one political opinion score for each subject.

Further, as it was intended to compare the ratings for the poems with reference to the subjects' political affiliations, it was deemed necessary to ascertain if people with different political affiliations, or with no affiliations, differed significantly in their political opinion scores. This was determined by dividing the 164 subjects who had completed the political opinion tests into five groups - Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists, Communists, and the Non-Affiliated (those with no political affiliations) - and by applying a 't' test to the mean political opinion scores of these groups. The probability, $P$, was then found from a table of 't' values (Snedecor, 1948, p. 65).

The results presented in Table 15 demonstrate that subjects with different political affiliations significantly differ in their political opinion scores. The

(1) cf. Appendix D, p. xxvii.

(2) cf. Appendix D, p. xxviii, for the formula and other details of calculation.
Table 15
Results of 't' Test applied to Mean Political Opinion Scores of different Political Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conservatives</th>
<th>Liberals</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated</th>
<th>Socialists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservatives</strong></td>
<td>n: 28</td>
<td>X: 56.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liberals</strong></td>
<td>n: 15</td>
<td>t: 4.72</td>
<td>X: 69.86</td>
<td>P: &lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Affiliated</strong></td>
<td>n: 20</td>
<td>t: 4.09</td>
<td>t: 1.82</td>
<td>P: &lt;.01, P: &gt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialists</strong></td>
<td>n: 52</td>
<td>t: 13.94</td>
<td>t: 9.33 t: 3.42</td>
<td>P: &lt;.01, P: &lt;.01, P: &lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communists</strong></td>
<td>n: 49</td>
<td>t: 32.07</td>
<td>t: 22.67 t: 7.72</td>
<td>t: 8.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conservatives have the lowest mean score while the Communists have the highest. In between these two extremes, the Socialists are comparatively nearer to the Communists and the Liberals nearer to the Conservatives, the non-Affiliated being in the middle. The difference between the mean scores of the Non-Affiliated and the Liberals is insignificant, which shows that there is a higher amount of overlap between
the scores of these two groups than between the scores of any of the other adjacent groups.

The findings also confirm the validity of the two tests for measuring real differences in political opinion. High political opinion scores, as the results indicate, go consistently with Communist and, next, with Socialist affiliations. Similarly low scores are consistent with Conservative and Liberal affiliations. Political affiliation may, therefore, be regarded as an approximate index to an individual's position on the political opinion scale and vice versa.

It may, thus, be concluded that when there is a positive and significant correlation between the ratings for a poem and the political opinion scores, that poem is liked most by the Communists, next by the Socialists, less by the Liberals and the Non-Affiliated, and least by the Conservatives. Inversely the same applies to a significant correlation with a negative value.

In order to make computation easier, the political opinion scores of the subjects, having been combined from the two tests, were converted into smaller figures. This was done by the following method: the mean and the standard deviation of the original scores were calculated and the range of these scores was divided on a scale of eleven steps in terms of half sigma values; from this
Table 16
'Standard Scale' for Political Opinion Scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sigma Values</th>
<th>Original Scale</th>
<th>'Standard Scale'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n : 164</td>
<td>Mean : 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean : 94.45</td>
<td>S.D. : 2 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. : 28.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+2.25 and Over     153 and Over     10
-1.75 to +2.25     144 to 157       9
+1.25 to +1.75     130 to 143       8
+ .75 to +1.25     116 to 129       7
+ .25 to +.75      102 to 115       6
-.25 to +.25       88 to 101        5
-.75 to -.25       74 to 87         4
-1.25 to -.75      60 to 73         3
-1.75 to -1.25     46 to 59         2
-2.25 to -1.75     32 to 45         1
-2.25 and Under    31 and Under     0

A 'standard scale' with a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of approximately 2 was constructed (cf. Table 16); as the original and the 'standard' scales were based on similar range and step intervals and hence were convertible, the scores falling at particular steps of the original scale were reduced to the corresponding scores of the 'standard scale' (cf. Guilford, 1950, p. 306).
Coming back to the proposed analysis, the main problem is to study more precisely the extent to which different social groups vary in the rating of each poem, and also to examine the differences which can be accounted for by the influence of political opinion within these groups. This analysis is, therefore, slightly different from the analysis applied to the ratings for all poems taken together in that it also includes an analysis of covariance of ratings and political opinion scores.

The object of this analysis is to find for each poem (a) the total variance of ratings of the 164 subjects whose political opinion scores are complete, (b) the variance between groups, (c) the variance between individuals within groups, and (d) the amount of variance within groups due to regression on political opinion scores. In order to check if the rate of regression is similar in all the three groups, (e) another component which is to be accounted for by differences in regression rates in different groups is also analysed. Finally (f) the residual is calculated to check the significance of variances due to regression of ratings on political opinion scores, and due to differences in regression rates in different groups. The significance of variance 'between groups' is tested against the variance 'between individuals within groups'.

(1) The formulae and other details of analysis are given in Appendix D, p. xxx.
The results of the analysis of variance and covariance are represented in a diagrammatical form in Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Variance due to differences between groups</th>
<th>Variance due to regression on political opinion scores within groups</th>
<th>Variance due to differences in regression rates in different groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S = significant (at 1% level);   B = barely significant (at 5% level)
I = insignificant.
These results show that:

(a) there is no significant variation due to differences in regression rates in different groups, or, to put it positively, the rate of regression of ratings on political opinion scores is similar in all groups - except in the case of poem 10 where the variation in regression rates is significant;

(b) the covariance of ratings and political opinion scores within groups is highly significant for all poems except for poems 1 and 5; for poem 5 it is barely significant while for poem 1 it is insignificant;

(c) there are significant differences between groups in the rating of all the poems except poems 8, 10 and 16.

As regards the differences between groups, the above analysis only indicates that the three groups differ significantly in the rating of most of the poems, but does not give a precise indication as to how significantly particular groups differ from one another. This is ascertained by applying a 't' test to the differences between the mean ratings of different groups for each poem.\(^{(1)}\) It may be pointed out here that since the 't' test is based on a pooled variance for all poems\(^{(2)}\) the results, owing to a number of comparisons made, may not be as significant as those

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\(^{(1)}\) cf. Appendix D, p. xxxvi.
\(^{(2)}\) The variances for separate poems do not differ significantly from each other.
of the analysis of variance showing differences between groups. The purpose of this test, however, is to gain an idea of the differences between pairs of particular groups.

An analysis of variance is also applied to the political opinion scores, and differences between social groups are found to be highly significant. (1) A test of significance of differences between the mean scores of the three social groups further shows that the mean score of group C is significantly higher than the mean scores of group A and group B, and that the difference between the latter two groups is insignificant. (2)

The influence of political opinion on ratings is also examined by finding correlation between ratings for each poem and political opinion scores, so that a positive or negative relation between the two measures could be ascertained in each case. In cases of poems where the sign of the coefficient of correlation is the same for the total

(1) Mean variance of political opinion scores 'between groups'  
F ratio = Mean variance of political opinion scores 'between individuals within groups'  
\[ \frac{118.35}{522.75} = \frac{59.47}{3.24} = 18.35 \]

(2) of Appendix D, p. xxix for the formula and calculations
population as for 'within groups', it may be inferred that political differences within the groups tend to influence the ratings in the same direction as differences between groups, particularly between group A, or group B, and group C, the former two groups differing significantly from the latter in their political opinion scores.

The coefficients of correlation, the results of the 't' tests applied to the mean ratings and mean scores of different groups, and the relevant results of the analysis of variance are presented in Table 18. The main conclusions drawn from this table may be stated as follows:

Poem 8 shows the highest mean rating for the total population. The differences in the mean ratings of groups A, B and C for this poem are statistically insignificant. Within groups, however, there is a negative and significant correlation between ratings and political opinion scores, which shows that subjects with 'conservative' opinion rate the poem significantly higher than subjects with 'radical' opinion.

The poems which are rated lowest by the population as a whole - the only poems receiving a total negative value - are 1 and 5, two of the three poems included as specimens of 'popular' poetry. Groups B and C do not differ significantly in the rating of these poems, but
### Table Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance of Difference between Mean Ratings of Social Groups</th>
<th>Regression of Ratings on Political Opinion Scores</th>
<th>Correlation of Ratings and Political Opinion Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Eating of Poems</th>
<th>196 Cases</th>
<th>164 Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-1.08</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.68</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Mean Rating**: 0.26  0.35  0.76  0.46

**Mean Score**: 4.16  4.78  6.00  6.72

---

4. In this case the rate of regression on political opinion scores are different in different groups and therefore the covariances in the three groups cannot be pooled together.

---

(1) Based on average variance within all poems.

(2) Estimated from a table of values of 'f' (for Snedecor, 1946, p.66).

(3) The level of significance is determined from Fisher's Table (Fisher and Yates, 1946, p.36).

(4) Estimated from Table of F values (Snedecor, 1946, pp. 212-213).
group A rates both these poems significantly lower than group C, and poem 5 significantly lower than group B. The correlation between ratings and political opinion scores is barely significant for poem 5 and insignificant for poem 1.

As regards poem 10, another specimen of 'popular' poetry, the differences among the social groups are statistically insignificant. The correlation between political opinion scores and the ratings for this poem, though uniformly negative, is significant only in group A. As in this case the rates of regression of ratings on political opinion scores are different in different groups, there being no consistent relation between the two measures in groups B and C, the covariances in the three groups cannot be pooled together to obtain the correlation coefficient 'within groups'. These observations lead to the conclusion that poem 10 is rated higher by conservative and lower by radical subjects in group A, but in groups B and C it is rated high or low by subjects irrespective of their political opinion.

It is interesting to note that it is only in the case of poems 1, 5 and 10 that differences of political opinion among the subjects have, on the whole, little or no influence on their ratings.
Poem 16 is another poem for which the variance 'between groups' is statistically insignificant. The test of significance of differences applied to the mean ratings of different groups, however, shows that there is some difference between groups A and C. The correlation between ratings and political opinion scores, being negative throughout and significant within groups, indicates that subjects holding 'conservative' opinion rate this poem significantly higher than subjects holding 'radical' opinion.

As regards the remaining poems (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15) there are significant differences between the social groups; the ratings for these poems also show significant, positive or negative, correlation with political opinion scores within groups.

Poems 2 and 14 are on the whole rated slightly higher by group B than by group A. The differences between the mean ratings of groups A and B for these poems are, however, insignificant. Group C, which gives a lower rating to both these poems as compared to the other two groups, differs significantly from group B in rating poem 2 and from both groups A and B in rating poem 14. Poems 6 and 12 are rated significantly higher by group A than by group C. For poem 6 the mean rating of group B falls almost half way between the mean ratings of groups A and C, while for poem 12 the mean rating of group B falls nearer to that of group A.
The analysis shows that group B differs significantly from neither group A nor group C in rating the former poem but differs significantly from group C in rating the latter. The ratings for these four poems show a negative and significant correlation with political opinion scores.

Poems 3, 9, 11 and 13 are, on the other hand, rated significantly higher by group C than by groups A and B. Group B rates poems 3 and 9 slightly lower and poem 11 slightly higher than group A, but the differences are statistically insignificant. The coefficients of correlation between the ratings for these poems and the political opinion scores are highly significant, with a high positive value 'within groups' and in each social group. For these poems the differences between the mean ratings of the three social groups are similar to the differences observed between the mean political opinion scores of these groups. (1)

Although the ratings for poems 7 and 15 correlate with political opinion scores within groups at the same level of significance as the ratings for poems 3, 9, 11 and 13, the former poems appear to differ from the latter in one important respect, namely, that for these poems the mean ratings of group B are nearer to those of group C than to

(1) cf. pp. 163-169 above.
those of group A. There are significant differences between groups A and B in the rating of both these poems, whereas groups B and C differ significantly only in the rating of poem 15.

As will be seen from Table 18, in most cases the poems which show positive correlation between ratings and political opinion scores are rated significantly lower by group A than by group C. There is, however, one exception of poem 4; although the ratings for this poem show positive and significant correlation with political opinion scores, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of groups A and C. Group B, on the other hand, rates this poem significantly lower than both the other groups.

Thus, summarising the statistical results in terms of the themes of the poems, (1) the following conclusions may be drawn:

(i) There are no significant differences between the social groups A, B and C in the rating of the poem with an 'individual' theme (8).
(ii) The poems with 'social' and 'religious' themes show highly significant differences between the social groups: groups A and B rate the poems expressing 'religious'

(1) cf. pp. 144-154 above.
sentiments (6 and 12) or 'social escape' (14) significantly higher than group C; similarly, group C tends to rate most of the poems expressing 'social discontent' or 'revolt' (3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15) significantly higher on the preference scale than group A or group B, or both. Group B, whose ratings in most cases approximate to those of group A, differs significantly from it in rating some of these poems (7 and 15). Among the poems expressing 'social discontent' or 'revolt', there is only one poem (4), in the rating of which there is greater agreement between groups A and C than between either groups A and B or B and C.

(iii) The poems with a 'philosophical' (2), or a 'philosophical-individual' (16) theme show greater differences among the social groups than the poem with a purely 'individual' theme (8). As the mean ratings indicate, groups A and B tend to like 'philosophical' poems more than group C. The differences are, however, not as marked and significant as in the case of poems expressing a 'social' or a 'religious' theme.

(iv) The ratings for all the above mentioned poems correlate significantly with political opinion scores: the poems expressing 'social discontent' or 'revolt' are rated higher, while poems with 'individual', 'philosophical', 'philosophical-individual' and 'religious' themes or a theme of 'social escape' are rated lower by 'radical' than by
'conservative' subjects. It is in relation to most of these poems that differences in political opinion within the three social groups tend to produce the same effect as that produced by differences between groups, particularly between groups A and C.

(v) Among the three 'popular poems', two expressing 'social consolation' (1 and 5) receive comparatively low ratings in all the three groups; group C, however, rates them significantly higher than group A. The differences between groups B and C are statistically insignificant. The third poem (10), which expresses 'religious' sentiments and also, to a lesser degree, 'social discontent', shows no significant differences between the three social groups. The correlation between the ratings for these poems and the political opinion scores is either not as significant within groups (1 and 5) or not as consistent in different groups (10) as in the case of all the other poems.

The above analysis was concerned mainly with similarities and differences among the three social groups, and the relation between ratings and political opinion scores. In order that a comparison of the subjects' preferences could be made in relation to both their social background and political affiliations, the mean ratings for the political groups in the total population and for the political subgroups within each of the social groups are also calculated and are presented in Tables 19-22.
Table 19

Mean Ratings of Political Groups in the Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Group</th>
<th>Conservatives</th>
<th>Liberals</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated</th>
<th>Socialists</th>
<th>Communists</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poem

1    -.67   0.00   -.70   -.52   -.48
2    1.54   1.65   .87    1.16   .61
3    -.90   -.91   -.54   .67    2.14
4    .19    .13    .66    .80    1.18
5    .06    0.00   -.91   -.37   -.16
6    1.06   1.65   .75    .27    -.77
7    -1.09  -.21   -.45   .27    1.31
8    1.74   1.60   1.70   1.49   .55
9    -1.32  -.52   .12    .21    1.66
10   1.00   1.17   .16    .83    .59
11   -1.74  -1.21  -.59   .11    2.12
12   .96    .95    .45    .03    -.57
13   -1.16  -.65   -.02   .22    1.77
14   1.03   1.00   0.00   .19    -.55
15   .16    .82    .05    1.09   1.50
16   1.51   1.26   1.50   1.21   -.11
Table 20

Mean Ratings of Political Sub-Groups in Group A

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<th>Political Conservatives</th>
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<th>Socialists</th>
<th>Communists</th>
<th>Unknown Affiliation</th>
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<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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Poem

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Table 21

Mean Ratings of Political Sub-Groups in Group B

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<th>Non-Affiliated</th>
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<th>Communists</th>
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<td>- .54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.95</td>
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</table>
Table 22

Mean Ratings of Political Sub-Groups in Group C

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Political</th>
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<th>Liber-</th>
<th>Non-</th>
<th>Social-</th>
<th>Commun-</th>
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<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Affil-</td>
<td>ists</td>
<td>ists</td>
<td>Affilia-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poem

1  1.80  0.00  .20  -.21  1.00  .21
2  1.80  .28  .76  .67  0.00  .60
3  -1.00  .71  1.72  2.32  1.30  1.62
4  .20  1.23  .83  1.42  1.40  1.14
5  2.40  0.00  -.12  .35  .40  .30
6  0.00  .14  -.20  -.50  -.20  -.28
7  .20  .57  .64  1.89  1.30  1.16
8  1.80  1.65  1.16  1.03  .40  1.10
9  -.2  1.14  .80  1.89  1.60  1.23
10  1.80  -.42  .64  1.10  .40  .76
11  2.40  -.14  -.52  -.50  -.40  -.36
12  2.20  1.42  1.52  1.96  2.10  1.78
13  .80  .65  .88  .32  .40  .46
An examination of Table 19 indicates that there are observable differences in the mean ratings of the political groups for most of the poems. The differences for the poems showing significant correlation between ratings and political opinion scores are to a great extent comparable to the differences found in the mean political opinion scores of these groups. The poems which are rated high by the Conservatives are rated low by the Communists and vice versa. The Liberals are nearer in their mean ratings to the Conservatives and the Socialists come between the Conservatives and the Communists. The mean ratings of the Non-Affiliated in most cases vary between those of the Liberals and those of the Socialists.

Tables 20-22 also suggest certain differences and similarities among different social groups and political sub-groups within them. These differences and similarities may be shown more clearly by a graphic representation of the mean ratings of these groups for the sixteen poems. This will also facilitate a comparison of the order in which the poems are placed on the preference scale by different groups and sub-groups.

In Figures 2-5, the numbers of the poems are arranged roughly according to the preferences of the extreme

(1) cf. pp. 161-162, above.
Figure 2
Mean Ratings of the three Social Groups and the Total Population
Figure 3

Mean Ratings of the Political Sub-Groups in Group A

- Libertas
- Non-Appointed
- Socialists
- Communists
Figure 4
Mean Ratings of the Political Sub-Groups in Group B
Figure 5
Mean Ratings of the Political Sub-Groups in Group 0

CONSERVATIVE LIBERALS
NON-AFFILIATED
SOCIALISTS
COMMUNISTS
social groups: the poems which are rated high by group A and low by group C are mentioned on the left-hand side of the graphs, and those rated high by group C and low by group A on the right-hand side. Within this broad grouping, poems with similar themes are arranged as near to each other as possible.

Figure 2 shows striking differences between the contrasting social groups A and C in the rating of most of the poems. Seen in relation to the whole pattern of the preferences of group A, 'individual' (8) and 'philosophical' (2, 16) poems rate highest, and poems expressing 'consolation' (1, 5) lowest on the scale. Most of the poems expressing 'social discontent' and 'revolt' (3, 7, 9, 11, 13) though placed higher than the poems of 'consolation', are also disliked in this group. In group C, on the other hand, the poems expressing 'social discontent' and 'revolt' are liked best and those expressing 'escape' (14) or 'religious' sentiments (6, 12) are disliked. The poems expressing a theme of 'consolation', although slightly liked in this group, are placed lower than all the other poems receiving a positive rating. The graph representing the mean ratings of group B suggests that the preferences of this group are, on the whole, much nearer to those of group A than to those of Group C.
A comparison of the relative positions of different poems in different groups indicates that the poems expressing 'religious' sentiments (6, 12), 'escape' (14) and 'consolation' (1, 5) do not rate very high with any of the groups.

Figures 3 and 4, which represent the mean ratings of the political sub-groups within groups A and B respectively, reveal a sharp deviation of the Communists from the dominant preference norms of these groups in that the direction of their preferences is almost reversed. In contrast to the dominant pattern of preferences in groups A and B, the Communists of both these groups place the poems expressing 'social discontent' and 'revolt' higher than most of the poems with a 'religious', a 'philosophical', or an 'individual' theme, or a theme of 'escape'.

The preferences of the other political sub-groups in groups A and B are to a large extent similar. There are, however, some observable differences between the Socialists and the Conservatives. The Socialists rate the poems of 'social discontent' and 'revolt' uniformly higher, and the poems of 'consolation' lower, than the Conservatives; they also differ from the Liberals in the rating of some of these poems.

Figure 5 represents the similarities and differences among the political sub-groups within group C. In
this group, the Conservative-Liberal sub-group\(^{(1)}\) tends to like most of the poems which are either disliked or only slightly liked by the other political sub-groups. Similarly, most of the poems expressing 'social discontent' and 'revolt', which are liked by the Communists, the Socialists and the Non-Affiliated, are disliked by the Conservative-Liberal sub-group. Thus, it seems that this sub-group, to a considerable extent, deviates in its preferences from the dominant pattern of preferences in group C, although its deviation is not as sharp as that of the Communists of groups A and B.

One striking point in the preferences of the Conservative-Liberal sub-group in group C is the exceptionally high position given to poem 5, one of the two poems expressing 'consolation'. This poem, it will be noted, is placed considerably high also by the Conservatives of group B, whereas it is rated very low by all the other sub-groups.

A comparison of Figures 3 and 5 will show that in group C the preferences of the Socialists bear almost the same relation to those of the Communists, as in group A the preferences of the Socialists bear to those of the Conservatives. The poems which are rated relatively higher by

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\(^{(1)}\) As the number of Conservatives and Liberals in group C was very small, it was considered justifiable to combine their ratings for purposes of comparison on the grounds that these sub-groups in the other two social groups, A and B, show a close resemblance in their mean ratings.
both the Conservatives and the Socialists in group A are rated lower by the Socialists as well as the Communists in group C. Similarly in group A the Socialists are nearer to the Conservatives and in group C nearer to the Communists in rating some of the poems expressing 'social discontent' and 'revolt', although in the former group they rate these poems higher than the Conservatives and in the latter group lower than the Communists.

It will be seen from a comparison of Figures 2-5 that the preferences of the Conservatives and the Liberals in the three social groups are largely comparable, and provide a contrast to the preferences of the Communists, which are, again, similar in the three groups. The Socialists of group C considerably differ in their preferences from the Socialists of groups A and B, the former being nearer to the Communists and the latter to the Conservatives and the Liberals. Further, the preferences of the Communists of groups A and B, on the one hand, and those of the Conservatives and the liberals of group C, on the other, bear resemblance respectively to the preferences of group C and of groups A and B, especially in relation to the poems which show significant and high correlation with political opinion scores.
Chapter VII

Qualitative Analysis

The statistical results would remain psychologically insignificant unless supplemented by an analysis of the subjects' comments on the poems - that is, the introspective account of their aesthetic experience and preference. This analysis, it is hoped, will give an insight into the qualitative content of the ratings which form the basis of the quantitative analysis.

The appreciation of a poem is a complex psychological activity. It involves, among other processes, comprehension of meaning, awareness of words, rhythm, and imagery, the awakening of emotions, and the feeling of harmony with the ideas and attitude expressed in the poem. An attempt is, therefore, made in the present chapter to analyse the reactions of the subjects to different aspects of the content and form of each poem, for instance its theme: the ideas, beliefs and emotions expressed; its mode or style of expression: its rhythm, diction, imagery and so forth. This is expected to throw some light on the psychological processes involved in literary appreciation,
and to help in understanding their mutual relationship and interaction.

As the present study is primarily concerned with the influence of group values on literary appreciation and preference, special attention is paid in the analysis of the comments to broad similarities and differences among the social groups and political sub-groups; individual reactions to different poems are examined in the light of perceptible group trends. Here it seems important to emphasise that the analysis of the comments does not refer to what is 'good' or 'bad' in poetry, as such a judgment on the part of the investigator would imply an imposition of some fixed and external standard of literary merit on the poems and an evaluation of the comments in relation to that standard.

In an empirical study like this one could, however, try to understand which of the poems are 'good' and which are 'bad' for subjects in different groups by analysing and comparing the comments of individuals in these groups. (1)

(1) The comments which are given separately in a Supplement are classified, according to the design of the present investigation, into three sections representing the three social groups, A, B and C. Each of these sections is again divided into six sub-sections on the basis of the subjects' political affiliation, non-affiliation or unknown affiliation; these sub-sections are headed Conservatives, Liberals, Non-Affiliated, Socialists, Communists, and Unknown Affiliation. Each subject is represented by a code number such as A12, B25, C75, in which the letter stands for the respective social group and the number refers to the individual subject in that group. To facilitate reference, a list of the code numbers, together with the pages on which they occur, is furnished at the beginning of the Supplement.
Poem 1

Poem 1 is one of the three 'popular' poems included in the present experiment. The theme of the poem, as determined by external judgment, is one of 'consolation'.

It is evident from the comments of subjects in different groups that this poem fails to appeal to most of them. In group A, its expression is generally regarded as 'trivial', 'childish', 'poor' or 'unoriginal'. Similar impressions are recorded for certain formal aspects of the poem. It is observed that in most cases it is not only the form and manner of expression which fail to satisfy the subjects, but the ideas expressed in the poem are also criticised as 'trite', 'obvious', and 'conventional'. The following comments represent the dominant reaction of subjects in this group.

A3. Obvious truth; nothing new. It is more a statement of fact than personal expression of feeling or thought.

All. I dislike this poem because the sentiment and its expression in verse are somewhat trite. I felt this even more after reading some of the other poems, such as 3 and 11, where there is more sincerity.

A20. I would term this doggerel rather than poetry. The thought is trite - there is nothing either new or interesting about the subject or the writer's approach to it.

A47. A platitude written in a very poor verse.

The comment of A3 seems striking in that it touches on an important aspect of the poem. In her opinion the
fundamental weakness of the poem, which seems to have some bearing on most of the pronouncements regarding both the sentiment and the manner of its expression, is that the poem is not 'a personal expression of feeling or thought'. This opinion explains to a great extent why many subjects describe the poem as full of 'clichés' and 'platitudes'.

Some subjects have gone a little further in the analysis of their impressions and have given such reasons for their dislike as refer to more subtle aspects of the poem, such as the attitude of the poet to the ideas expressed and, somewhat related to this, the poetic treatment of these ideas. One subject, for instance, is of the opinion that the poem lacks conviction, another doubts the sincerity of the poet, while another points out that there is a lack of harmony between the theme and the tone of the poem.\(^1\)

The reactions of subjects in group B to this poem are not very different from the reactions of subjects in group A. Most of the subjects in this group reject the poem because they consider its ideas 'obvious', 'hackneyed', and 'superficial', and are of the opinion that it has little poetic value.\(^2\) There are a few subjects, however, mostly among the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Non-Affiliated, who, though not very enthusiastic about the poem, seem to enjoy it.

\(^1\) A49, A76, A84.

\(^2\) B2, B6, B10, B14, B21, B23, B25, B31, B35, B37, B39, B43.
Bl. A simply written but charming little poem, and also true.
B4. Because there is truth, comedy and sadness in it and rhythm.
Bl2. I like it mostly for its bright rhyme and lively satire - good verse but not poetry.
Bl3. Happy everyday theme, said with an attractive lilt.

The poem is liked still more by subjects in group C. Conservatives and Liberals in this group seem to like it mainly for the ideas expressed, while Socialists and Communists, though critical of the ideas, sometimes show a liking for the poem because its expression appeals to them. There are, however, many subjects in this group who criticise the poem on more or less the same literary grounds as do the more educated subjects in groups A and B - as for instance lack of originality, triteness of ideas, insincerity and frivolity of tone.

C5. The literary technique is nil. A set of lines of measured metre and each one rhyming with a previous line, does not make such effort a poem. The content is also out dated and further more too childish to rank anything but on a low scale, with anyone of either intellectual or progressive views.

C13. An untruthful and insincere jingle, propaganda of an insidious type, because it could be excused as cynical humour.

C25. The poem is lilting but rather hackneyed and insincere.

C67. Trite theme, poorest of jingle, ... I dismiss it as nothing.

(1) C46, C47, C48, C49.
(2) C9, C10, C26, C61, C73.
The reactions of subjects to this poem may be viewed from two angles: their estimation of its literary aspects and their response to the ideas expressed in it. The form and style of the poem are found to be unsatisfactory by the more educated subjects, but are enjoyed to some extent by the less educated subjects in groups B and C. Within each of the three social groups, the ideas are criticised more by the Socialists and the Communists than by the Conservatives and the Liberals. Thus, the poem is liked least by the Socialists and Communists in group A and is liked most by the Conservatives in groups B and C.

Poem 2.

Poem 2 was predominantly judged to be expressing a 'philosophical' theme.

The first six lines, as interpreted by subjects in different groups, illustrate the importance of contrasts through similes from nature. As such, this part of the poem is enjoyed by most of the subjects for its poetic description and pictorial effect. It is the second part, where the description of contrasts is linked with a philosophy, which appears to be the mainspring of differences among the subjects.

In group A, most of the Conservatives and Liberals seem to like the poem as a whole, both for its literary qualities and for its philosophical content. The Socialists also admire the form and style of the poem, although they sometimes appear to be critical of the philosophy expressed in it. The following are a few examples of the comments of subjects in these sub-groups.

A18. Has beauty as well as a conclusion apposite and true. The line "makes the summer petals burn more bright" etc. conjures up an image of brilliance and beauty.

A33. I like the form (Petrarchan sonnet) because it demands control of material. I like the sharp contrasts in the octet, especially "winter snow" and "summer petals burn" and the way in which the latter suggests bright colour without naming it. The pattern of the sounds is harmonious, especially the "v's" and "m's" in the first six lines.

A58. Bears marks of thought and real power of eloquent expression. A style which might tire for long stretches, but in this extract impressive.

A71. Vaguely familiar. While admiring the technique and perfect balance of this poem, I think what repels me is the fatalistic philosophy expressed; that we should be content to endure evils and misfortunes so that our happy moments may be more happy by contrast.

The Communists in group A appear to deviate from the dominant reaction of subjects in this group. Their ratings, on the whole, tend towards a slight dislike for the poem. It is evident from the comments that their dislike is mainly due to their disagreement with the philosophy and the implied attitude.

(2) A62, A65, A70.
(3) A73, A77, A80.
A81. This poem is more pretentious and asks to be taken seriously, with its grandiose language and rolling rhythm. This makes the philosophy it expounds all the more dangerous, by cloaking a falsehood in fine words. As I thoroughly disagree with the message in this poem, I have rated it below No. 1 poem ........

A83. A true but platitudinous sentiment; objectionable because so often used to inculcate resignation and not resistance, to evil.

A88. The imagery is weak, the sentiment trite....

The reactions reflected in these comments provide a contrast to those expressed by most of the Conservatives and Liberals and many Socialists in group A. Here the poem is adversely criticised not only for its philosophy but also for its formal and technical aspects. It may be noted that the favourable comments quoted earlier, which express an admiration for 'eloquent' expression, 'image of brilliance and beauty' and 'harmonious pattern of sounds', are almost contradicted by the unfavourable comments of the Communists in which the poem is criticised for 'grandiose language', 'weak' imagery and 'rolling' rhythm. It seems that an unfavourable reaction to the ideas sometimes colours the estimation of purely technical qualities of the poem, which are otherwise appreciated by the educated subjects.

An admiration for the technical and literary qualities of the poem but a dissatisfaction with its content seem to have resulted in a conflict in the reaction of one subject, the only Communist in group A who places this poem on the highest step of the rating scale.
A74. Like the measured philosophic tone of this poem and intensely admire the technique of this sonnet form. On second thoughts rather think have been quite overwhelmed by the stall of the poet, for the subject boils down to a rather fatalistic conception of life. The poet presents a dramatic conflict of good and evil within the circumstances of man's life but not between man and man - lack of social content. But cant condemn it for that since the style indicates it was written before social struggle was consciously recognised.

The comment shows how the pressure of certain widely recognised values of one's group may compel one to re-interpret and rationalise one's own experience. Here the poem is definitely liked by the subject but on second thoughts it is realised that it is deficient in what the Communists regard as an important factor in determining the value of a poem, that is a 'social content'. The resulting conflict seems to be resolved by a reassurance that the poem was written before the importance of 'social content' was recognised.

An examination of the comments of subjects in group B shows that their reactions to the poem, favourable or unfavourable, largely spring from their reactions to its theme. The literary qualities of the poem are in most cases untouched or only casually mentioned. (1)

B1. I like this poem because it helps me to appreciate both the pleasures and grievances, and also to understand and gain experience easily and by the hard way.

B2. I like the message here, it is perfectly true and one which we would do well to think about - without unhappiness there is no happiness ....... This

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(1) E9, E12, E18, E28, E32, E36.
is far more poetical than No. 1, because it dealt more with a spiritual theme instead of a purely material one.

In group C, the poem is, on the whole, liked less than in the other two groups. Those subjects in this group who rate it relatively high generally mention two main reasons for their reaction: (a) that the poem, particularly the first part, is beautifully and competently written; and (b) that the theme of contrasts is interesting. Those subjects, on the other hand, who rate the poem relatively low emphasise in their comments that the poem implies a 'fatalistic attitude' which is disagreeable. (1)

It appears from a number of comments that subjects in this group experience some difficulty in understanding the poem, particularly the sestet in which the central theme of the poem is expressed. (2) A similar difficulty is also reported by some subjects in group B. (3) One of the subjects in group C complains of 'lengthy phrasings' in the poem, which he describes as 'arty for art sake' (C47). This pronouncement, though stereotyped, does not seem to be quite irrelevant in this case. It suggests, particularly in view of the obscurity reported by other subjects, that the poem does not convey any clear meaning to the subject and therefore for him it is nothing more than a combination of words and phrases in a versified form.

(1) C1, C6, C7, C13, C25, C26, C33, C36, C39, C60, C65.
(2) C20, C48, C49, C59, C68.
(3) B13, B20, C23, C42.
In some other cases, similar stock phrases have been used not for the expression but for the ideas of the poem such as 'bourgeois' or 'reactionary' (C6, C9). These stereotypes seem to refer to certain implications of the philosophy expressed in the poem which have been criticised in more detail by some other subjects in this group who have analysed and expressed their impression of the ideas conveyed by the poem more clearly. The following comment provides an example.

C2. ...... It [the second part] begins by stating several obvious truths, ending with the line "That makes the summer petal burn more bright," and then boldly asserts the analogy that "Were there no wrong, how should we judge of right." The fact is that we judge right and wrong not against each other but against a third factor: Those things which serve Man's interests and existence and those which do not.

His next line, "Or stillness without stress and tempest know", is rather less dangerous statement. If by stress and tempest he refers to natural or weather conditions, he states only another of his opening truism. He may mean the stress and tempest necessary to change our social order to lessen them. Here he would be making a useful constructive suggestion. In view of the previous line, however, he leads me to believe that he refers to those evils indigenous to our present social order. The next verse convinces me of my above assertion. In short, he seeks to resign us to, and excuse, the wrongs, stress and tempest as things necessary and desirable to help us to recognise those gracious gifts of stillness between the storms. No thought of seeking to effect a change in this state of subservience, impotency and helplessness.

To sum up, it may be observed that the poem is in most cases considered competent in its expression; the philosophy expressed in the poem is accepted more readily.

(1) C29, C72.
in groups A and B than in group C, and more readily among the Conservatives and Liberals than among the Socialists and Communists. Some of the Communists in group A who are unsympathetic with the ideas also appear to be dissatisfied with the form and expression of the poem.

Poem 3.

The theme of poem 3 was classified by the judges as one of 'social discontent' and 'revolt'.

The poem is on the whole liked in group C much more than either in group A or in group B. Within each group, the Conservatives and the Liberals generally dislike the poem, the Communists like it, while the reaction of the Socialists varies in the three social groups: in group C they show a considerable liking for it, in group A they like it only slightly and in group B they slightly dislike it.

The dislike of the Conservatives and the Liberals for the poem, as the comments indicate, is mainly due to their unfavourable reaction to the sentiments, and to the tone in which these sentiments are expressed. Many of them, however, particularly in group A, appear to differentiate between their dislike for the sentiments and their perception of certain expressive qualities of the poem which they admire. (1)

A3. ......... it has a clear, direct approach and the constant references to blood and death and toil are heightened tremendously by the "crimson wool"; that is very effective......

(1) A1, A2, A12, A17, A18, A19, A24, A25, B3, B9, C48, C49.
All. I dislike the violence and blind hatred of this poem, though I admire the force and directness of its expression (You ha' eaten our lives and our babies and wives). The sentiment, mainly because of its extreme one sidedness, is one with which I cannot sympathise.

A20. The hatred of the workers for their masters fills this poem with life and vigour. The poet has had sufficient skill to show and moreover prove his own point of view. He is capable of compelling the reader to agree with him. Obviously he is a socialist and very bitter about conditions. The words have force and impact.

B1. A poem giving full vent to the feelings and emotions. Very well written, with even rhythm.

B9. The construction is good but there is too much of the 'bloody' atmosphere about it.

An appreciation of certain literary qualities of a poem as differentiated from an unfavourable reaction to its content may sometimes give rise to a conflict between liking and dislike for the poem as a whole. An example of such a conflict is provided by the following comment.

A25. It is so difficult to say whether you like or dislike a poem when you like somethings about it and dislike others. The strong dancing rhythm is very pleasing, but the subject matter and the treatment of it are not compatible. Had it been a sea shanty in the same style it would have been very stirring, but had the poor, ill-used people it is about been so full of zest and vigour they would not have been down trodden for very long. It doesn't quite ring true. I don't expect you could eliminate mine accidents and shipwrecks even from the most perfect State.

A differential response is, however, not observed in many cases, and the unfavourable reaction to the sentiments seems to hinder the perception of the technical and literary qualities of the poem, which, as the earlier
comments show, are appreciated by some other subjects in relative independence of their unfavourable reaction to the content. Many Conservatives and Liberals, who concentrate in their comments mainly on their disagreement with or dislike for the ideas and sentiments expressed in the poem, either leave its technical aspects untouched or criticise it on literary grounds as well.

A5. How I dislike this kind of revolutionary poetry. It is so dated and lacks everything that we most enjoy in poetry, beauty, imagination, rhythm and inspiration.

A23. This is trash, poor metre, complete lack of any literary merit and bogus, outdated sentiments.

A26. There is a cynical note underlying. The idea of the oppression of man is uppermost. Bitter class distinction between rich and workers is deplorable.

B16. Uncontrolled, out-of-date, and sheer propaganda, and incitement to unreasonable behaviour.

C62. I dislike this because of the strong feeling of class hatred it expresses. It seems a gross exaggeration nowadays, at least in this country.

In some cases the poem is dismissed with certain stereotyped remarks such as 'propaganda', 'dated', 'cry of the non-productive "Red"' and so on. These phrases, as may be seen in the context of the above comments, mainly refer to the subject-matter of the poem, which is disliked. The stereotype 'propaganda' is a complex phrase which seems to be used with different implications. Sometimes it may refer to the subject-matter which is regarded as unsuited

(2) A4, A7, A9, B5, B7, B10.
to poetry, sometimes to the use of poetry for expressing ideas which are considered 'biased' or 'one-sided'. Poem 3, like some other poems with a similar theme, is criticised in a number of comments by Conservatives and Liberals for both these reasons.\(^{(1)}\)

\begin{quote}
A15. The skill of the poet, or poets, in expressing his thoughts is undoubted, he reveals his Communistic outlook as well as it is possible to do. I feel that if he felt inclined to write all this down it would have been less disagreeable in prose form. To me he has made a mockery of poetry; if I agreed with all the thought expressed (which I don't) I believe that I would still feel it unfitting that all the ugliness, bitterness and injustice expressed in these lines should be the subject matter of poetry which is essentially a lovely thing, created to give pleasure, not pain to the readers.\(^{(2)}\)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
A21. A sullen, mean poem (or rather verse). The thought could be expressed with less crudity. The blind prejudice which is the force behind the verse renders it unpleasant in the extreme.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
A35. Verse form and metre are catchy - the thoughts behind the poem typical of stuff that is fed to the workers nowadays to incite them to discontent. "A lie that is half truth is ever the greatest of lies".
\end{quote}

As in one of the above comments (A21), the poem is also criticised by a number of subjects for its manner of expression and tone, which are considered to be 'rough', 'crude', 'intolerant' and 'bitter', but in many cases it is difficult to say how far these reactions to the tone and the expression of the poem are independent of the dislike shown for its subject-matter.

\(^{(1)}\) A1, A4, A30, A33, B12, B16.

\(^{(2)}\) This comment was made on poems 3, 7, 9, 11 and 13 considered together.
The Socialists in groups A and B, who are on the whole more sympathetic with the sentiments expressed in the poem, also in many cases appear to be dissatisfied with the expression of the poem. Their main criticism seems to be that the poem is unsubtle and direct in expression and violent in tone.\(^{(1)}\)

The comments of the Socialists in group C and those of the Communists in the three groups provide a contrast to the comments hitherto discussed. Most of the subjects in these sub-groups like the poem as a whole. They seem to be in greater agreement and sympathy with the ideas and the attitude expressed in the poem, and also endorse its tone.\(^{(2)}\) The following comments represent the dominant reaction of subjects in these groups.

A75. Fuses imaginatively, as no other poem does here, the reality of Capitalist slavery. The overthrow of Capitalism is implicit in the poem in its strength of understanding and protest, in its terrible awareness of all the suffering of humanity, the exploitation of man by man.

A79. Deeply felt and quite moving. I would have liked it better if it had ended up with a more militant and optimistic message for the future.


C24. I like it very much because it expresses genuine protest. The rhythm of the poem helps a lot in conveying the sentiment.

\(^{(1)}\) A62, A69, A70, B30, B47.

\(^{(2)}\) A55, A73, A80, A81, A82, A89, B40, B41, B42, B45, C21, C26, C88, C6, C4, C6, C7, C9, C9, C10, C12, C15, C16, C17, C34, C45, C61, C69.
C38. I like it very much, it is a good poem indeed both in form and content. It is sincere, forceful and inspiring.

C35. Is easy to read, and written in a full blooded and knowledgeable tone. It is too easy for us in this country to feel that such sentiments do not apply and regard it as a "period piece", it would be interesting to move it around and apply it to various other countries. This poem I like very much for its easy style which balances its very serious sentiment.

It appears from these and other comments that the difference between these subjects and those who dislike the sentiments expressed in the poem lies not so much in the appreciation of certain technical and expressive qualities, which are often admired by the latter subjects also, as in the affective reaction to the emotional content and the tone of the poem.

It seems important to mention here that among the Communists of the three groups, and the Socialists of group C, there are a few subjects who appear to be dissatisfied with the use of certain words and phrases and sometimes also criticise the poem as 'rough' and 'violent' in expression and 'exaggerated' in content. Their dissatisfaction with these weaknesses is, however, outweighed by their appreciation of the emotional content of the poem.(1)

Summarising the main points which have emerged from the comments on poem 3, it may be stated that some of the Conservatives and Liberals, particularly of group A,

(1) A77, A78, A81, A88, B43, B45, C11, C14, C21, C22, C29, C33, C38.
and most of the Communists agree that the poem is competent, effective and vigorous in expression. Most of the Conservatives and the Liberals and some of the Communists, on the other hand, find the poem crude, violent and exaggerated. The majority of subjects among the Conservatives and Liberals, however, differ from the majority of subjects among the Communists of the three groups and the Socialists of group C, not only in their reaction to the ideas and the sentiment expressed in the poem, but also in their response to its tone and manner of expression. Thus the poem is considered 'realistic' or 'biased', 'convincing' or 'unconvincing', 'vigorously' or 'violent', 'militant' and 'defiant' or 'undignified' and 'unsubtle', in different groups depending largely on whether the ideas and sentiments expressed in it are liked or disliked. It is only by a few subjects that different aspects of the poem are analysed and evaluated in relative independence of their liking or dislike for its content.

Poem 4.

Poem 4 is the only one of the poems judged to be expressing 'social discontent' or 'revolt' for which group A on the whole shows a considerable liking.

In group A, most of the subjects appreciate the poem primarily for its 'effective' and 'competent'
They frequently praise the use of words and phrases, and the rhyme and metre, which help to evoke mental images. Although many subjects do not agree with the description of conditions in mining places and the attitude implied in it, the picture itself is considered to be 'clear', 'vivid' and 'beautiful' and the poem is often liked on that account. (1)

A15. The thing which I do like about this poem is the way in which it is written - the rhythm, the rhyme and the use made of alliteration. I do not like the theme of the poem though. I look upon a poem as a thing of beauty and believe therefore that the theme should fit this. Despairing, gaunt folk, slag heaps, headstocks are therefore I think unfitting for inclusion in a poem. There is also of course theory that children born in a mining area are doomed to work and die in the mines, which I think is quite untrue.

A52. How it is said; Pleasing poem. Gives good images.

A59. Much better. Has some fine pictorial poetry so that imagery and language are used with dignity to considerable effect. But of course beauty is nearer "mining places" than towns like London. Also others besides miners, or the poor, are cheated of life's graces. Certain element of self pity.

The comments quoted above represent the reactions of those who find the poem technically successful but do not sympathise with the ideas and the sentiments expressed in it. In cases where the perception of technical competence is combined with a sympathetic response to the ideas and feelings expressed, the appreciation of the poem seems to be heightened and the experience more satisfying. Such cases,

though present in different political sub-groups in group A, are more frequently found among the Communists, who appear to be more responsive to the emotional content of the poem. (1) The following comment provides an example of such a sympathetic response to the poem.

A81. It is a beautiful poem. Musical and lifting in sound and rhythm, full of feeling and love for people, for childhood, for nature. Again the words are simple and chosen with great economy and restraint. The feeling is more poignant than that of any poem so far read. The picture the poem creates in the mind is clear and sharp. It is a great poem in every way, a poem that can be re-read indefinitely and always yield new riches for the heart and mind, and yet that is so passionate in its protest against the ugliness of the Industrial Revolution that it is almost unbearable to read it through once. I like it very much.

The qualities of form and style admired by subjects in group A, are less frequently perceived and appreciated in group B. Reactions of subjects in this group seem to be based mainly on the theme of the poem, the conditions portrayed and the attitude expressed. Within the group, the poem is liked more by Socialists than by subjects in other political sub-groups. Conservatives and Liberals in most cases disagree, wholly or partly, with what has been described in the poem, the Non-Affiliated subjects find it unpleasant, while the main criticism of Communists is that the attitude implied in the description is 'defeatist'. Socialists, on the other hand, who seem to be in greater agreement with the description and less critical of the attitude, are more sympathetic with the emotional content.

(1) The comments of Communists A77, A50, A83 may be compared with the comments of subjects A1, A6, A33, A44, A71 in other political sub-groups.
of the poem. It is interesting to note that, while the poem is often admired for its literary qualities by Socialists, it is considered by some of the Conservatives and Liberals to be of little poetic value.

D5. (Conservative) I dislike: my experience of mining area is of far more open-air facilities in the vicinity than the town. Here again the poet forsakes poetry for bitter expression.

B12. (Liberal) As poetry I do not think much of it. I do not think that today it is a completely true picture. William Blake might have had cause to have written of such things, but with their improved housing, cars and television, the miners are not the creatures of these verses.

B27. (Socialist) I like this poem very much because, in spite of the unpleasant nature of its subject matter, the author has conjured up, for me at any rate, a vivid word-picture of a mining town or village, whilst at the same time expressing a great sympathy for the dwellers of that place and for their children growing up with no knowledge of the beauty which exists outside their own small world.

Reactions of subjects in group C to the ideas and attitude expressed in the poem are more or less similar to the reactions of Socialists in group B. A few subjects question the truth of the ideas and some are critical of the attitude but on the whole the content of the poem seems to evoke a sympathetic response in this group. There are quite a few subjects who also appear to perceive in the poem certain qualities of experience and expression, noted mainly by subjects in group A, such as competent use of

words, effectiveness of metre and rhythm, power of
description, sincerity and restraint of feeling and tone. (1)

C42. I like the powers of description the poet
uses to paint his dismal scene: the yellow smoke,
dusty weeds, running rife, the gaunt folk, slag heaps
and headstocks all heighten the pitiable state of
children "born for the mines"... ... ... ... ... ...

C29. This poem I did like. It possesses a sad
and sincere quality and it is noteworthy that the poet
has created beauty from such things as railway lines,
slag heaps etc. The man who wrote it had obviously
worked and suffered in a mining community, not because
he actually says so in the poem but because it can be
felt when reading it.

C25. Associations clear and crisp, with good
descriptive stanzas.

Poem 4 has often been compared with poem 3 by
subjects in different groups. (2) In groups A and B, where
poem 4 is preferred to poem 3, subjects seem to be of the
opinion that the expression in the former is better than
that in the latter. This difference is a little more
clearly explained by some subjects in terms of tone and
mood. Poem 4 is regarded as 'calm', 'quiet', 'contemplative'
and 'restrained', while poem 3 is criticised as 'crude',
'bitter' and 'violent'. Subjects in group C and Communists
in groups A and B, on the other hand, express their
admiration for the 'fighting' and 'militant' tone of poem 3
and are critical of what they describe as the 'pessimistic'

(1) C3, C7, C8, C10, C24, C31, C37, C39, C41, C43, C67,
C68, C71, C72.

(2) A4, A5, A20, A23, A27, A43, A61, A92, B21, B23, B41,
C69.
and 'defeatist' mood of poem 4. Some subjects have tried to analyse the two poems and the possible effect of their tone and manner of expression on different people. Two of them, one from group A, who prefers poem 4 to poem 3, and the other from group C, who likes both these poems equally, have come to the same conclusions. Their views are interesting and seem to be confirmed by the reactions of subjects in different groups.

A84. More imaginative statement of point of view rather like 3. Now this one might make a convert, the previous is for the converted. The images selected are typical, well observed, well selected. They're allowed to make their own impact, not underlined. Touch of sentimentality? On second thoughts, no. The pity is a fine emotion, quite in proportion to the subject. Opening line's good. The quiet tone, occasional understatement. Has more poetical merit than the previous ones. Probably a good description of a mining town, but I've never lived in one, but it rings true.

C2. ....Its theme and subject, the misery and poverty of a mining district, is stated with perfect clarity and simplicity. It stands by itself in that the theme is stated in the form of a quiet, almost humble, petition to its readers. No strong accusations are delivered; no demand for rectification of wrongs is expressed in so many words, yet no decent reader could picture the sights which the poet presents without a feeling of indignation and resolution to demand that justice be done. This poem is not for those who already recognise the evils portrayed. They need poem "three" to stir them to action. No, this poem is for those who are ignorant of these evils or are led to believe that the author of poem three is one of those dangerous "Bolschies", "Anarchists", "Careerists" etc. who "see only worst in life" and seek to exploit conditions for their own ends.

These and other comments suggest that poem 3 is a direct expression of certain emotions while in poem 4
emotions are expressed only indirectly through a poetic description of certain conditions. The indirect, or what some subjects have called 'sensitive' and 'subtle', expression of emotions seems to make the sentiments expressed in poem 4 less unpleasant for those who do not find them agreeable, and the visual images provide a positive source of aesthetic pleasure.

It is, however, observed that the poem is often rejected by the less educated subjects, and sometimes also by the more educated subjects, apparently on account of a disagreement with or a dislike for its content, and no reference is made to its literary aspects. It seems that when the ideas expressed are considered to be insignificant or unpleasant, the poem is liable to lose all its appeal for the reader.\(^{(1)}\) Sometimes it also happens that, when the content is disliked, the poetic expression, which is praised by those who are sympathetic with the content, or who differentiate between their unfavourable reaction to the content and their appreciation of the form and expression, is also adversely criticised and the poem is dismissed on literary grounds as well.\(^{(2)}\)

A14. My feelings about this poem are very similar to those for 3. It is such a dreary poem and although it is talking about dreary conditions, I do feel it has been laid on rather heavily here. It seems as if the author has a real grudge against the mining town and conditions

\(^{(1)}\) A26, A34, A37, A48, A63, A66, B11, B13, B19, C47, C62, C63. 
\(^{(2)}\) A40, A53, A60, B5, B7, B9, B10, B12.
and has exaggerated the appearances greatly .......
I don't like this poem because of its biased nature and misdirected ideas. It displays the ignorance of the author. The writing of it is also childish and choice of words poor.

B34. I didn't like anything about this poem. Why does he assume beauty is only found externally? I know some people prefer slums to countryside. The miners are now well paid, why don't they emigrate or encourage the children to work for a scholarship in another profession. This apathetic approach is not convincing enough. Not good craftsmanship poetically.

C55. I do not agree with the ideas expressed. Beauty takes many forms. Again the ideas are dated, the exposition lacks style and the poetry value negligible.

The more or less detailed criticism of the content in these comments suggests that some contact has been made with the poem. In some other cases, where the poem is rejected with an indignant remark such as 'revolutionary theme', 'cynical note again', it appears that the subjects, perhaps being prejudiced by certain words and phrases, have withdrawn from the poem without establishing a close contact with it.(1)

Poem 5.

Poem 5 is another of the three 'popular' poems included in the experiment, and its theme, like that of poem 1, was judged as expressing 'consolation'. It resembles poem 1 also with regard to the ratings given to it by subjects in different groups, and the reasons mentioned by them for liking or disliking it.

(1) A26, D6, B16, B19, C49.
In group A, the poem is generally criticised on literary grounds. It is considered to be devoid of 'poetic merit', 'lacking in inspiration', 'poor' in style and 'patronising' in tone. The ideas expressed in it are also frequently criticised as 'trite', 'commonplace' and 'hackneyed'. (1) Subjects in groups B and C also express similar opinions about the poem, though for some of them, particularly in group C, its form of expression seems to be more satisfying. (2)

Within the three social groups, the Socialists and Communists find the ideas and the attitude expressed in the poem more disagreeable than the Conservatives and Liberals. Besides considering the ideas 'obvious' and 'hackneyed', they also often criticise them as being 'false' and 'reactionary'. (3)

Thus, poem 5, like poem 1, is liked the most by the Conservatives of group B, and the Conservatives and Liberals of group C, who are relatively more satisfied.

(2) B1, B13, B25, C43, C9, C20, C25, C32, C43, C49, C63, C69, C71.
Socialists and Communists: A55, A68, A69, A71, A72, A76, A78, A83, B18, B20, B23, B26, B32, B35, B37, B41, B43, B45, B49, C9, C14, C16, C24, C28, C29, C73.
with both the form and the content of the poem, and is liked the least by the Socialists and Communists in group A, who are dissatisfied with both.

Poem 6.

The theme of poem 6 was judged to be 'religious' by most of the judges and 'philosophical' by some of them. This may be taken to mean that the theme embodied in the poem is predominantly religious, and has been expressed on a philosophical plane.

This poem provides a contrast to the poems expressing social discontent or revolt in that it is liked considerably more in group A than in group C, and, within each of the three social groups, by the Conservatives and Liberals more than by the Socialists and Communists. Most of the Conservatives and Liberals like the philosophy and the religious sentiments expressed in the poem, the Socialists, particularly of group C, are critical of them, and most of the Communists dislike them.

The sentiments expressed in the poem, which is based on the view that scientific knowledge is being achieved at the expense of spiritual values, conveys a sense of frustration and dejection, which seems to have a great appeal for those who more or less agree with this view. (1)

(1) A46, A58, B2, B16.
A44. .... As a carefully phrased criticism of life, it is unexceptionable and its pessimism — realistic as it is — is a refreshing contrast to the optimism of one or two of the other poems.

A32. This I liked, and alas, how very true!

B12. This I liked very much, probably because I agree wholeheartedly with its philosophy. By its quiet sentiments it builds the tragedy of life, and moves one to think more constructively.

C42. What pleases me most about this poem is the depth of thought it implies. Brief phrases as "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge" raise volumes of thought. The grand rhetorical manner, with well balanced phrasing and effective repetition (sic) is ideal treatment for the despairing element contained in the thought.

Those, on the other hand, who do not agree with the ideas and the philosophy seem to have little sympathy for the mood and the feeling tone of the poem.(1)

A78. I like the words of this poem and admire its craftsmanship, but I disapprove of what I would call its defeatist outlook. It expresses despair and says in effect — mankind is doomed and there is no escape.

C33. .... A negative poem. After all the moaning, so what? What does he want us to do? He has brought us to the Dust and he is leaving us there. .... If he has had some personal revelation, good luck to him, that is his concern. I don't like the poem but the writing is good.

It appears that the reactions of subjects to the affective aspects of the content are not quite independent of their reactions to the ideas and beliefs expressed in the poem. One of the subjects in group A seems to be conscious of this close relation between agreement with the ideas and appreciation of the affective tone of the poem.

(1) A3, A39, A81, B21, C11, C14, C21, C35.
A24. I like this poem very well. The subject is one with which I am in sympathy, consequently it is easy for me to appreciate the mood in which it was written.

Favourable or unfavourable reaction to the ideas and philosophy of the poem seems to have a bearing also upon the perception of, and reaction to, its manner of expression. The poem is frequently commented on as expressing philosophical ideas by means of paradoxes, repetitions of words and rhetorical phrases.\(^{(1)}\) This manner of expression is considered by those subjects in groups A and B who agree with the philosophy, to be effective and cogent, whereas Communists in these groups, who generally disagree with the ideas, find it imposing and ajar. The following comments provide an interesting contrast between the reactions of those who agree and of those who do not agree with the ideas and the attitude embodied in the poem.

A53. ...... has a definite meaning, eloquently expressed.

B34. I appreciate the profundity of this poem and am in full harmony with its sentiments. I approve of the sensitive yet forceful way in which it's written ...... Made me reflect and I am grateful to have read it. There is nothing about it which annoys me; it is not campaigning for a cause, it is exciting.

A77. The last two lines rather give the game away. What has been (pretentiously and) repetitively

\(^{(1)}\) A2, A29, A46, A49, B37, C46.
said in the rest of the passage is now said undecoratively and how hollowly didactic it now sounds! A ready-made untruth out of a monastery.

B41. I dislike this poem very much because it is so pompous, many long words saying nothing. It has not a definite rhythm, and it gives me the impression that whoever wrote it was someone who thought that there was no point in living.

B48. This poet takes too long to say so little. He is wordy, verbose and confusing, and repetitious. It is stuffy and allegorical, and full of semi-religious symbolism.

The poem, which is generally praised by subjects in group A for certain poetic qualities, is rejected by some Socialists and Communists of this group also on literary grounds. It seems that a dislike for the ideas and the attitude expressed in the poem and, consequently, an unsympathetic response to its affective tone and manner of expression sometimes make the poem also appear insignificant and even poor in its technical and literary aspects. (1)


A83. I do not sympathise with the main idea of this poem but my chief reason for disliking it is its poor poetic quality, e.g. "Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

There are, however, some Socialists and Communists in this group who, in spite of their unfavourable reaction to the ideas and the attitude, admire the poem as a successful and sincere piece of poetic expression. These subjects, as their comments show, analyse different features

(1) A62, A72, A73, A74, A80.
of the poem and evaluate its poetic qualities in detachment from their reaction to its content. (1)

A71. ..... The use of the words appeals to me here. The incantations of the lines 3-5 are enjoyable yet repellent - the kind of thing one likes to chant to oneself without bothering what it means........

A76. In this poem, I am not at all in sympathy with the ideas expressed - in fact I dislike them. On the other hand, the poem is sincere - the poet, has fully felt the difficulty of finding meaning in life ........

A78. I like the words of this poem and admire its craftsmanship, but I disapprove of what I would call its defeatist outlook ........

Three subjects in group A, one Socialist and two Communists, appear to have experienced some conflict in their reaction to this poem. One of them, the Socialist, likes the poem as an "effective expression of a profound subject", but on the other hand he recognises it as having been written by someone who, in his opinion, has a "reactionary tendency". The conflict seems to be resolved by him in favour of his own experience of the poem which he likes in spite of his prejudice against the author. (2)

Of the two Communists, who also like the poem, one is dissatisfied with the reference to "God". (3) and the other disagrees with the view that "science leads away from true understanding". (4) They, however, seem to resolve the

(1) A52, A56, A87.
(2) A69.
(3) A53.
(4) A76.
conflict between the values they hold and the experience they get from the poem by modifying or re-interpreting its meaning. In the former case the poem is accepted "if it could read goodness instead of God", and in the latter case, where the subject is impressed by "The beautiful expression and sincerity of the poem", the interpretation given to it is different from the interpretation of most of the subjects, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the content of the poem. There is a general agreement that the poem expresses a dissatisfaction and grief over the suppression of the spiritual by too great an emphasis on the material life, or over man's progress in knowledge which is a regress from God, or over the speed of scientific knowledge which has resulted in man's drawing away from God and in a decline of spiritual values.\(^1\) The interpretation given in this case, that "the poet has felt real delight and wonder at the world", does not seem to fit into what the poem is generally interpreted to mean.

In groups B and C, there are comparatively fewer subjects who mention in their comments the technical and literary aspects of the poem. The reasons given by subjects in these groups for liking or disliking the poem mainly refer to the content of the poem. This does not, however, mean to say that subjects in these groups are unable to appreciate the literary aspects of the poem. From a few

\(^1\) A12, A20, A46, A66, B18, B18, C2, C6, C17, C21, C57.
comments, especially of those who more or less endorse
the central idea of the poem, it may be observed that
sometimes less educated subjects also notice and appreciate
the poetic qualities mentioned by the more educated
subjects such as effective use of repetition of words and
paradoxical phrases, harmony of rhythm and meaning, good
construction, and sincerity. (1)

Less educated subjects, particularly in group C,
often mention their difficulty in grasping the full meaning
of the poem, and, sometimes, attribute it to what they
describe as 'confusion of ideas', and 'complicated', or
'classical' style of expression. It may be due to this
difficulty that these subjects are often unable to derive
pleasure from the technique of the poem, and thus its style
and rhythm appear to them unattractive and even defective. (2)
In the case of a lack of contact with the poem it also
sometimes happens that subjects, perhaps taking their cues
from certain religious symbols such as God, Dust, or the
Word, against which they seem to be prejudiced, simply
reject it as 'religious' or 'mystic' in theme. (3)

B17. This poem failed to impress me in any way,
I think more so because it wasn't very clear to me.
Also when reading it I couldn't get any poetic rhythm
into it.

(1) B9, B16, B25, B34, C8, C12, C14, C22, C33, C39, C42,
    C63, C72.
(2) B5, C5, C13, C24, C32, C69.
(3) B3, B35, C28, C38.
C65. As a poem it is spoiled for me by the somewhat forced repetitions and muddled mysticism and of course, its sentiments are abominable. I bet the poet who wrote it used a dictionary.

C59. Obscure, and I again dislike the religion brought into it.

Many of the less educated subjects, however, seem to get the central idea or the dominant mood of the poem from whatever they have been able to understand.\(^1\) The reactions of these subjects to the poem, which are stated vaguely in their comments, may be viewed in the light of the comments of some other subjects in this group, who show similar reactions but analyse their impressions of the ideas and the feeling tone of the poem in greater detail.\(^2\) The following comment may be quoted as an example.

C67. You know I grow most impatient and angry with people who obviously have had privilege of education and scholarships who embrace subjectivity to the degree that they would etherealise it into poetry. The historical significance of the idea of God - the historical reality of Christ and his teachings are far too important to reject out of hand - indeed, when the battle for social objectivity is won, and our heaven achieved through scientific action then, the business of human relationship will profit well from study of Jesus' life and his great love of people. To get back to our poem, the kind of mind which, because of its emotional drying-up sees decadence in all human activity save the worship of God is pretty hopeless. Give me the poet and I will show him things that will fill him with hope and inspiration, pride in his kind - then perhaps he will begin to justify his gifts.

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\(^1\) C3, C8, C10, C14, C53, C58, C69, C73.

\(^2\) C2, C6, C33, C35.
Poem 7.

The theme of poem 7 was predominantly judged to be expressing 'revolt'; it was also classified by some judges in the categories of 'consolation' and 'escape'.

Subjects in different groups interpret the poem as drawing a contrast between the 'miserable' present and the 'ideal' future, or between the 'actual' and the 'desired' world, by means of a dream or a vision of a future society. The poem is on the whole liked in groups B and C and disliked in group A.

Subjects in group A find the poem weak in expression, and lacking in rhythm and music. It is frequently remarked that the style of the poem is prosaic, and that the use of slang makes the language 'unpoetic' and 'crude'. Besides these defects of form and style, subjects have also noticed some other weaknesses which seem to refer to both the expression of the poem and the experience embodied in it.

A77. I particularly dislike this poem because it is the product of a conceited, literary person falling for fashionable affectations in poetry and generalising about socialism after a "progressive" style which is (or was in the 30's) a mere literary convention. .

A80. A rather feeble poem, but with a faint spark. Not very well written. "Sad, furious fatal" seems to me a singularly irrelevant collection of adjectives to apply to our here and now.

(1) A20, A33, A46, A49, B9, B21, B24, B36, C35, C74.
(3) A1, A62, A76, A83.
A88. I like the first two lines of this poem very much, but after that it seems to me to suffer complete decline. It suffers from lack of clear rhythmic form, from prosaicness and declines to a mere passive contemplation of the horrors of the present. There is no bridge between the present and the future in the poem - because this bridge must be built by action. Similarly it suffers from feeble imagery - contrast the class hatred of the ruling classes in 11 and 3 with the weak "against those who withhold bread". I suppose this is a middle class poet trying to write a "progressive" poem.

These comments suggest that the poem is perceived to lack in warmth of personal experience and feeling. This weakness is explained as being due to an attempt, under the influence of certain accepted ideas, at writing something which is not experienced by the poet himself.

Subjects in groups B and C also appear to be dissatisfied with the form and expression of the poem, but these aspects are not criticised by them as frequently and as clearly as by subjects in group A. In many cases they express their dissatisfaction with the poem in such general terms as 'its form is wrong', 'it is poor poetry', 'it has no beauty', it is not 'well written', and so on. (1) There are, however, a few subjects, who analyse their impressions in some detail. Their comments seem to explain more precisely why the poem is considered to be poor in poetic qualities by many subjects in these groups.

B41. This poem did not affect me at all, beyond leaving me slightly puzzled, but over what I cannot say. I prefer poems that have a rhythm, or a rhyme, or both. It seems stilted and visionary, and does not think how these things will be obtained or that we, the present generation, will have them.

C2. ..... simple, delightful but hardly complete in itself. The theme cannot fail to be attractive but would hardly be convincing. The poem would be of great value as an epilogue to a play, lecture or longer poem. The play etc. would, of course, seek to convince its audience of the feasibility of the picture portrayed in the epilogue.

C28. I like what it visualises but there is nothing inspiring. I think it is because it has no feeling. The poet is more an onlooker than one who genuinely and actively desires for a better future.

C29. This poem just misses the mark. The thought behind it is good but the execution of it lets it drop. Such words as "sack" line 2, are unpoeitic.

These comments point out almost the same weaknesses in the poem as are noted by the more educated subjects in group A - that is, for example, lack of rhythm, lack of feeling and conviction and use of certain words which are regarded as unpoeitic.

In spite of a general dissatisfaction with its poetic expression, the poem is liked by subjects in groups B and C. Their liking for it, as the comments indicate, depends mainly on the value they attach to the ideas and the attitude it conveys. (1) The poem is frequently described as expressing "optimism", "hope and truth", "promise of a better future", "a glimpse of future life".

and so forth. For a few subjects in these groups the form and expression of the poem also seem to have some appeal. Their liking for the expression is, however, fused with their favourable reaction to the content of the poem. (1)

Poem 8.

The theme of poem 8 was judged to be 'individual'. According to the description given by a number of subjects in their comments, the poem starts with images taken from nature and draws a metaphor of an imagined effect of music, linking it with a human experience - the state when some small happening stirs the memory and disturbs the mind. (2) Although some subjects, especially in group C, find the poem rather vague and ambiguous, (3) there is a fair amount of agreement that it portrays a 'psychological experience' or a 'sensation of mind'. (4)

The poem is enjoyed by most of the subjects both for its theme and the way in which the theme is expressed. The more educated subjects in group A stress in their comments on the craftsmanship shown in the poem - the

(1) B14, B17, C3, C6, C12, C14, C21, C25, C72.
(2) A33, A44, A51, A76, A87, B25, C72.
(3) A3, A25, A56, A72, C2, C21, C47.
'delicate' form and 'beautiful' construction, and the skilful use of words and imagery - while the less educated subjects in groups B and C emphasise the idea it conveys and the effect it produces. In many comments of both the more educated and the less educated subjects, however, the reactions to these aspects of form and content are fused, and the poem is liked as a whole.

The experience, which is perceived to be purely personal and introspective, is frequently noted as being morally neutral. This aspect of the theme has been described in different ways by different subjects. Some regard the poem as expressing a theme which is not wholly 'material', or which does not refer to 'real life', and some consider it abstract, or dealing with 'incommensurable ideas' and 'hidden truth'. It is this non-moral or non-ideological character of the theme, together with the technical competence, that seems to make the poem almost equally acceptable to subjects in the three social groups.

A22. This is a common psychological experience but is beautifully described. The image beginning verse 2 is very striking.

A29. I like the imagery here. It is more nearly poetry than any of the other poems. It seems to come more from the writer's heart and it isn't seeking to convert anyone to anything. It "sings" more than any of the others.

B10. Well constructed. Free from suggested morality. I seem to have read it somewhere.
C29. I think this is lovely piece of poetry. The words are obviously chosen with a sense of their aptness and lyrical value. The fact that the poem expresses is so true but so intimately expressed that it is dissolved of the commonplace. There is little I can say about this piece since my appreciation of it is mostly of an aesthetic and mental picture nature that I can't analyse.

The absence of a definite attitude, however, in itself seems to become a basis for differences in reactions of subjects to the poem. It seems to add to the enjoyment of the poem by some subjects, and detract from its appeal for some others. It is significant to note that while subjects in groups A and B have specifically expressed their approval of the moral neutrality of the poem, the Communists of these groups and many subjects in group C criticise it because in their opinion it is 'pointless' and is devoid of any message.\(^{(1)}\) The Communists, particularly of group A, are the least satisfied with the poem and often express their indifference to or dislike for it on the grounds that it has nothing worthwhile to say, though in many cases they appear to appreciate its technical qualities. Their comments suggest that they consider the subject-matter of a poem more important than its form and technique, and that since they find the subject-matter of this poem insignificant, it loses much of its appeal for them.\(^{(2)}\)

A79. I dislike this individualistic, esoteric kind of poetry. Art for Art's sake.

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\(^{(1)}\) A73, A80, A83, B38, B43, C24, C28, C32, C66, C74.

\(^{(2)}\) A74, A77, A83, B44, B45, C7, C9, C14.
A81. ..... This very obscure poem is very much
like a stone dropped into a pond - it's upsetting for
a moment to the mind to be ruffled by such unintelligible
stuff, but a second later no trace of the poem's message
remains in the mind. This analogy I borrow with
acknowledgment from the poem, but in fact the poem has
no message or meaning at all, so it is not surprising
it leaves none behind.

B35. This poem lacks clarity of purpose and
therefore it has no effect upon me.

B40. This does not say anything to me. The poem
is written alright, but why not choose a subject.

No lead.

C10. Ivory tower stuff. Like the lyrical
tones. Peaceful after a day swinging a hammer.

It emerges from these and other comments of the
Communists that a purely 'individual' theme as expressed
in this poem is considered by them to be lacking in
'realism' and 'purpose', and therefore of little worth.
Certain stereotyped phrases used in their comments such as
'Art for Art's sake', 'romantic rather than realistic',
'ivory tower stuff' seem to reflect the same view.

The literary value that poetry should serve some
purpose and convey some message seems to be operating in
the reactions of many other subjects in group C. One of
them, who seems to be conscious that his liking for the
poem contradicts the accepted value that a poem should have
something 'definite to say', nevertheless accepts his own
experience of the poem and shows an admiration for it.
C33. I like this poem. The poet has captured some almost indefinable phenomena in these verses. Because he has nothing definite to say I do not condemn the poem. I am quite prepared to accept art of this nature and be glad of it.

It is interesting to note that a few subjects in this group, who considerably like the poem, perhaps owing to its vagueness reported by many subjects, project their own ideas into the poem and find some message in it.

C2. ...... In saying that a mere word, look or sign can make an impression in the minds and hearts of people, I believe that the poet is warning all those who advocate a particular faith or creed that every word and act they say or do is being watched by the people and may do good or harm to their faith or creed. This is indeed so and thus the poem could be of great value to, amongst others, the leaders of the progressive peoples. ........

C61. I may be seeing more than was intended but the implication is a great warning to the bigotted.

C69. ...... It gives a picture of life as it comes and goes. Experience, excitement and then rest. Things agitate and then time heals and covers it all up and we are like the pond with the stone; something has been added to us but outwardly we are serene. The last verse is an encouragement to be friendly and helpful.

Poem 9.

Poem 9 is one of the poems which were judged to be expressing a theme of 'social discontent' and 'revolt'.

The reactions of subjects in different social groups and political sub-groups to this poem are largely similar to their reactions to poem 3. Many subjects in groups A and B, particularly Conservatives and Liberals,
criticise the poem as being 'biased', 'untrue' and 'exaggerated'. (1) The Communists and some Socialists in these groups and many subjects in group C, on the other hand, accept it as 'factual' and 'true'. (2)

A3. I dislike the morbidity of this poem - it is sentimental and exaggerated and the verse form, and rhythm, doesn't make for seriousness. Coal steel and iron do not attract me as subjects for poetry

A20. The hatred of a woman for the mines which are to crush her child's life is well shown. But I find the poem over sentimental. The last line is the feeling of the mother - but nevertheless she is mistaken. It is ignorance which produces sentiments this mother feels.

B17. This poem to my mind is exaggerated, for who is planning, from birth, the death of an innocent baby. That death must come to us all eventually is inevitable, but to say it is being planned is just too much for me. I find this poem far too sad.

A55. So very true. These thoughts are expressed by mothers of today over and over again. It leaves me depressed.

A88. I find this poem moving and the rhythm appropriate. It has an excellent last line - but lacks a feeling of struggle against "The Masters".

B20. One hears a generation of mothers murmuring those exquisite first two lines of the third stanza. The poet has caught the inexpressible tenderness of mother love in his poem. It left me feeling deep sorrow, but is not sentimental. Moving.

C12. Beautiful in its simplicity, factual and touching.

A comparison of these comments suggests that

reactions to the emotional content of the poem are closely


(2) A79, A97, B37, B38, C4, C9, C12, C25, C33, C48, C53, C59, C63, C73.
related to the favourable or unfavourable response to the ideas expressed in it. When the ideas are considered to be exaggerated and untrue, the feeling underlying these ideas appears to be uncalled for and its expression 'sentimental'; when, on the other hand, the ideas are considered to be true, the feeling is also found to be appropriate and its expression 'moving' and 'touching'.

There seems to be some agreement among the more educated subjects, irrespective of their favourable or unfavourable reaction to the content, that the poem is sincere and effective, but its expression is marred in places by the use of commonplace language and stock phrases. (1) It is noteworthy that subjects who are unsympathetic with the content often emphasise the defects of the poem, while those who are sympathetic take greater cognizance of its good qualities. It may be that a favourable and sympathetic reaction to the content sometimes obstructs the perception of defects and facilitates the recognition of merits, and the reverse happens in the case of an unsympathetic reaction to the content.

One criticism of the poem, sometimes made by subjects in group A is that the form and the content are not quite mutually compatible. (2) An interesting difference


(2) A3, A9, A34, A39, A66, A76, A77, A80, A81.
is observable in the comments of those who find the content disagreeable and of those who feel sympathetic with it; the former reject the ideas and sentiments expressed in the poem on the grounds that they are too bitter to be suitable for a lullaby, or for any poetry, whereas the criticism of the latter is directed against the form which is considered to be unsuited to the serious nature of the subject-matter.

These subjects comment that the facile rhythm and style, though appropriate to the theme of the traditional lullaby, render the expression too light in this case to produce the intended effect.

Some of the highly educated Communists, who like the content of the poem but at the same time find the expression weak and unsatisfactory, seem to experience some conflict in their reaction to the poem. The following comment provides an example of such a conflict.(1)

A77, I had difficulty in making up my mind about this one. The message it contains is worthy. The style is at first (to me) unconvincing, too facile, very much like Kipling's verse, apparently incapable of expressing deep feeling, especially a phrase like "brain, blood and bone" can flow easily without real feeling or thought. And yet re-reading strengthens the conviction of sincerity. The facile rhythm and rhyme are probably a commendable sign of a respect for technical efficiency: tidiness of form. And some apparently stock phrases are more than redeemed by the last line of each verse, both "The Masters are planning" and the equally effective conclusion to Verse 2. These lines are strong stylistically and do justice to the intended message.

(1) cf. also A76, A80.
The spontaneous reaction here seems to be that the style, being "too facile" and, therefore, "incapable of expressing deep feeling", is "unconvincing"; some stock phrases are also marked in the poem. The poem is nevertheless liked, apparently because of the ideas, and some redeeming features are found in the style as well. The "facile rhythm and rhyme", which at first appeared to be the main weakness of the poem, are explained and accepted on literary grounds, and some lines are found to compensate for other defects of the style.

The less educated subjects in groups B and C in most cases accept or reject the poem mainly on the basis of the ideas and sentiments expressed in it. Those who dislike the ideas rarely mention the formal and technical aspects, and sometimes dismiss the poem with such stereotyped remarks as 'Red', 'Communistic', 'Poetry is being made subservient to propaganda', or 'Art and Politics do not mix'. (1) Among those who are sympathetic with the content, there are, however, some subjects, especially in group C, who seem to appreciate the literary qualities of the poem. (2)

C15. One clear idea and says it clearly in easy rhyme within the poet's limitations - very sincere and I like the thought motivating it.

C68. The thought behind this poem is clear and sincere. I liked the way that the lines appeared in a sing song fashion.

(1) B5, B7, B10, B29, B30, C55.
(2) B2, B46, C2, C7, C8, C12, C29, C35.
C19. Very true, very true, but it rhymes so easily that some may just sing their way through it without assimilating its real meaning.

C28. I like it as a parody. But the theme of the poem is more serious. It expresses anti-war sentiments and therefore demands a more serious tone.

It seems that among the less educated subjects those who like the content perceive the weaknesses as well as the merits of the poem more often than those who dislike the content because the latter, perhaps being inhibited by their unfavourable reaction to the content, do not come into as close a contact with the poem as the former.

Poem 10.

Poem 10 is one of the three poems (the other two being 1 and 5) which were included in the experiment as specimens of 'popular' poetry. Its theme was judged to be expressing religious sentiments and, by a smaller number of judges, also 'social discontent'.

As interpreted by subjects in different groups, this poem presents a contrast between the 'apparent' and the 'real'. The first part of the poem, which is explained as depicting the 'apparent' in life, seems to be quite clear to most of the subjects. The second part, which is generally interpreted to mean that life behind the 'apparent' is sorrow and suffering, appears to be vague and ambiguous. Many subjects, both highly educated and less educated, have
complained that the poem, especially the second stanza, is obscure and confusing. (1) The ambiguity of the second stanza, as many comments suggest, is caused mainly by the phrases "the window of your soul" and "Jesus hanging on a Cross". It seems that the interpretation of the poem, and the consequent reaction to it, largely depend on what the second stanza, particularly the last line, is construed to mean: whether it conveys a religious or a social meaning, and whether the image in the last line is taken to be a sign of redemption or just suffering, a symbol of hope or despair. The picture drawn in the first stanza, though not found to be ambiguous in itself, also changes its implication with different interpretations of the second stanza. It is taken to represent natural when contrasted with social, physical or visual when contrasted with mental or mystic, desired when contrasted with actual, and material when contrasted with religious or spiritual aspect of life, subject to the interpretation of the second stanza. (2)

The ambiguity of the poem seems to provide a vague situation which is interpreted differently by different subjects in the framework of their own attitude and philosophy. It is perhaps due to this that the poem is liked

by most of the subjects in the three social groups, and the differences of political opinion, too, do not have any marked and consistent relationship with the liking or dislike for it. This may be seen from a comparison of comments of subjects in the two contrasting social groups A and C. (1)

A13. Two views of the same thing - the visual and the mystic. I find myself deeply impressed by the last four lines.

A25. I like the style and the idea of this, and the contrast between the material and spiritual.

A26. Very good. This poem applies Christianity to today's problems and troubles.

A27. This is very good, and strikes home. The contrast between beauty and ugliness, joy and sorrow, and the combination of the two in all human kind is suggested briefly and forcibly. The old sadness of humanity. Reads like Blake.

A40. Simply expressed and very forceful. The last line is almost mentally shocking in its stark simplicity. A very effective poem. Not just depressing but hopeful that there might be a solution to the world's miseries somewhere. Reflects not so much lack of faith as regret at the gap between Ideal and Common Practice.

A87. This poem portrays the sharp contrast between the visible appearance of things and the real background to life, stripped of decorations, in the so-called "Free World". The last line is most effective.

C2. I like poem ten because it is simple and because it makes its appeal attractive to the religious section of democracy. Anyone who reads it and then investigates its allegations can see for himself (or herself) that indeed all that Jesus stood for is hanging dead upon a cross just as much as did Jesus himself.

(1) A12, A16, A49, A51, A66, A68, A70, A74, A81, A84, C3, C8, C14, C16, C17, C21, C25, C26, C30, C34, C35, C47, C49, C62.
C10. Like. Phraseology and easy to tongue sentences. Describes obviously a soul in torment at injustice.

C13. An unusual little poem. 2 clear thoughts successfully welded into an idea. Unpretentiously worded but effective. It deals with man and his relation to the physical world — and what he has made of it. It seems very sincere to me. It seems to be the only effort which could be classed as "poetry". I would not class it as religious or mystical as the last line here seems to embrace the idea of the martyrdom of Mankind in the mass.

C33. A difficult specimen to analyse. The poet is discontented although things appear bright to him on the surface — but he is a humanist above all things and is honest with himself. It is not a religious poem. The implication of Jesus hanging on the cross, I think, is an image of the goodness of mankind being crucified by some forces which he does not define.....

It appears from these and other comments that subjects in group A emphasise the religious and mystic implications of the theme of the poem, while subjects in group C interpret it more in a social context. Communists, both highly educated and less educated, who more or less consistently show a dislike for poems with a religious theme, often give a social meaning to this poem and like it on that account.

Some of the subjects in group A, who apparently do not interpret the poem in a religious sense, find the pictures presented in the two stanzas inconsistent and the contrast unconvincing. The main points of their criticism seem to be: how such contradictory views of life could be taken by the same person; when life is perceived to be so
bright and happy externally, how one could feel so miserable and sombre at heart; and, if there are contradictions in life, why they could not be seen through the same 'window'. Similar questions are occasionally raised also by subjects in groups B and C.(1)

A56. Pleasant but confused. The two things, as here pictured are not really comparable. The eyes of the soul see further, it is true, but the windows of a house overlook things as grim as those pictured in the last lines. Similarly the soul does not always see grim things. The meaning behind the poem is excellent but the contrasts are not really fair.

A59. I can't understand why if the house prospect is so good the soul prospect should be so bad.

A75. Recognises that there are contradictions in our life although it fails to tell that they are really there and that both can be seen through the same window (the first one) and are there even when the window isn't.

B16. I do not really care for poems divided into two people's thoughts - it breaks the thread of thought and spoils the web that a poem ought to spin before your mind. Besides that, this poem seems apathetic, as if the author is quite content just to look on at the terrible scene.

Cl. How a person who could see such beauty in the world, 1st verse, can have a soul so tormented with hopelessness beats me.

That such criticisms are seldom made by those who take a religious view of the content of the poem may be taken to suggest that one of the possible factors which unify and sustain the contrasting pictures is a religious attitude on the part of the reader.

There seems to be a fair amount of agreement among subjects, both highly educated and less educated, that, unlike poems 1 and 5, the other two specimens of 'popular' poetry, poem 10 is sincere and effective in its poetic expression.\(^1\) Other qualities of expression noted in the poem by many subjects are simplicity and restraint.\(^2\) More educated subjects in group A, however, frequently describe the poem as being 'slight' and 'ordinary', and criticise it for the use of hackneyed and conventional phrases and forced rhymes.\(^3\)

It is significant to note that poem 10 is liked much more than poem 9 by subjects in groups A and B, particularly by Conservatives and Liberals, although similar qualities and weaknesses of form and expression are noticed in both these poems. It seems that differences in the reactions of subjects in different groups to these poems are due not so much to a difference in the formal and technical characteristics of the poems as to the difference of ideas and sentiments perceived in them.

\(^1\) A40, A41, A47, A62, A76, A79, A81, A84, A88, B10, C13, C14, C33.


\(^3\) A1, A2, A21, A23, A33, A46, A41, A47, A50, A58, A64, A65, A69, A77, A88.
Poem 11.

Poem 11 was judged, with almost perfect agreement among the judges, to be expressing a theme of 'revolt'.

The comments show that reactions of subjects in different groups to this poem closely resemble their reactions to poem 3 and 9. It is liked by subjects in group C and by Communists and some Socialists in the other two groups both for its content and style, while subjects in groups A and B and Conservatives and Liberals in group C seem to dislike the poem mainly because it expresses a feeling of class antagonism.

There seems to be a fair amount of agreement among subjects that the poem is competent and forceful in its expression. It is frequently mentioned in the comments that the style - repetitions of words, rhythm and rhyming - is in harmony with the subject-matter, and that irony and sarcasm add to the effect of the poem. These qualities, though more often admired by subjects who like the content, are also recognised by a number of more educated subjects in groups A and B, who find the ideas and sentiments disagreeable, but analyse and evaluate the form and expression in relative detachment from their emotional reaction to the content.

(1) A32, A60, A64, A73, A80, A88, B14, E33, E37, B41, C7, C13, C14, C24, C72.
(2) A2, A17, A20, A23, A32, A34, A49, A50, B1, B17, B30, B49.
All. This poem has life and vigour, but like 3, repels me by the hatred in it. It has some powerful sarcasm, too ("The honest English gentlemen"), but I am unable to sympathise with the emotion behind it.

A30. I dislike this chiefly because the writer puts the onus upon God. Also I feel it a pity to make such use of the phrase "English gentlemen", for there has always been amid all the tyranny of "big business" and grasping land-owners, an "English gentleman" who is capable of Christian charity. As poetry I think that the writer knows how to write, his use of re-iteration is effective and his rhythm gives the right amount of "punch".

A84. Chesterton, surely - I think I've met it before. Propaganda poetry is not a high form of art but I like it better when it's quite open in its abuse and vigorous in its vocabulary, as here and in No. 3. I can't stand it if it pretends to be philosophy, or poetry, but has no added depth to justify the claim. There's a rollicking gusto about this with its repetitions and its great scorn, which is pleasant and vigorous, like a good slanging match. But such poetry can never be taken seriously, either as poetry or as politics.

B21. This I detest. Whatever its poetic merit may be, if any, and it certainly has a momentum, it rouses antagonism in me, as an English woman living at this particular point in time.

Though the poem is considered competent and forceful in its expression, there is an occasional note of dissatisfaction with its general quality, as may be observed in the comment of A84, quoted above. It is sometimes remarked that the poem, which is a direct expression of a particular attitude, lacks in depth of feeling and experience. This is pointed out in different words not only by those who disagree with the attitude expressed but also by some of the highly educated Communists.
who are in full agreement with the attitude. A few examples from their comments are given below.

A77. Not very great in feeling or style, but good enough as a campaigning rhyme; lively.

A78. I like the satirical humour and militant revolutionary sentiments expressed in this poem. It has a good rhythm, and although it has weaknesses, I feel that it is the most successful of the "political" poems in this group.

B43. Militant, but hardly poetry. Conception that mass appeal must dictate a lowering of cultural standard.

Among the less educated subjects in group C also, where the poem is very much liked both for the sentiments and the forceful way in which these sentiments are expressed, there are some subjects who appear to notice certain shortcomings in the poem. Their criticism, though stated in different terms, seems to refer to almost the same weakness as is perceived by the more educated subjects.

C9. I admire the militancy of this poem, but at the same time feel that it is born from spontaneous spite as much as from anything else. For instance, the word "soon" in the last verse may have no relation to the actual situation. The poet may mean well but tends to be carried away by the overflow of his (or her) own emotions.

C65. A bit rumbustious, but I quite agree.

The comments so far quoted represent the reactions of those who seem to perceive and evaluate different aspects of the poem in relative independence from each other. In most cases, however, the perception and evaluation of the
literary aspects of the poem seem to be influenced by the favourable or unfavourable reactions to its content. The following are a few examples from the comments of those who like the content.

A39. An excellent bit of revolutionary poetry with a strong rousing rhythm, bright sarcasm and a potent threat.

A68. This is a good indictment of the British imperialist system as it was since it has now given way to the American. I like also the crisp, concise setting of the poem.........

A79. Succeeds very well in achieving the effect that was desired. Slick technique. Form and content well matched.

These comments may be contrasted with the comments of those who dislike the content of the poem.

A3. I am singularly unmoved by this poem - the regular rhythm and position of the beat tends to slow up the force of the words, ........ this poem is not especially moving - possibly also because of the re-iteration of "gentlemen" at the end of the lines - and because in form the poem is loosely constructed.

A33. ........ I dislike this strongly because I feel it to be insincere - more soap box oratory, stock sentiments expressed in stock language........ Class hatred, towards any class, is a mean and nasty emotion and this appeals to nothing higher; there is no genuine sympathy for the oppressed. It creates a certain effect of liveliness by its jaunty metre, sledge-hammer repetitions, and heavy-handed irony ("the honest English gentlemen") - the use of language is entirely unoriginal.

The poem is often dismissed by both highly educated and less educated subjects as 'propaganda', 'hymn of hate', 'dangerous', 'destructive' or 'biased', and no comment is made on its formal and technical aspects. In such cases,
the remarks indicate that the poem is disliked, not because its form and expression are perceived to be deficient, but mainly because the ideas and sentiments expressed in it are found to be disagreeable.\(^{(1)}\) Sometimes the poem is rejected also on the grounds that its theme is not suited to poetry.\(^{(2)}\) This seems to reflect the view, often expressed by subjects in groups A and B in connection with poems expressing 'social discontent' and 'revolt', that themes which evoke unpleasant feeling are in themselves unpoeitic and, therefore, should not be the subject-matter of poetry.

Poem 12.

Poem 12 was judged, like poem 6, to be expressing a 'religious' theme, the difference between the two poems according to the judges' classification being that poem 6 contrasts the spiritual with the material aspect of life and expresses grief over the loss of spiritual values, while poem 12 is a 'devotional' poem.

The poem is interpreted by subjects in different groups as a hymn of praise and devotion to God - the "Light Invisible" - who, though unknowable, is the source of all lights.\(^{(3)}\) The meditation of light as the symbol of God is.

\(^{(1)}\) A4, A7, A14, A18, A24, A27, A35, A40, B2, B7, B10, B13, B15, B19, C37, C43, C60.

\(^{(2)}\) A28, A29, A35.

frequently regarded as reflecting Christian mysticism, but the images of different kinds of lights, which appeal to the visual sense, also seem to give to some of the subjects an impression of pagan worship. (1)

The theme of the poem has greater appeal for subjects in groups A and B than for subjects in group C; and, although there are some subjects in different political sub-groups within groups A and B who do not like the religious content, the Communists generally seem to dislike it. Subjects in group C and Communists in the other two groups often criticise the poem as being 'escapist', devoid of 'realism' and without any 'purpose' or 'worth'. (2) In groups A and B, on the other hand, it is sometimes contrasted to poem 11 and other poems expressing social discontent and revolt, and its theme is commended as being worthier of poetic expression. (3)

The poem is often reported by the less educated subjects to be obscure and confusing, but in most cases its central idea appears to be conveyed to them. The comments indicate that their liking or dislike for the poem is based mainly on their favourable or unfavourable reaction to its religious content. The formal and technical aspects, which are occasionally praised when the content is liked, are

(2) A79, A80, B38, C3, C33, C38, C39, C43, C67.
(3) A35, A84, B12, B16, B21.
rarely mentioned by these subjects when the content is disliked.

Some of the more educated subjects analyse and evaluate the technical and other qualities of the poem irrespectively of their liking or dislike for the content. There seems to be an agreement among these subjects that the poem is sincere and evokes pleasant images, but that its style is deliberate and lacks in rhythm and music.\(^1\)

In many cases, however, subjects who like the theme admire the visual images, use of words and phrases, and quiet and peaceful atmosphere evoked by the poem,\(^2\) while those who dislike the theme find the poem 'forced', 'pompous', 'snobbish' and 'dull', and do not seem to appreciate the positive qualities mentioned by the others.\(^3\)

All. I like the sensitive and imaginative use of words here ("batflight", "Glow-worm glowlight"), and the warmly coloured images in the poem. I like the thought behind it, too, of relating all lights to one Light Invisible.......

A54. Here, too, is "poetry" - something really "made" - the lesser lights lifting the mind to the "Light of lights". Again there is some beauty of expression... some originality in the use of words... the verb "fracture"... "batflight"... "submarine" (though here its use is a little obscure, perhaps).

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(2) A13, A20, A29, A33, A74, A84, B12, B21, B29.

A79. Dull and literary in form. Mystic and escapist in content.

A83. Trite in its theme and moreover "phony" in its sentiment. There is a precious and snobbish atmosphere about it, as tho' the poet were concerned to advertise his profoundly poetic nature, which cannot only derive intense emotional satisfaction (as ordinary men presumably cannot) from various light effects, but can moreover philosophise about it quite in the classical Platonic style.

C7. There seems to be no point. Expression all right, but I don't like the repetition.\(^1\)

It seems that in the absence of a discriminative response, when the content is found to be significant and appealing, the weaknesses of form and expression become less prominent, but, when the content is found to be disagreeable, the weaknesses are magnified and the positive qualities lose their appeal. Sometimes, as in the case of C7, when the content is considered to be insignificant but the poem is perceived to be competent in expression, some minor point of style is picked out and a literary basis is thus found for rejecting the poem.

Poem 13.

Poem 13, like poem 3, was judged to be expressing a theme of 'social discontent' and 'revolt'.

The reactions of subjects to this poem largely resemble their reactions to the other poems expressing

\(^1\) C7 is a university student with a working-class background.
social discontent and revolt, especially poems 3, 9 and 11.

There seems to be an agreement among subjects that the poem is sincere and simple in expression, but the more educated subjects occasionally appear to be dissatisfied with its form and style. They do not seem to admire this poem as much as poem 3, which is often praised for its forceful and effective expression even by those who dislike its content.

It is interesting to note that some of the more educated subjects in group A, especially Communists, who identify this poem as one by Shelley, praise it in exceptionally high terms and sometimes appear to regard it as superior to poem 3 in technique and power of expression. One of them seems to like poem 3 better than 13 and is conscious that the latter poem does not deserve a very high position on the preference scale, but, knowing its authorship, he not only places it considerably high but also expresses an admiration for its form and technique.

A41. I am almost certain this is from Shelley: if I did not think this, I might have placed it lower down the list. However, the phrasing is tight - very good workmanship - there is a simple starkness of imagery and rhythm which seems to suit the emotion.

It seems here that a clash between the experience gained from the poem and the prestige of its author has

(1) A33, A72, A77, A79.
(2) Comment of A41 on poem 3:- Remarks on 13 apply here, but I am not sure if this is not a bit above 13, really.
resulted in a suppression of the individual's own experience and, apparently, in a rationalisation of the response by a high praise of its "workmanship". There are some subjects, however, who seem to give more importance to their own experience, and freely criticise the poem, in spite of the knowledge that it is by Shelley.

A84. I think this is possibly Shelley - part of a long poem he wrote especially to rouse the people, which I read once ..... In comment I can only express my general feeling towards poetry-with-an-obvious-purpose. This is less offensive than some because less hysterical in tone, but though competent work, I can't say it's good poetry........

A88. I recognise this poem, and my response to it is affected by the associations it has for me. In the form given, it lacks the feeling of a complete poem with a climax. Stanza 3 is obscure in its structure. There is the same strong feeling as in 3 and 11 with more variety of rhythm, but there is a sense that the ideas in Shelley's mind have not reached full expression and that he is struggling unsuccessfully with the form - compare certain speeches in Prometheus, which express the same ideas more successfully.

The poem is also identified by some subjects in group C, but in their reactions the factor of prestige does not seem to be operating as much as in the reactions of subjects in group A. (1) They like the poem mainly for its ideas, and almost equally with poem 3.

(1) C7, C11, C20, C69, C72.
Poem 14.

According to the external judgment, poem 14 expresses a theme of 'escape' and, to some extent, 'consolation'. The poem was also classified by some of the judges in the categories of 'individual', 'religious' and 'philosophical' themes.

Subjects in groups A and B, who like the poem, interpret it as expressing a detachment from physical and material realities which are 'bitter', 'crude' and 'temporal', and a dedication to, or contemplation of, spiritual realities - 'Beauty', 'ideal' or 'Ultimate Goal' - which are 'peaceful' and 'permanent'. The attitude implied in this approach to life is found by these subjects to be 'optimistic', 'comforting' and 'elating', (1) and is sometimes compared with the attitude expressed in poem 13, which is disliked. (2) Most of the subjects in group C and the Communists and some Socialists in groups A and B, many of whom like the attitude expressed in poem 13, on the other hand, find the ideas expressed in poem 14 'abstract', 'esoteric', 'meaningless' and 'harmful'. The underlying attitude is often criticised by them as 'defeatist' and 'escapist'. (3) Thus, a favourable or unfavourable reaction

(2) All, A12, A56, B29.
to the ideas seems largely to determine whether the implied attitude is considered to be 'optimistic' and 'elating', or 'defeatist' and 'escapist'.

Among the more educated subjects, who refer to literary aspects more frequently than the less educated subjects, those who are sympathetic with the content of the poem often admire its expression, while those who find the content disagreeable criticise the expression as well. When the ideas are found to be convincing and the attitude agreeable, the expression is praised as 'dignified' and 'forceful', but, when the ideas and the attitude are considered insignificant, the expression is criticised as 'pretentious' and 'pompous'.(1)

There is, however, some agreement among subjects who discriminate between different aspects of form and content that the poem is sincere and has some qualities of language and style but that in places it is obscure in expression and confused in thought.(2)

Poem 15.

The theme of poem 15 was judged to be one of 'social discontent' and 'revolt'.

(1) A38, A44, A46, A67, A70, A80.
This poem, according to the subjects' interpretation, presents a dream of future or desired life, as contrasted to present or actual conditions, and gives a call to change the latter into the former. (1) The theme is, on the whole, liked more by subjects in groups B and C than by those in group A, and, within group A, more by Communists than by Conservatives.

There is a considerable amount of agreement among the more educated subjects that the poem is weak, that it is vague and conventional in ideas and that its language and style are hackneyed, commonplace and facile. (2) The poem is also criticised, mainly by Communists, for a lack of conviction and faith in the message it conveys. (3)

Those subjects who find the poem less appealing than some other poems expressing social discontent and revolt, consider it to be less forceful and 'revolutionary', while those who find it more agreeable describe it as mild and less bitter in tone. (4)

Poem 16.

The theme of poem 16 was predominantly judged to be 'individual' and 'philosophical', expressing a feeling of nostalgia combined with certain philosophical ideas.

(1) A37, A46, A54, A66, A68, A74, B18, B20, B22, B27, B29, C2, C3, C8, C10, C20, C25, C39, C59.
(3) A72, A77, A81.
(4) A6, B30, C5, C21, C28, C60, C62.
Comments of subjects in different groups emphasise both these aspects of the theme. The poem is interpreted as expressing a feeling of loneliness, and isolation, and a wish for simplicity in life; the philosophy which is linked with this experience is analysed as being based on the idea that the complexity of modern life deprives man of simplicity and spontaneity which he enjoyed at earlier stages of life. (1)

The expression of the feeling of loneliness and the urge for simplicity seem to have an appeal for most of the subjects, but the philosophical content of the poem produces differences in the reactions of subjects having different beliefs and attitudes. The Conservatives and Liberals and most of those Socialists who seem to agree with the philosophy show a greater liking for the poem than Communists and some Socialists who disagree with it. The poem is sometimes rejected by the latter subjects as 'decadent', 'defeatist' and 'fatalistic'. These words, though in themselves only indicative of an unfavourable reaction to the ideas expressed in the poem, seem to imply certain values, which are reflected more clearly in the comments of subjects who analyse, in some detail, their reactions to the philosophy and the attitude implied in it.

A76. This is a better poem than 15 and I like it better, though I still dislike it a little. I find the ideas annoying and very stereotyped - the poem looks like a typical twentieth century poem and the theme of "loneliness" is hackneyed. All the same, the poet has felt what he writes, and it is a true description, no doubt, of his own state of mind. I don't understand "laughter to which I listen". One feels the poet longs for sincerity, longs for understanding. He is trying to face up to his predicament. Underlying the poem, however, is the false intellectual idea that complexity is the enemy of spontaneity, i.e. civilisation is the enemy of love. I profoundly disagree with this idea and that is why I don't like the poem. However, it is genuine though a little pompous, as if the poet is "striking an attitude". Metre and language are very good and effective.

C2. While this poem speaks a number of important and elementary truths, including particularly its first line, it lacks any strength in its voice; it lacks the strength to break through the maze it speaks of; it gives no indication of the weakest, or the foundation, stones in the walls of that maze. I feel that this poem which tries to tackle our social problems, cannot be really successful without being written along a social theme. Philosophy is part of life; not an alternative to it. A particularly valuable statement is:

Really we long to give one gift, and only hope for a single exchange.

If we review our present social order in the light of this statement it does not take long to find those sections of the community responsible for building the maze. I disagree with the poet for saying that the plan was lost. There was never a collective plan......

C9. Its exposure of the hypocrisy and obscurities with which mankind has surrounded itself are quite good. But its inability to find a "way out" suggests weakness, and the poet is altogether too dogmatic about "the inevitability of the loneliness of man".

The poem is often reported to be rather difficult to understand, especially by subjects in groups B and C, but in most cases the central theme seems to be grasped, and the experience of loneliness and the wish for simplicity
conveyed by the poem evoke a sympathetic response. Sometimes, however, when the philosophy expressed in the poem is found to be disagreeable, the experience also loses its appeal and becomes insignificant and meaningless. (1)

A88. I do not know why I disliked this poem more than the other poems above. Perhaps it is the note of decadence "in my deathly corridor", "life a twisted tower" and despair.

B41. This poem annoys me. I can't quite understand what it is all about, or what the point of it all is. I disagree with what it says, about man complicating a life which was once simple. It is a peculiar poem and I do not like it very much.

C8. The plea for simplicity is important, but not a pining for simplicity which seeks to evade the complexity of our modern world. .... I think the style and wording do arouse imagination.

A sympathy for the experience and a disagreement with the philosophy sometimes made it difficult for the reader to reconcile his conflicting reactions to the content of the poem. Two subjects in group A, one Socialist and one Communist, appear to recognise that the philosophy and the attitude expressed in the poem are contrary to certain beliefs they accept, but, at the same time, find the sense of frustration or the urge for simplicity in harmony with their own individual experience.

A68. Here it is the form which greatly attracts me and the use of words. I realise that it is almost defeatism and also to a certain extent escapism but I respond to it as I too am often assailed by a feeling of despair and futility. I think I should actually place it before 11.

(1) A56, A76, A77, A78, A79, A81, A87, B36, A37, A45, C1, C2, C3, C9, C28, C53, C57, C69.
A72. I feel a little guilty about liking this, but it is true for me. And needs saying. After all it is what I am fighting for.

Although in both these cases the poem is liked despite the pressure of accepted beliefs, there is some difference between the reactions of the two subjects, A68 clearly accepts the contradiction between his own experience and the beliefs he holds, giving more importance to the former, but A72 feels "guilty" at going against recognised values and tries to rationalise his reaction in order to make it acceptable.

In group A, the poem is generally praised for sincerity, simplicity of expression and effectiveness of imagery and style. Some Communists also, in spite of their dislike for the content, recognise that the poem is an expression of a genuinely felt experience, and that there are some good lines and effective images in it. There is one Communist in this group, however, who rejects the poem not only as unconvincing in ideas but also as lacking in poetry, and devoid of any sincere feeling:

A77. "Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements" is a flat statement which doesn't convince me of its truth. What "simple action" (verse 4) is required? The same simple action as in "To His Coy Mistress"? If the dilemma (whatever it is) is real, I can't sympathise with the attitude. If (again) the dilemma is real the attitude (which creates it) is cowardly. If (as I think) it is not real, it is merely an intellectual affectation, a fashionable poetic pose. The one line which could carry conviction "inevitably we have established the loneliness of man" is so lacking in any kind of poetry as to betray the fact that the
"poem" was written without feeling, without inspiration. It came from a dry mind, emptied of whatever it is that is inspiring. Also the writer does not really seem upset at the loneliness. I doubt if this is poetry. Is this also Eliot?

The reaction shown in this comment, when viewed in the light of the comments made by other highly educated Communists, appears to be caused by a dislike for its content, which also affects the evaluation of its poetic expression.

Summary.

The analysis of comments shows that all the poems, except poems 1 and 5, are on the whole considered to be genuine and sincere.

Poems 7 and 15, though regarded as genuine, are criticised, mainly by the more educated subjects, as being weak in experience and expression. These poems are, however, considerably liked by subjects in groups B and C. Subjects in group B, who on the whole dislike other poems expressing social discontent and revolt, find these poems more agreeable because of their being mild in tone and free from an expression of class antagonism.

Poem 4, expressing a theme of social discontent, is also to some extent liked in group B for similar reasons. Subjects in group C show a greater liking for this poem and, unlike the other poems of social discontent and revolt, it
is also liked by subjects in group A, because, besides being admired for description and imagery, it is found to be restrained in tone and indirect in the expression of the feeling of discontent.

Poems 3, 9, 11 and 13, which are liked in group C, are disliked by subjects in groups A and B on account of a strong and direct expression of class antagonism. These poems, particularly poems 3 and 11, are, however, often admired by the more educated subjects in group A for forceful and effective expression. In this group, Communists, who are sympathetic with the content, seem to appreciate the positive qualities of the form and expression of these poems, more than the subjects who dislike the content; certain weaknesses of form and expression are, on the other hand, noted in these poems, especially in poems 9 and 13, more often by the latter than by the former subjects.

Poem 10, which combines religious sentiments with social discontent, though criticised in group A for almost the same weaknesses of language and style as poem 9, is nevertheless liked by most of the subjects in this group. This poem, being vague and ambiguous in its meaning, is interpreted differently by different subjects, and is more or less liked in all the three groups. Poem 8, another poem which is equally liked in different groups, is admired for skilful expression of a common human experience.
The remaining poems are praised, mainly by the more educated subjects in group A, for effectiveness and competence of style and expression. Among these poems, poem 2, which comprises a philosophical theme, and poem 16, which combines philosophical ideas with individual experience, produce greater differences between subjects in different groups than poem 8. The philosophy and attitude expressed in these poems are more readily accepted by subjects in groups A and B than by subjects in group C. Poems 6, 12 and 14, the first two expressing religious sentiments and the last an attitude of escape, evoke still greater differences between subjects in these groups. Less educated subjects report these poems to be complicated and difficult to understand. It is evident from the comments, however, that the main ideas expressed in these poems are in most cases grasped, and are found to be less agreeable by subjects in group C than by subjects in the other two groups. The highly educated Communists in group A, who differ in their preferences from the rest of the group, find poems 2, 6, 12, 14 and 16 more or less disagreeable in content, although they sometimes admire the literary qualities of these poems.
Chapter VIII

Discussion of Results.

The purpose of the present experiment was to study the influence of social attitudes and values, considered to be related to social background and political opinion, upon literary preferences. The very nature of the problem suggests that the results derived from the experiment should be interpreted in a social psychological context. This involves a discussion of the literary norms and values observed in different social and political groups, and of the psychological processes operating in literary appreciation and preference in relation to these norms and values.

The statistical results indicate certain broad differences among the three groups as regards their literary preferences. Poems expressing themes of social discontent and revolt are liked most, and those with a religious theme or a theme of escape liked least in group C. In group A, on the other hand, individual, philosophical and religious poems are rated high while poems with social discontent and revolt fall to much lower positions on the preference scale. Group B, which occupies a middle position as regards social background, shows a preference for individual and
philosophical themes and such themes of social discontent and revolt as are not infused with a feeling of class antagonism (poems 7 and 15).

There is, however, one exception to the clearly defined norm of group A and one to that of group C. Group A gives a notably high position to poem 4, though the poem expresses a theme of social discontent, which is one of the least favoured themes of this group. Similarly poem 8, with an individual theme, is rated by group C as high as some of the poems expressing social discontent and revolt.

The high position of poem 4 in group A, as the comments show, is due not so much to a liking for its theme as to the value attached to certain poetic qualities which the poem is considered to possess.

An examination of the ratings indicates that poem 8 is one of the two poems for which there are least differences among the three groups. This poem is frequently commented on by the subjects in different groups as portraying a common human experience without being committed to any moral, religious, or political ideology, and hence it is liked almost equally in all the three groups.

Another poem which evokes only slight differences among the social groups is poem 10. The reason why this poem is rated relatively high by all the groups seems to be that its theme, which was objectively determined to be
expressing religious sentiments and social discontent, is interpreted differently by individuals in different groups. In group C, it is predominantly interpreted in terms of social discontent, whereas in group A, its meaning is more often construed in a religious context.

This poem, it may be recalled, is one of the three poems included in this experiment as specimens of 'popular' poetry. The other two poems of this category (1 and 5) turned out to be more or less unsuccessful in all the three groups and have generally been described as doggerel, expressing platitudes and stock ideas. These two poems, it seems, have been dismissed by most of the subjects because they fail to reach the minimum literary standard.

The mention of the term standard requires here an explanation. As has been maintained throughout this thesis, it is difficult to determine a common standard of 'good' and 'bad' in poetry which is acceptable to all. The comments on these poems, however, strongly suggest that a minimum standard of poetry acceptable to the majority of the present population, more or less independent of differences in education, social background and political opinion, is possible if the term 'good' or 'bad' be taken to mean true and genuine or false and spurious. Poetry is an embodiment of personal experience in some form. But when a poet expresses something which is not his real or genuine
experience, the expression may fall short of a true poem. And it is in this sense that poems 1 and 5 are false and are judged as being so by most of the subjects.

The differences in literary preferences, as the statistical analysis demonstrates, are operative not only in social dimensions, as between different social groups, but also in political dimensions, as within each of these groups. With the exception of the three 'popular' poems, to which the reactions of the subjects show either a barely significant (poem 5) or insignificant (poems 1 and 10) correlation with political opinion, all the poems, including poem 8 which is regarded as non-ideological, are significantly correlated in their ratings with political opinion scores within the three social groups.

Of these, the poems expressing a theme of social discontent or revolt (3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15) show a positive correlation with political opinion; that is, they are liked more by the 'radical' than by the 'conservative' subjects in each group, while individual (8), philosophical (2 and 16), and religious (6 and 12) poems, and a poem expressing escape (14) show a significantly negative correlation with political opinion, which indicates that the 'conservative' subjects rate them higher than the 'radical' subjects.

It may be observed here that the poems which appeal to the 'radical' subjects within each group are, on the
whole, given a high value by the manual workers and a low value by the members of the professional group, while the positions of the poems which appeal to the 'conservative' subjects within each group are reversed on the preference scale of the two contrasting social groups. Thus, the influence of political opinion in relation to these poems tends to produce an effect within each social group similar to that produced by the differences of social background between the professional group and the group of manual workers. The clerical group has, on the whole, an affinity in its preference for most of these poems to the professional group, except for poems 7 and 15 which, unlike some other 'radical' poems, do not express class antagonism.

The results of the statistical analysis and the mean ratings of the social groups and political sub-groups suggest that the Communists in the professional and the clerical groups and most of the subjects in the group of manual workers on the one hand, and the Conservatives and Liberals in the clerical group and in the group of manual workers and most of the subjects in the professional group on the other, share certain values which have a marked influence on their literary preferences.

This broad division of the total population is reflected not only in group norms and preferences but also in certain notions about poetry and literature which the subjects of different social and political groups have
frequently expressed in their comments. In group A many subjects have expressed the notions (a) that the subject-matter is of less importance in a poem than its technique and style; (b) that certain themes are inartistic and do not fit into poetic expression; or (c) that to use political themes in poetry is to sacrifice art for propaganda. (1) It is interesting to note that these values are usually expressed in relation to poems expressing social discontent and revolt, themes which are not generally favoured by the subjects in group A. The Conservatives and Liberals of groups B and C, when commenting on poems expressing class antagonism, also sometimes express the view that such themes are not fit for poetry because they turn art into propaganda. (2)

Most of the subjects in group C, and the Communists in groups A and B, who prefer themes of social discontent and revolt, seem to hold different literary values. These are reflected by such views as (a) the worth of a poem depends more on its subject-matter than on its style or technique; (b) social themes, particularly themes of discontent and revolt, are more 'realistic' and, therefore, 

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(1) cf. A15 (poems 3, 4, 7, 9, 11 and 13), A29 (poem 4), A30 (poem 3), A35 (poem 12), A38 (poem 2), A40 (poem 3), A45 (general comments), A53 (poem 13), A54 (poems 11 and 12), A64 (poem 11), A85 (poem 11).

(2) cf. B2 (poems 1 and 2), B17 (poems 1 and 3), L31 (poem 3), B49 (general comments), C62 (poem 13).
of greater value in poetry; or (c) poetry should serve some purpose and convey some message (1).

The literary values of groups A and C, which refer to the relative importance of style and subject-matter, resemble those formulated by Tomars (1940) (2). According to his generalisations, 'purism' in art, which is a dominant trend in upper classes, stresses the stylistic aspect of form and technique as against the subject-matter, while the opposite trend of 'realism' gives more importance to the subject-matter and emphasises the social function of art.

In so far as the expressed values of the contrasting social group are concerned, the present study suggests similar differences in emphasis. But the deviation of the Communists from the 'purist' values of group A, and the factor of education which may to some extent explain the differences between groups A and C as regards the emphasis on form and technique, make the situation too complex to be explained only on these lines. On the individual plane, emphasis on form and technique on the one hand, and on subject-matter on the other, may be explained, at least partly, by differences in education and agreement or disagreement with the content of a poem according to the individual's social and political attitude.

(1) cf. A81 (poem 8), A83 (general comments), B35 (poems 8 and 10), B36 (poem 9), C9 (poems 8 and 12), C14 (poem 8), C22 (general comments), C45 (general comments), C69 (poems 3 and 4).

(2) Tomars' formulations have been discussed in Chap. III, pp. 83-84 above.
The literary values expressed at the group level, though vague, ill-defined and more or less conventional, are nevertheless important pointers to different values held by individuals in different groups. These values, together with the norms of literary preferences derived for different social groups and political sub-groups from their ratings, provide an objective basis for studying psychological processes functioning in literary appreciation and preference on the individual level.

The results of the present experiment indicate that group values have a significant influence on an individual's literary preferences, especially when these values are so interiorised by him that they become a part of his own mental organisation. The ratings and the comments, however, show not only individual differences within each group but also sharp deviations of some individuals from the dominant norms and values of the group. As the comments suggest, an individual's own experience of a particular poem may sometimes come into conflict with the accepted values of the group. In such a conflict, some individuals give more importance to their own spontaneous reaction while some others tend to conform to the accepted values of their group. These two different types of reactions are sometimes described by such concepts as spontaneity and conformity (Vinacke, 1952) or sensitiveness and resistance (Trotter,
The concept of sensitive and resistive behaviour, suggested by Trotter, has been examined and explained by Harding (1953). The resistive individuals are those "who resist their own experience (by repression, rationalisation, and re-interpretation of all kinds) whenever a clear recognition of it would bring them into conflict with the values and outlook of their group". The sensitive individuals, in contrast to the resistive ones, are those "who take their own experience seriously even when it clashes with the conventional outlook" (ibid., p. 48).

The subjects in group A generally do not like the poems expressing social discontent and revolt because one of the literary values held by them is that 'political' themes are not worthy of poetic expression. There are quite a few subjects in this group, however, who in contrast to the dominant reaction of their group, appear to be more sensitive in that they not only appreciate the technical skill of some of these poems (3, 9 and 11) but also express a modified and more sympathetic reaction to their themes. The Communists in groups A and B and most of the subjects in group C, again, generally find the 'political' poems more pleasing because such poems are considered by them to be more 'realistic' than the other poems. Yet some of these subjects, when they find their own experience of these poems dissatisfying, criticise them in spite of their group values.
It is these subjects who sometimes prefer individual, philosophical, or religious poems because they find them more satisfying.

The question why some people are more sensitive than others is a problem for further research. It may, however, be suggested that education, formal or informal, and wider social experience are two of the possible factors which make an individual relatively free from the conventional values of his group. It seems that education and varied experience enable an individual, in some measure, to supersede the conventional and stereotyped values so that he can explore new possibilities of literary appreciation and integrate new experiences.

The comments also show that in some cases where there is a conflict between group values and the individual's spontaneous reaction, the opposite process of resistance may take place in that the individual may try to conform with the accepted values of his group at the expense of his own experience. For instance, if a subject feels that a certain poem is 'crude' or is not deep in feeling or competent in style, but at the same time finds that its ideas and sentiments concur with the accepted views of the group, he may give a high value to it and justify the response. In such a case the conflict is often resolved through rationalisation, which involves explaining the response by
selecting from the complex reaction the most acceptable as a redeeming feature. Similarly, when a poem is found to be competent and effective in expression but the ideas and sentiments expressed in it clash with the group values, some minor point of language and style is picked out for criticism and the poem is rejected on literary grounds as well.

It may be mentioned here that 'sensitive' and 'resistive' reactions are observable only where there is a clear conflict between an individual's reaction and his group values. It is when the recognition of one's own reaction would imply a contradiction of certain widely recognised values of one's group that such a conflict arises. In most of the comments, however, a conflict between experience and accepted values is not discernible and it seems that individual experiences and group values are so much in harmony that the question of a clash between the two does not arise; the group values appear to be integrated with the individual's own values in such a way that the former do not operate on the psychological plane as external to the individual.

A rigid conformity with group values, which does not leave any degree of freedom in mental activity, is liable to make an individual unable to manipulate his perception and past experience with relative independence
of external restraint. In such a case the individual is not free in his reaction but controlled by some preconceived ideas or prejudices. The comments suggest that sometimes a poem is rejected merely because it contains certain symbols or cues to the symbols against which subjects in a particular group are prejudiced. For example, a mere suggestion of certain religious, philosophical or political ideas in a poem makes an individual indignant, with the result that he dismisses the poem without entering into its actual experience. The rejection of poems 3, 4, 9, 11, and 13 by many Conservatives and Liberals of groups B and C and of poems 6, 12, 14 and 16 by a number of Socialists and Communists of these groups appears to be the result of withdrawal from these poems due to prejudice. Prejudice is distinguishable from genuine criticism in that prejudice more often evokes stereotype reactions and stock responses where an individual, owing to a lack of direct contact with the poem, tends to apply to it ready-made labels and conventional phrases, such as 'reactionary', 'art and politics do not mix', 'bourgeois' or 'propaganda'.

Stereotypes are observed to occur more frequently in the comments of the less educated than the more educated subjects. Apart from prejudice, stereotypes also appear to be used when the subjects who have little experience of literature and are not specially trained to analyse their
own experience in detail find it easier to express their impression of a poem in conventional terms and stock phrases. This does not necessarily mean that like their phrases their actual reaction to the poem is also a stock response. An examination of the comments of the less educated subjects shows that they are often unable to analyse their experience as clearly as the more educated subjects or to formulate their reaction to the theme and the style of the poem in precise terms. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that when many of these subjects try to express their reaction to a poem beyond an indication of very simple reasons of their liking or dislike, their comments appear to be more or less stereotypes.

But there are cases where the use of stereotypes is not explicable in terms of either prejudice and withdrawal or a lack of education and training. A possible explanation seems to be that the stereotypes, as Lippman (1922) has explained in some detail "aid in economy of cognitive effort". Sometimes an individual describes his reaction in stereotypes which, being stock phrases and easily available, save him from the task of examining and analysing his own experience freshly and in detail.

The stereotypes, though they help only a little in making the individual experience accessible to the observer, are, nevertheless, illuminating in that they refer, however
vaguely, to certain values prevalent in a particular group. The recurrent application of certain stereotypes by one group rather than by another is itself indicative of the fact that these stereotypes are not altogether irrelevant and meaningless. They in fact reflect group values which, to a great extent, influence the perception and the affective responses of the individuals within the group. Likewise, when certain stereotypes are applied consistently to some poems and not to others by the subjects of a group, they serve as a pointer to the value attached to these poems by the group as a whole and may be taken as an index to the probable reaction of other individuals in the same group.

Group values which work on the psychological plane through individual attitudes are of great importance for literary appreciation, in that an individual's attitude has a significant influence upon his perception of the ideas and beliefs embodied in a poem. The interaction between an individual's attitude and the ideas and beliefs of a poem largely helps or hinders the interpretation and appreciation of the affective tone, the feeling and the mood, of the poem.

It is sometimes suggested that since the function of language in poetry is primarily emotive and not informative, beliefs should contribute little or nothing to the appreciation of a poem, and that 'disbelief' on the part of the reader, being an inhibiting and distracting attitude, must
be suspended in literary appreciation (Richards, 1924; 1930). The distinction between the emotive effect of poetry and its communication of beliefs, however useful it may be, is not clear in an actual situation of literary appreciation. The language of poetry undoubtedly appeals to emotions, but this does not mean that the emotive effect of words in poetry is independent of what they cognitively mean.

It is noted in the comments that appreciation of the affective aspects of poetic language is considerably influenced by the reader's own attitudes and beliefs. It is obviously so because poetry represents not mere feeling and emotions but emotive reactions to certain ideas, events and relationships in the external world. The questions why a poem is found convincing or why the tone of a poem is appreciated by the subjects of one group and not of another, or why a particular mood is appreciated in some poems and not in others may partly be explained by recognising that in literary appreciation ideas and feeling, beliefs and emotions, cognitive processes and affective responses are far from being independent of each other. When, for instance, a poem is true (3 and 9) according to one system of beliefs it is convincing; the same poem may be untrue according to another system of beliefs and therefore unconvincing. Similarly the sad feeling tone of a poem, when perceived in the context of
one's own favourable attitude to its ideas and beliefs, is appreciated more than the similar feeling tone of another poem expressing unfavourable ideas and beliefs. It is evident from the comments on poems 6, 16, 9 and 13, that reaction to the mood and feeling tone of a poem is largely determined by the individual's own attitude and the way in which he reacts to the ideological context of the poem. It is due to differences in attitudes and values of subjects in different groups that the same poem is regarded as 'moving' and 'stirring' or 'sentimental' (poem 9), 'defiant' and 'outspoken' or 'indecent' and 'crude' (poem 11), 'realistic' or 'sordid' and 'ugly' (poem 4), 'eloquent' or 'bombastic' (poem 6).

These words, it seems, are projectiles, which are more an expression of praise or abuse than an instrument of statement. These expressions, though coloured by the subjective reactions of the individuals, do, nevertheless, refer to certain characteristics of tone and mood of the poems, which when viewed in the context of different attitudes and beliefs evoke different - rather, opposite - responses in different individuals. In the appreciation of a poem, therefore, sympathetic response to its emotions, mood and affective tone is largely dependent upon one's own beliefs and attitudes. That is, an individual's cognitive perception of the ideas and beliefs of a poem may obstruct
or facilitate his reaction to its mood and affective tone. These two processes of cognitive perception and affective reaction operate in the context of an individual's own beliefs and attitudes, which may or may not be congruent with the beliefs and attitudes expressed in the poem.

The absence of a sympathetic response to the experience of a poem does not, however, exclude the possibility of an appreciation of its technical and expressive qualities. It may be recalled that poems 3, 4, 11, 2, 6, 12 and 16 are appreciated by many of those who do not seem to share the sentiments expressed in these poems. Confining oneself to the comments of subjects with similar educational background, it is observed that the Communists in group A, to some extent, appreciate poems which conflict with their criterion of the need for realism in poetry (2, 6, 12 and 16). They praise poem 16 for its sincerity, effective expression and appropriate imagery, and poems 2, 6 and 12 for their choice of words, similes or pictorial effect. Similarly, the Conservatives and the Liberals in this group frequently express their appreciation for the 'vigorously' and 'forceful' expression of poems 3 and 11, and for the pictorial effect and restrained expression of poem 4, even though they disagree with the subject-matter. The literary and expressive qualities of the above-mentioned poems are also appreciated, though only occasionally, by subjects of groups B and C more or less
Independently of their affective response to the ideas and sentiments of these poems.

This suggests that a poem may be appreciated on different levels. On one level a person may appreciate the rhythm, the metre, the imagery, the composition of words as mere instruments of successful expression. But appreciation on this level does not necessarily make the poem interesting and significant for the individual; it may remain nothing more than a series of signs and symbols expressing the attitudes, beliefs, and emotions of someone else. When, however, the ideas and beliefs expressed by the poem are in harmony with the individual's own beliefs and attitudes, and he reacts to them sympathetically, the poem is appreciated not merely on the technical but also on the affective level.

A comparison of the ratings and the comments reveals that when a poem is thus appreciated on both the technical and the affective levels, the appreciation is heightened and consequently the poem is given a higher rating than one which satisfies on one level only. The comments further suggest that, whereas it is possible to appreciate a poem on a technical level when the reader is not sympathetic to the subject-matter, appreciation on the affective level facilitates the process of appreciation on the technical level as well; conversely, an unfavourable reaction to the
Ideas and sentiments may, sometimes, inhibit or obstruct appreciation of the technical and expressive qualities of the poem. Thus, attitudes and beliefs play an important part in the rating given to a poem by the reader.

Appreciation on one level in isolation from the other seems to be possible only when a high standard of literary criticism has been reached. In many of the comments, particularly those of the less educated subjects, the distinction between the affective reaction to the ideas, attitudes and emotions of a poem and the appreciation of its form of expression is not very clear. The two aspects of reaction are often so much integrated and fused together that only those who have had comparatively higher education or experience of literature are able to judge the literary qualities of a poem in relative independence of their liking or dislike for its ideas and sentiments. In the majority of cases, particularly among the less educated subjects, the perception of literary aspects is influenced by the favourable or unfavourable reaction of the individual to the content of the poem.

The comments of the less educated subjects show that they also sometimes recognise and enjoy the same qualities of form and technique, as the more educated subjects do, when they feel sympathetic with what the poem says. This suggests that they can, in some measure,
appreciate the formal and expressive qualities, though their appreciation is not as independent of their reaction to the content as that of the more educated subjects.

Another comparison between the ratings and the comments of the more educated and the less educated subjects indicates that there are some poems (7 and 15) which are fairly consistently criticised by the educated subjects, irrespective of the differences between their attitudes, but which appear to be more satisfying for the less educated, and some others (1 and 5) which are completely rejected by the former but are to a certain extent accepted by the latter.

It follows, then, that a poem can be successful with a group of readers if its level of literary expression is appropriate to their more, or less, developed skill of appreciation. Further it may also be concluded that a more developed form of expression may sometimes be appreciated, particularly if the ideas and sentiments are favourable, by the less educated readers because it provides a scope for further development in the skill of appreciation but the reverse seldom happens, since a return from the appreciation of the more developed to the less developed literary expression is generally less satisfying (Harding, 1948).

The interpretation and comprehension of meaning depends, of course, on the standard of education - the less educated subjects frequently mention their difficulty in
grasping the meaning of poems 2, 6, 12, and 14, while the highly educated subjects do not seem to experience any such difficulty. But when a poem is not fully intelligible to a reader, it is not necessarily disliked. In most of the cases where the reader is unable to grasp the meaning, he shows an indifference to the poem and places it on the neutral step of the rating scale. When, however, a poem which is comparatively difficult to understand is liked or disliked by the less educated subjects, their comments indicate that the meaning of the poem has at least partially been grasped and that their reactions are based on whatever they have been able to understand.

Active reaction of a less educated reader, either in the form of liking or disliking, to one of the difficult poems, therefore, cannot be dismissed as due to a mere lack of understanding. Moreover, when the reaction of a less educated reader conforms with the predominant reaction of the more educated members of his social or political group, who appear to have understood the meaning fully, it may safely be concluded that his reaction to a large extent refers to the norms and values of his group and that he has been able to grasp at least the predominant idea or the theme of the poem.

The main difference between the educated and the less educated readers seems to be not that the latter are
entirely unable to understand the meaning and therefore incapable of any literary appreciation, but that the educated are more capable of analysing, interpreting and evaluating a poem on different levels. The literary response of the less educated, the moderately educated and the highly educated readers appears to range from vague emotional reaction to an elaborate analysis and interpretation of ideas, beliefs and emotions and the mode and technique of expression. Inability to analyse and discriminate different aspects of a poem more often results in an undifferentiated and diffused emotional response. In a discriminative response, on the other hand, different aspects of a poem are distinguished and evaluated in relative independence of each other. In the event of a conflict in one's reaction to different aspects of a poem, when for instance one finds a poem satisfying in its literary expression but disagreeable in its ideas and sentiment, or the reverse, a discriminative or differential response helps an individual to see the situation more clearly and to evaluate the sentiments and the mode of expression on two different levels. The process of discrimination makes it possible for an individual to appreciate and accept a poem on one level and to dislike and reject it on another.

The process of discrimination, being related to education, is less evident with the subjects in groups B
and C. This should not be taken to mean, however, that discriminative response is entirely limited to the highly educated subjects. Among the less educated subjects, peculiarly enough in group C, there are some individuals who appear to be capable of analysing and interpreting a poem and discriminating its different aspects. It may be that, although the formal education of these subjects is only up to the elementary or secondary stage, they have had wider social and intellectual experience and some private study of literature. These subjects may be regarded as the representative 'critics' of their group, who are able to interpret and express more precisely their literary experiences, which seem to be shared by other members of their group but which the latter can express only in a rather vague and undifferentiated manner. (1)

(1) cf. C2, C14, C20, C28, C29, C33, C35, C39, C42, C52, C67.
Chapter IX

Summary and Conclusions.

Aesthetic appreciation, as a survey of relevant researches in this field shows, has generally been studied either in terms of individual psychology or in relation to a preconceived standard of art and literature determined by so-called 'art experts'. Psychological processes considered to be involved in the appreciation of art and literature have usually been treated in isolation from their functional relationship, on the one hand, to the content of the art object and, on the other, to the attitudes and values held by the individual; while those who based their studies on some fixed standard have not realised that the appreciator may hold values which do not conform to that standard.

It was, therefore, concluded that aesthetic appreciation could profitably be studied with reference to the attitudes and values held by the individual and the content of the art object, both of which are closely related to social factors. Thus, the assumption underlying the present investigation was that social values which emerge from different groups of society and take the form, on the
psychological level, of common attitudes in the individuals belonging to these groups, influence aesthetic appreciation and preference.

Sociologists and social psychologists have demonstrated that in contemporary society social classes and political parties are two important groupings which exert a great influence in the shaping of an individual's attitudes and values, tastes and preferences. It was therefore proposed to study the possible influence of social background and political opinion on literary preferences.

The experiment devised for this purpose consisted of sixteen poems, a rating scale, and a questionnaire which included two political opinion tests and a number of questions on certain factual details relevant to the study.

In the selection of the poems no fixed standard of 'poetic value' was implied, because it was maintained that it would not be possible on psychological grounds to determine a common standard for people belonging to different groups and holding different attitudes and values. Thirty poems, most of them being of contemporary origin, were submitted to four groups of persons, belonging to contrasting social groups and political parties, for their selection. Out of these, thirteen poems representing the highest preferences in these groups were included in the experiment.
together with three other poems chosen by the investigator as specimens of 'popular' poetry. The themes of these poems were determined by three groups of judges in terms of certain defined categories.

The experiment was conducted in two parts. In the first part subjects were asked to rate the poems on the rating scale and to write comments on them. The second part, consisting of the questionnaire, was given after the first part had been completed and returned by the subjects.

Ratings and comments were obtained from 212 subjects, out of whom 164 completed the two political opinion tests. In the light of relevant studies on social classes, it was decided that occupation could be taken as an index of social background, and the subjects were classified into three groups, A, B and C, according to the types of occupations followed by them. Business, administrative, managerial and professional occupations were included in group A, lower professional, commercial and clerical occupations in group B, and skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations in group C. Each group was again divided into political sub-groups on the basis of the subjects' political affiliations.

Analysis of variance was applied to the ratings of subjects for the sixteen poems taken together, in order to see if the three social groups differed significantly in
their preferences. The ratings and political opinion scores of the 164 subjects who had completed the two political opinion tests were treated in a further analysis of variance and covariance in relation to each poem separately.

The statistical results show that there are significant differences among the three groups in the rating of poems comprising social and religious themes. There are some differences among the groups also in the rating of poems expressing philosophical themes, but the poem expressing a purely individual theme, with no definite attitude - social, philosophical or religious - is given almost equal ratings in the three groups. The ratings for all the poems, except the three 'popular' poems, show highly significant correlation with political opinion scores within groups. It is observed that in most cases poems which are rated high or low by subjects in the group of manual workers are rated high or low also by 'radical' subjects in the three groups, while poems rated high or low by subjects in the professional and the clerical groups are rated high or low also by 'conservative' subjects. Thus, differences of political opinion within the groups tend to influence the ratings in the same direction as differences of social background between the groups.
The statistical results as interpreted in the light of the comments showed that social background exerts its influence on literary preferences in two different ways: partly through education and partly through social values and attitudes, the latter being related also to political opinion.

In literary appreciation and preference, the factor of education appears to be functionally connected with the perception of literary and technical qualities, and that of attitudes and values with the affective response to the ideas and sentiments expressed in a poem. Since perception and appreciation of technical and literary qualities are related to the reader's educational background and literary experience, it seems psychologically irrelevant to expect that a poem which is 'good' in relation to a particular level of education or skill of appreciation should be 'good' for a higher or lower level as well. Again, since attitudes and beliefs play a major role in literary appreciation it is not psychologically possible or relevant for a reader to suspend his 'belief' or 'disbelief' in order to be able to appreciate the emotive effect or the feeling tone of a poem in complete independence of the ideas and attitudes expressed in it.

The psychologically acceptable attitude in an aesthetic situation, therefore, seems to be not suspension
of 'belief' or 'disbelief', or complete detachment from the content and concentration on the formal and technical aspects only, but sensitiveness to one's own experience and discrimination between, and evaluation of, different aspects of an art object, in relative independence of each other.

Full appreciation of a piece of literature, however, takes place only when it appeals to the reader on both the technical and the affective level. The two aspects are not only related to the reader's educational background and attitude, but are themselves interrelated in that the reaction to the subject-matter considerably influences the reaction to the poem as a whole. Thus, attitudes and beliefs, held by the individual and the content of the poem however 'irrelevant' and 'extraneous' they may be regarded to the 'proper' and 'ideal' literary appreciation, cannot be dismissed on psychological grounds.
References


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Hayes, S.P. Jr., Homogeneity in Voters' Attitudes in Relation to their Political Affiliation, Sex and Occupation. J. Soc. Psychol., 9, 1938, pp. 141-60.


Appendix A

The Poems and the Rating Scale
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Patience Strong</td>
<td>The Second Patience Strong Gift Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sonnet</td>
<td>W.R. Latham</td>
<td>Poetry Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>March-April, 1950.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1933.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trying All the Time</td>
<td>Patience Strong</td>
<td>Silver Linings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1949.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London: Faber &amp; Faber, 1946.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Rex Warner</td>
<td>As for poem 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Into the Mirror</td>
<td>R.L. Cook</td>
<td>Poetry Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May - June, 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A Lullaby for a Baby born in 1937</td>
<td>W.T. Nettlefold</td>
<td>The Left Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>October, 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Patience Strong</td>
<td>Every Common Bush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>London: John Miles Ltd., 1937.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gentleman</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>Poems of Revolt, edited by J. Beauchamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ultimately there is Truth only in Simple Statements</td>
<td>B.K. Hill</td>
<td>Poetry Review March - April 1950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It's certainly true that we can't do without it; 
And yet when we've got it, we're troubled about it....

Poor folk seem happy - they laugh quite a lot - 
Taking the most of the little they've got.
But rich folk look bored - for a life that's all leisure - 
Lacks that odd something that makes for real pleasure;
Prosperous folk with their stocks and their shares - 
Taxed to the limit, are weighed down by cares.

Men risk their lives for this thing we call money, 
Steal for it - Kill for it. Isn't it funny? 
No matter how much we've got in our store 
Everyone wants just that little bit more!

All things by contraries their nature show, 
As darkness' virtue is revealed by light; 
Day is made vivid by contrasted night. 
And swiftness proved and measured by the slow. 
It is remembrance of the winter snow 
That makes the summer petals burn more bright; 
Were there no wrong, how should we judge of right; 
Or stillness without stress and tempest know?

So in Time's eye the evils we endure 
Lay, in their true proportion, emphasize 
Those present blessings which we cannot see, 
And when of our disease we find the cure 
It may be patent to our opened eyes 
That both were servants of our destiny.

We have fed you all for a thousand years, 
And you hail us still unfed. 
Tho' there's never a dollar of all your wealth 
But marks the workers' dead.
We have yielded our best to give you rest,
   And you lie on crimson wool;
For if blood be the price of all your wealth
   Good God, we ha' paid in full!

There's never a mine blown skyward now
   But we're buried alive for you;
There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now
   But we are its ghastly crew;

Go reckon our dead by the forges red,
   And our factories where we spin;
If blood be the price of your cursed wealth,
   Good God, we ha' paid it in!

We have fed you all for a thousand years
   For that was our doom, you know,
From the days when you chained us in your fields
   To the strike of a week ago.

You ha' eaten our lives and our babies and wives,
   And we're told it's your legal share;
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth,
   Good God, we ha' bought it fair!

Beauty never visits mining places,
For the yellow smoke taints the summer air,
Despair graves lines on the dwellers' faces,
Ly fellows' faces, for my fellows live there.

There by the wayside dusty weed drowses,
The darnel and dock and starwort run rife;
Gaunt folk stare from the doors of houses,
Folk with no share in the beauty of life.

There on slag heaps, where no bird poises,
Ly fellows' wan children tumble and climb,
Playing in the dust, making shrill noises,
Sweet human flowers that will fall ere their time.

Playing in the slag with their white faces,
Where headstocks loom by the railway lines -
Round-eyed children cheated of life's graces -
Ly fellows' children, born for the mines.
We don't get all we want in Life -
But it is better so,
Because we have to strive and strain and struggle as we go.

There's always something missing -
Some new thing that we desire,
A distant pinnacle of dreams to which our hearts aspire.

How weary we should grow if it were sunshine all the way.
There would be no rainbows if the skies were never grey.
Light and shadow; storm and shine; the pleasures and the pains.
Disappointment and success; the losses and the gains.

Do not look for easy paths - but see your shoes are strong,
So that when the road is stony you can get along.......
Always there'll be awkward bends, rough ruts and hills to climb.
For this is Life - you have got to keep on trying all the time.

The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!
The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge and words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycle of Heaven in twenty centuries
Brings us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.
I see the houses of the future, and men upstanding,
men not fearing the sack.
Women work with men and love is voluntary,
love is delightful.

Hate is no more against those who withhold bread;
those people have gone.
Love is no more the antidote for terror,
but is recreation.

What is happening will be clear to the men of the future;
for deceit will not be needed.
But our here and now to them will look like a dream
sad, furious, fatal.

Into the mirror of a pool,
Static in Autumn, deep and black,
A stone falls, cracks the glass and sinks
To a forgotten resting-place;
The mirror forms again; the ripples die.

And music often, like a flower in space,
Fading into an empty room,
Leaves unseen shadows everywhere
Before the deaf walls crush the bloom,
Assert their permanence, absorb the sound.

Sometimes a word, a look, a sign,
Falling upon the guarded mind,
Echoes like music or a stone,
Ruffling the troubled consciousness
And twisting the frail tendrils of the heart.

Oh hush thee, my baby, and sleep while you can,
The days that are flying will make you a man.
Sleep deeply my beauty, 'tis I who should cry,
The Masters are planning the way you should die.
The mining and blasting, the coal that we hew,
The steel we are casting, are, baby, for you,
To mortgage your future, the brain, blood and bone;
Your life an investment to cover their own.

Oh stay as a baby, stay just as you are,
So tiny and helpless, yet bright as a star;
But buds break to blossom as brief moments fly,
And masters are planning the way you shall die.

Tell me what you see, my friend,
From the windows of your house;
I see green meadows flecked with flowers,
And silver trees in forest bowers,
I see bright birds; the sky's wide dome
And happy children running home.

Tell me what you see, my friend,
From the window of your soul;
I see tired creatures dumb and blind,
The agonies of all mankind,
The stranger's need, my brother's loss,
And Jesus hanging on a Cross.

God placed the Russian peasant
Under the Great White Czar.
God put the Prussian worker
Beneath the Lord of War,
But he sent the English gentleman
To make us what we are.

Our fathers once were freemen,
And as freemen went to toil,
To reap the fruitful harvest,
And to gather golden spoil.
But the greedy, grasping gentlemen,
The land engrossing gentlemen,
The honest English gentleman
They stole away the soil.
They drove us from our villages
By force and fraud and stealth.
They drove us into factories,
They robbed us of our health.
But the cotton-spinning gentlemen,
The coal mine shipyard gentlemen,
Stockbroking, banking gentlemen
They gathered wondrous wealth.

The patient Russian peasant
Has turned and smashed his Czar;
Some day the Prussian worker
Will break his Lord of War.
And soon—oh! soon, our gentlemen
Our proud, all powerful gentlemen,
Our God-damned English gentlemen,
Shall find out what we are.

O Light Invisible, we praise Thee!
Too bright for mortal vision.
O Greater Light, we praise Thee for the less;
The eastern light our spires touch at morning,
The light that slants upon our western doors at evening,
The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight,
Moon light and star light, owl and moth light,
Glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade.
O Light Invisible, we worship Thee!

We thank Thee for the lights that we have kindled,
The light of altar and of sanctuary;
Small lights of those who meditate at midnight
And lights directed through the coloured panes of windows
And light reflected from the polished stone,
And gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco.
Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward
And see the light that fractures through unquiet water.
We see the light but see not whence it comes.
O Light Invisible, we glorify Thee!
What is freedom - ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well -
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

'Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell,
For the tyrant's use to dwell.

So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade,
With or without your own will bent
To their defence and nourishment.

'Tis to be a slave in soul
And to hold no strong control
Over your own wills, but be
All that others made of ye.

Forget all these, the barren fool in power,
The madman in command, the jealous 0,
The bitter world biting its bitter hour,
The cruel now, the happy long ago.

Forget all those, for, though they truly hurt,
Even to the soul, they are not lasting things;
Men are no gods; we tread the city dirt,
But in our souls we can be queens and kings.

And I, O Beauty, O divine white wonder,
On whom my dull eyes, blind to all else, peer,
Have you for peace, that not the whole war's thunder,
Nor the world's wreck, can threat or take from here.
So you remain, though all men's passionate seas
Roar their blind tides, I can forget all these.
In dreams I see a world that's gay and fair,
And love and peace and happiness reign there,
Where man, content, works on while children play;
But dreams are transient and fade away.

And I awake and in this world I see
But hate and greed, a modern calvary.
Where man must kill - and children, stricken, cry
As hell is loosed and death goes riding by.

Dreams can come true. Before it is too late
0 man rise; be master of your fate!
Is it in vain - my feeble cry but lost?
You strive for self - but do you count the cost?

Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements.
in Autumn the leaves fall; I love you; we shall die.
Ultimately there is comfort only in simple actions.
the impulsive caress, laughter, the urge to cry.

Really we long to give one gift, and only
hope for a simple exchange; but man has made
his life a twisted tower, where indirectly
he wanders proudly and vainly, or cowers afraid.

There was a road to joy once, but ingeniously
we constructed a maze, forgetting to keep the plan.
Heard voices cannot be traced now; inevitably
we have established the loneliness of man.

Can you not hear, laughter to which I listen,
how in my deathly corridor I cry,
asking for simple action by simple statement,
"In Autumn the leaves fall. I love you. We shall die"?
Here are some poems. Will you please read through each one carefully (as many times as is necessary for you to appreciate it) and indicate the degree of your liking or dislike for each - on the scale given below. For example, if you like a poem very much write the number of that poem against the phrase which says so, and so on. You can ignore any phrase which you feel does not apply to any of the poems.

1. Like very much
2. Like a good deal
3. Like a little
4. Neither like nor dislike
5. Dislike a little
6. Feel fairly strong dislike
7. Dislike very much

Now will you please arrange, according to the intensity of your like or dislike, all those poems which you have put against one or another of the above phrases. For example, if you have put poems 1, 2, 3 against the phrase 'Like very much', and you feel that you like 2 better than 1, and 1 better than 3, please re-arrange these numbers as 2, 1, 3 against the corresponding phrase below. Similarly, if you have put 8, 9, 10 against the phrase 'Dislike a little', and you feel that you dislike 10 more than 8, and 8 more than 9, please re-arrange them as 10, 8, 9 below. Treat all poems similarly. You need not, of course, re-arrange those poems you neither liked nor disliked.

1. Like very much
2. Like a good deal
3. Like a little
4. Neither like nor dislike
5. Dislike a little
6. Feel fairly strong dislike
7. Dislike very much

Will you please write down briefly what you think and feel about each poem - why you liked, disliked or neither liked nor disliked it.

In doing so will you please pay special attention to what is said in these poems as well as how it is said.

If there is any poem with which you are familiar, please mention the fact. Again, if there is any poem which appears to be complicated, obscure or not very clear, please mention it as well.
Appendix B

The Questionnaire on Social and Political Background.
In order to draw some conclusions (for academic purposes) regarding literary preferences and social values of the persons who have so kindly agreed to co-operate in this experiment, certain information is needed. Would you, therefore, be kind enough to go through the following questionnaire and fill it in for me? It is not necessary to mention your name anywhere in this questionnaire.

1. Age__________ 2. Sex__________ 3. Married/Single/Widow/Widower__________
4. Religion (Please mention Catholic or Protestant)__________
   If not a member of any religion, please state "none"__________
5. Occupation (Housewives should please give their husband's occupation)__________
6. Father's occupation__________
7. Education:
   (a) Primary or Elementary School__________ Left at age__________
   (b) Secondary or Grammar School__________ Left at age__________
   (c) Any Adult Education classes attended - please state the subject studied__________
   (d) Private study (please mention subjects)__________
   (e) Technical School or Institute - (please give particulars)__________
   (f) Commercial Training (please give particulars)__________
   (g) Professional Training (please give particulars)__________
   (h) Public School__________ Left at age__________
   (i) University education__________
9. Source of income (Please "tick" one or more items as the case may be):

Wage_______ Salary_______ Investment_______ Other Source_______

9. Income. To which of the following income-groups do you belong? (Will students please mention their father's and housewives their husband's income.)

(a) Up to £5 per week
(b) Between £5 and £10 per week
(c) £11 to £12 per week
(d) £13 to £14 per week
(e) £15 to £17 per week
(f) £18 to £20 per week
(g) £21 to £23 per week
(h) £24 to £26 per week
(i) Over £26 per week

10. To which of the following social classes would you say you belong:

(a) By origin: 
(i) Upper Middle Class
(ii) Lower Middle Class
(iii) Upper Working Class
(iv) Working Class

(b) By present position:
(i) Upper Middle Class
(ii) Lower Middle Class
(iii) Upper Working Class
(iv) Working Class

11. Please "tick" beside the types of workers which you consider you can include in the social class to which you yourself belong.

(1) Factory workers
(2) Porters
(3) Liners
(4) Dockers
(5) Seamen
(6) Truck drivers
(7) Conductors
(8) Firemen
(9) Boiler makers
(10) Fitters
(11) Foremen
(12) Police sergeants
(13) Engineers (14) Salesmen (15) Office Clerks
(16) Bank Clerks (17) Insurance Agents
(18) School teachers (19) Works Manager
(20) Civil Servants (21) University Teachers
(22) Doctors (23) Lawyers (24) Business Executives
(25) Owners of Commercial concerns
(26) " " Small Factories

12. With which of the following Parties would you feel most inclined to affiliate:

(a) Conservative  (b) Liberal
(c) Labour or Socialist  (d) Communist
(e) None
I realise that, for the following statements, none of the simple answers provided would be quite accurate. Your answer will not, however, be interpreted as meaning absolute agreement or disagreement - but simply as a tendency in one direction or the other. Will you, therefore, please read the following and, from the answers given under each question, "tick" the one with which you most agree:

Please "tick" one from each of the following sets of statements:

1. (a) The present social and economic structure should be RADICALLY changed in Great Britain______
(b) The present social and economic structure should be PARTIALLY changed in Great Britain__________
(c) I am not decided or clear on this issue__________

2. (a) It should be IMMEDIATELY changed________
(b) It should be GRADUALLY changed________
(c) I am not decided or clear on this issue_____

3. (a) I favour an economic system of private enterprise for private profit___________________________
(b) I favour an economic system in which all the industries of the country are nationalised and run by the people__________________________
(c) I am not decided or clear on this issue_____

4. (a) The most important job for the government is to see that there are opportunities for everyone to get ahead on his own__________________________
(b) The most important job for the government is to guarantee everyone a stable job and a decent standard of living__________________________
(c) I am not decided or clear on this issue_____

5. Do you think that it would be an advantage to the community as a whole if the working class were given more power and influence in the government?
   (a) Yes.
   (b) No.
   (c) Undecided.
6. In strikes and disputes between working people and employers, have you found that you usually side with

(a) The workers.
(b) The employers.
(c) Neither.

7. Which of the following opinions about the relations between workers and employers do you consider to be correct:

(a) Workers take undue advantage of employers.
(b) Employers " " " " workers.
(c) Neither takes undue advantage.
(d) Can not say.
Below are given a number of statements which represent widely-held opinions on various social and political questions. They are chosen in such a way that most people are likely to agree with some and disagree with others. Will you please observe the following rule in indicating the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement:

RULE. In the left-hand margin before each statement
Underline SA if you strongly agree with the statement.
" A " " agree with the statement.
" ? " " are uncertain or undecided about it.
" D " " disagree with the statement.
" SD " " strongly disagree with the statement.

SA A ? D SD (1) It is clearly unfair that some people should get large incomes, not through any work of their own but through inheritance.

SA A ? D SD (2) Socialism leads to too much bureaucracy.

SA A ? D SD (3) British Government has so far aligned itself in foreign countries with reactionary elements.

SA A ? D SD (4) Capitalism is a misleading term in Britain now that the majority of the population have invested savings and buy their own homes.

SA A ? D SD (5) It is not possible to put democratic principles into practice owing to the wide differences in innate intelligence between individuals.

SA A ? D SD (6) Stable peace will only be possible in a socialist world.

SA A ? D SD (7) Capitalism is immoral because it exploits the worker by failing to give him the full value of his labour.

SA A ? D SD (8) It is the greed of the capitalists which leads to war.

SA A ? D SD (9) Our so-called democratic governments are generally controlled by great financial interests.
The labouring classes of all the countries have so much in common that they should unite to attain political domination of the world.

All industries should be controlled by the men who work in them.

The people who wish to overthrow the democratic governments are mostly trouble-makers who would never be satisfied.

Anyone who works hard is successful in life.

It is competition which leads to progress and this alone will keep this country great.

The reason that wages are not higher is that industry can not afford to pay more.

The well-to-do are generally more intelligent and industrious. That is why they are successful.

The capital is simply the accumulated savings of the people of foresight.

Capital and labour are partners and have basically the same interests.

Strikes are generally due to the Reds, who mislead the workers.
Appendix C

The Form for the Classification of the Themes of the Poems
Here are a few categories according to which the themes of the given poems can be classified. I shall be grateful if you would read each poem carefully and see which category or categories are applicable to the theme of the poem. While doing so, please bear in mind that these are broad categories and are not mutually exclusive. If, therefore, several categories seem to be involved, please note them all.

1. Social Theme: A social theme is one in which the poet is clearly or vaguely conscious of social evils, such as social inequality and injustice, poverty and unemployment, class struggle and exploitation, economic crisis or war.

This consciousness can express itself in the following ways among others:

1a. Revolt: It may take the form of a desire to change the social order by exposing its ills and wrongs. In a word, it is a theme which evokes emotional revolt against the present socio-economic order.

1b. Discontent: It may be expressed simply as discontent with the present social order. In such a theme the poet, although conscious of one or another of the social evils mentioned above, does not refer to their causes; nor does he make any suggestion for the removal of those causes. In fact, he does not, in spite of being discontented, evoke any revolt against the social order.

1c. Consolation: It may be expressed in offering some consolation for and distraction from suffering and hardship by emphasising the bright or light and humorous aspects of social realities, the awareness of which is, to some extent, implied in the poem, or by offering some other form of consolation. In such poems social conditions are generally not questioned.

1d. Escape: It may take the form of a desire to escape from social realities (some awareness of which is implicit in the poem), by taking refuge in a world of one’s own imagination, or by seeking some other means of forgetfulness.

2. Individual Theme: An individual theme is one in which the poet expresses his personal or individual experiences, for instance, (2a) amorous (2b) nostalgic, (2c) one in which the poet introspects and contemplates, (2d) one in which the poet projects his own feelings and notions onto outward objects.
3. Religious or Mystic theme: It is a theme (3a) which is devotional and in which the poet addresses himself to God, Christ or some other supernatural power, or (3b) in which the spiritual aspect of life is compared and contrasted with its material aspect and the poet expresses his grief over the loss of spiritual values, or else (3c) which appeals to religious sentiments in any other way.

4. Philosophical Theme: Themes in which some generalised truths and views of life are expressed with more of philosophical than either religious or social interpretation.

The numbers assigned to the above categories are given on a separate paper against the number of each poem. Will you please encircle the relevant number of the category or categories which you think are applicable to the theme of each poem.

It will help me a great deal if on the back of the paper you could also make comments on the given categories, and also state your own reactions in applying them.
Poem 13 - 1a. 1b. 1c. 1d. 2a. 2b. 2c. 2d. 3a. 3b. 3c. 4.
" 14 - 1a. 1b. 1c. 1d. 2a. 2b. 2c. 2d. 3a. 3b. 3c. 4.
" 15 - 1a. 1b. 1c. 1d. 2a. 2b. 2c. 2d. 3a. 3b. 3c. 4.
" 16 - 1a. 1b. 1c. 1d. 2a. 2b. 2c. 2d. 3a. 3b. 3c. 4.
Appendix D

Statistical Formulae and Calculations
The Formulae for Analysis of Variance and their application to the data

1. Total Sum of Squares (Vx) = $\Sigma x^2 - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{SP}$

where $x$ denotes the rating, $S$ the number of subjects and $P$ the number of poems

(i) Subjects 212  

<table>
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(ii) Subjects 164

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XXIII

(i) Subjects 212  (ii) Subjects 164

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\[ \sum x^2 - \left( \frac{\sum x}{SP} \right)^2 \]

(i) \[ 11988 - \left( \frac{1517}{212 \times 16} \right)^2 = 11309.574 \]

(ii) \[ 9460 - \left( \frac{1209}{164 \times 16} \right)^2 = 8902.957 \]

\[ \frac{\left( \sum x \right)^2}{SP} = \frac{\left(1517\right)^2}{212 \times 16} = 673.446 \]

\[ \frac{\left( \sum x \right)^2}{SP} = \frac{\left(1209\right)^2}{164 \times 16} = 557.043 \]
2. Sum of Squares 'Between Groups' \( (V_g) \)

\[
V_g = \frac{\left( \sum x_a \right)^2}{S_a^2} + \frac{\left( \sum x_b \right)^2}{S_b^2} + \frac{\left( \sum x_c \right)^2}{S_c^2} - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{sp}
\]

where \( x_a, x_b \) and \( x_c \) stand for the ratings of the poems for group \( A, B \) and \( C \), and \( S_a, S_b \) and \( S_c \) for the number of subjects in the respective groups.

\[
(1) \quad \frac{(\Sigma x_a)^2}{S_a^2} + \frac{(\Sigma x_b)^2}{S_b^2} + \frac{(\Sigma x_c)^2}{S_c^2} = \frac{68 \times 16 + 49 \times 16 + 75 \times 16}{678.446} = 148.009
\]

\[
(11) \quad \frac{(\Sigma x_1)^2}{S_1^2} + \frac{(\Sigma x_2)^2}{S_2^2} + \frac{(\Sigma x_3)^2}{S_3^2} = \frac{71 \times 16 + 36 \times 16 + 57 \times 16}{557.043} = 135.103
\]

3. Sum of Squares 'Between Individuals Within Groups' \( (V_i) \)

\[
V_i = \left[ \frac{\sum h^2}{p} - \left( \frac{\Sigma x}{S_x} \right)^2 \right] - V_g
\]

where \( h \) denotes the sum of the ratings of all poems for each individual subject in the three groups, the remaining symbols being the same as before.

\[
(1) \quad \frac{(9447 + 7570 + 19104)}{16} = \frac{678.446}{148.009} = 1431.107
\]

\[
(11) \quad \frac{(7533 + 4688 + 14630)}{16} = \frac{557.043}{135.103} = 986.041
\]

(1) Before pooling the variances between individuals within each group it was ascertained that they did not differ significantly from each other.
4. Sum of Squares 'Between Poems' \((V_p)\)
\[
\frac{(\Sigma x_1)^2 + (\Sigma x_2)^2 + \cdots + (\Sigma x_{16})^2}{s} - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{SP}
\]
where \(x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_{16}\) denote ratings of poems 1, 2, \ldots, 16 for all subjects

(i) \(\frac{285623}{212} - 678.446\)
\[= 1347.273 - 678.446\]
\[= 668.827\]

(ii) \(\frac{186191}{16} - 557.043\)
\[= 1135.310 - 557.043\]
\[= 578.267\]

5. Sum of Squares for 'Group-Poem Interaction' \((V_{gp})\) = \(v - (V_p + V_g)\)
where \(v = \text{Sum of Squares 'Between Poems Among Groups'}\)
\[
v = \left\{ \frac{(\Sigma x_{a1})^2 + (\Sigma x_{c1})^2 + \cdots + (\Sigma x_{a16})^2}{S_a} \right. \\
+ \left. \frac{(\Sigma x_{b1})^2 + (\Sigma x_{c2})^2 + \cdots + (\Sigma x_{b16})^2}{S_b} \right. \\
+ \left. \frac{(\Sigma x_{c1})^2 + (\Sigma x_{c2})^2 + \cdots + (\Sigma x_{c16})^2}{S_c} \right\} - \frac{(\Sigma x)^2}{SP}
\]
where \(a, b, c\) stand for the groups A, B, and C, and 1, 2, \ldots, 16 represent the respective poems.

(i) \(\frac{27171}{88} + \frac{17026}{49} + \frac{36714}{75} - 678.446\)
\[= (663.832 + 148.009)\]
\[= 811.841\]
\[
(11) \quad \left(\frac{18123}{71} + \frac{6886}{36} + \frac{56702}{57} - 557.043\right) \\
- \left(578.267 + 135.103\right) \\
= 649.085
\]

6. Sum of Squares for 'Residual' \((V_r)\)

\[
= V_x - (V_g + V_i + V_p + V_{gp})
\]

To arrive at the mean variances due to different sources each sum of squares is divided by the appropriate degrees of freedom. The form of analysis is given in the following table:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Variance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Total</td>
<td>(SP - 1)</td>
<td>(V_x)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. 'Between Groups'</td>
<td>(G - 1)</td>
<td>(V_g)</td>
<td>(\frac{V_g}{G - 1})</td>
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<td>3. 'Between Individuals'</td>
<td>(S - 3)</td>
<td>(V_i)</td>
<td>(\frac{V_i}{S - 3})</td>
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<td>4. 'Between Poems'</td>
<td>(P - 1)</td>
<td>(V_p)</td>
<td>(\frac{V_p}{P - 1})</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction'</td>
<td>((G - 1)(P - 1))</td>
<td>(V_{gp})</td>
<td>(\frac{V_{gp}}{(G - 1)(P - 1)})</td>
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<td>5. 'Group Poem</td>
<td>((G - 1)(P - 1))</td>
<td>(V_{gp})</td>
<td>(\frac{V_{gp}}{(G - 1)(P - 1)})</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Residual</td>
<td>((SP-1) - {(G-1) + (S-3)} V_r)</td>
<td>(\frac{V_r}{(SP-1) - {(G-1) + (S-3)}})</td>
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Correlation between the Scores on the two Political Opinion Tests

\[ r_{xy} = \frac{W_{xy}}{\sqrt{V_x V_y}} \]

\[ W_{xy} = \sum xy - \frac{\sum x \sum y}{N} = 61412.903 \]

\[ V_x = \sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{N} = 12726.995 \]

\[ V_y = \sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{N} = 27147.927 \]

where \( x \) is the score on test I, \( y \) the score on test II, and \( N \) is the number of cases, 164

\[ r_{xy} = \frac{27147.927}{\sqrt{61412.903} \times 12726.995} \]

\[ = \frac{27147.927}{27357.141} = .97 \]
The t-Test applied to the differences of mean political attitude scores of the five political groups

\[
 t = \frac{\text{difference}}{\text{standard error of difference}} = \frac{d}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2 + s_2^2}{n_1 - 1 + n_2 - 1}}}
\]

where \(d\) = the difference between the mean scores for any two groups \((\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)\)

\(n_1\) and \(n_2\) = number of subjects in the respective groups

\(s_1^2\) and \(s_2^2\) = the squares of the standard deviations for the groups; the formula for calculating \(s^2\) being:

\[
 s^2 = \frac{\sum x^2}{n - 1}
\]

The data

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The 't' Test applied to the Differences of Mean Political Opinion Scores of the Social Groups A, B and C. (1)

\[ t = \frac{d}{S \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_a} + \frac{1}{N_b}}} \]

where \( d \) = difference between two means \( (\bar{x}_a - \bar{x}_b) \)

\( S \) = standard deviation of scores within groups

\( N_a, N_b \) = number of cases in the respective groups

\[ t \text{ for } \bar{x}_c - \bar{x}_a = \frac{(6.087 - 4.162)}{1.8 \sqrt{\frac{1}{36} + \frac{1}{71}}} = \frac{1.925}{0.36} = 5.35 \]

\[ t \text{ for } \bar{x}_c - \bar{x}_b = \frac{(6.087 - 4.722)}{1.8 \sqrt{\frac{1}{57} + \frac{1}{36}}} = \frac{1.365}{0.37} = 3.68 \]

\[ t \text{ for } \bar{x}_c - \bar{x}_a = \frac{(6.087 - 4.162)}{1.8 \sqrt{\frac{1}{57} + \frac{1}{71}}} = \frac{1.318}{0.39} = 6.39 \]

(1) The data are given on page xxxi below.
XXX

The Formulae for calculating the Variances and Convariances applied to the Ratings of each Poem

(a) Total sum of squares of ratings (\( V_t \))
\[
= \sum t^2 - \frac{(\sum t)^2}{N}
\]
where \( t \) is the rating and \( N \) the total number of subjects.

(b) Sum of squares 'between groups' (\( V_{tg} \))
\[
= V_t - (V_{ta} + V_{tb} + V_{tc})
\]
where \( V_{ta}, b, c \) stand for sum of squares within the respective groups

(c) Sum of squares 'between individuals within groups' (\( V_{ti} \))
\[
= V_{ta} + V_{tb} + V_{tc}
\]

(d) Sum of squares due to regression of ratings on political opinion scores within groups
\[
(W_{stw}) = \frac{(W_{sta} + W_{stb} + W_{stc})^2}{V_{sa} + V_{sb} + V_{sc}}
\]
where \( W_{st a}, b, c \) is the sum of products of ratings and political opinion scores within group \( a, b \) or \( c \); \( V_{sa}, b, c \) is sum of squares of political opinion scores within group \( a, b \), or \( c \).

(e) Sum of squares due to differences in regression rates in different groups (\( W_{stp} \))
\[
= \left( \frac{W_{sta}^2}{V_{sa}} + \frac{W_{stb}^2}{V_{sb}} + \frac{W_{stc}^2}{V_{sc}} \right) - W_{stw}
\]

(f) Residual Variance (\( V_r \))
\[
= V_t - (V_{tg} + V_{ti} + W_{stw} + W_{stp})
\]
To arrive at the mean variances each sum of squares is divided by the appropriate degrees of freedom.
### XXXI

#### The Data

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s = score on the 'standard' political opinion scale
t = rating of poem.
## XXXII

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The 't' Test applied to the Differences between the mean Ratings of each Poem For the three Social Groups

\[
t = \frac{d}{\sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}} \]

where \(d\) = differences between the mean ratings of any poem for any two groups \((\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2)\)

\(N_1\) and \(N_2\) = number of subjects in the respective groups

\(S\) = the square root of the average variance of all poems.
Supplement

to

An Experimental Study of the Influence of Social Background and Political Opinion on Literary Preferences

by


Thesis presented to the University of London for the Degree of Ph.D. in Psychology

1954
Contents

Key to the Material • 141

Information and Comments: • 1 - 153

Group A
Conservatives 1
Liberals 39
Non-Affiliated 59
Socialists 87
Communists 112
Whose Political Opinion or Affiliation is unknown 142

Group B • 154 - 224
Conservatives 154
Liberals 162
Non-Affiliated 170
Socialists 173
Communists 210
Whose Political Opinion or Affiliation is Unknown 223

Group C • 225 - 326
Conservatives 225
Liberals 228
Non-Affiliated 231
Socialists 238
Communists 271
Whose Political Opinion or Affiliation is Unknown 316

Texts of the Sixteen Poems • 327 - 334
The respondents have been classified, on the basis of the type of their occupation, into three social groups A, B and C. Each of these groups has further been subdivided according to the political affiliations, non-affiliation or unknown affiliation of the respondents. The comments on the sixteen poems are arranged here in accordance with these classifications.

Each respondent is represented by a code number such as A12, B25 or C70, in which the letter stands for the respective social group and the number refers to the individual respondent in that group. Necessary information about each respondent is given against his or her code number in the following order:

Sex (Age) Occupation Education Political Opinion Score. (This score is out of a total of 150, if both the political opinion tests have been completed; if the tests are answered incompletely, the total is mentioned in each individual case.)

The abbreviations used in presenting the information are as follows:

- F. = Female
- M. = Male
- Uni. = University Education
- Pub. = Public School Education
- Gram. = Grammar School Education
- Sec. = Secondary School Education
- Elem. = Elementary School Education
- Prim. = Primary School Education

The ratings given by the respondents to the sixteen poems are mentioned against the number of each poem in each individual case. The ratings were recorded on the following seven step scale:

1. Like very much + 3
2. Like a good deal + 2
3. Like a little + 1
4. Neither like nor dislike 0
5. Dislike a little - 1
6. Dislike a good deal - 2
7. Dislike very much - 3
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1. It is obvious that the author has given no thought to the problem he presents.

   It is too great a simplification to say that "Poor folk seem happy .... But rich folk look bored."

   The question in line 10 obviously expects the answer 'yes'. Whether "funny" = peculiar or ha-ha, neither would be true.

   As for the poem as poetry, it can only be described as doggerel and poor at that.

2. It almost seems that the two stanzas of this poem were written by different people. The first contains quite pleasant image and is almost poetry; the second is quite the reverse and is also obscure. (I cannot think what "Time's eye" can be, nor the disease of which the author is so sure we will all find a cure.) It is badly written (e.g. rhyming "eyes with emphasize, destiny with see)."

3. I cannot understand this at all; maybe a title would help. At first I thought it was a negro lament but the emphasis on blood and death makes it sound more like something from the Siberian salt mines. Actually, I can only suppose it to have been written by a communist agitator with a fertile and unscrupulous imagination. As for the writing - I can write things like that myself but they are not poetry.

4. I find this quite impressive. It is evidently sincere, and written, presumably, between the wars when life was certainly grim in the mining towns. It reads well and some lines have a kind of beauty. I presume there are mis-prints in the third verse.

5. I approve the sentiment of this and find the writing moderately pleasing. The 5th line would be better with the omission of the 4th word. Unfortunately, the last verse reminds me too much of a person talking down to a lot of school boys.

6. As poetry this is good, but unfortunately the philosophy does not appeal to me.
7. I wish I knew when and where this was written. It appears to be a translation of a poem written in a foreign language which may originally have had some beauty. I do not approve the political ideas: there are some men, and always will be, who will not work hard unless they fear the sack; and no one withholds bread in this country these days.

8. I like this because the imagery appeals to me; it reads well and has a depth of meaning. It leaves you thinking after you have read it.

9. I have no patience with this sort of sentimental twaddle.

10. I like what this says; it is a good commentary on life today. But the whole is ruined by the use of the word "bowers" simply because it rhymes with flowers. The author would probably prefer "verdant vales" to "green fields".

11. I would have thought that this was supposed to be funny were it not for the severity and threat in the first and last stanzas. The middle stanza is ridiculous - I assume the author has never read a history book in his life.

12. This is quite refreshing. I do not come across many pagan hymns but I am always intrigued by them.

13. I do not see the point of this, but perhaps I am not one of the "ye" to whom it is addressed. That is one of the troubles - I do not know who "ye" are. As for the writing - if it was written a long time ago I do not like it, and if it is fairly recent then it is amateur.

14. I put this in the "like a little" class for the sake of the 7th and 8th lines. The reference to "the jealous 0" is not understood. The poem reads well as a plea for escapism.

15. I quite like the sentiment of the first two verses. The third sounds all very fine and uplifting but the exhortation is hopelessly unpractical. The poetry is not distinguished.

16. Reading this gives me quite a lot of pleasure. It contains much truth, and I always like reading what I agree with. The writing is imaginative and direct; it strikes no false notes.
A 2. F. (13) Student. (Father Schoolmaster). Uni. P.O.S. 53

1. - 3. Very poor. The verse is extremely childish. The theme lacks interest.

2. - 1. Ordinary. Fails to make much impression.

3. + 1. This contains force. 'Ghastly crew' especially expressive. The bitterness of the author comes out well.

4. + 1. A clear picture given. Makes one think - especially about the children.


6. + 3. A very thoughtful and interesting poem. The repetition is extremely effective.

7. 0. Rather insipid. The verse does not add any colour.

8. 0. Many better have been written on the same subject.

9. + 2. Rhythm very pleasant, and on the whole a rather charming poem. Perhaps a little too much sentimentality.

10. + 1. Not outstanding, but quite a thoughtful poem.

11. 0. I disagree strongly with the first verse. The whole is very biased and vehement. The repeated use of 'gentlemen' is effective.

12. + 1. The different 'lights' are apt to become muddling. Some of the fleeting pictures are painted well.


14. + 2. The meaning of "the jealous C" extremely obscure. A lofty theme to which the poem does not do complete justice.

15. 0. 'My feeble cry' expresses the whole impression given by this poem.

16. + 3. A thoughtful subject, simply yet clearly expressed. The metaphor of life as a 'twisted tower' is well-thought.


1. - 2. I dislike this poem to begin with because of the triteness of the verse and the way the subject matter was
treated; though my dislike lessened when I re-read the second stanza, the verse states an obvious truth but there is nothing new in the way it deals with it, and the familiarity of the language is rather offensive. It seems very bathetic to say "Isn't it funny" just after saying that men steal and kill for money. The verses are more a statement of fact than a personal expression of feeling or thought; that is why I dislike them.

2. 0. The only lines in this poem which had any personal meaning for me were the 5th and 6th; the others I accepted but could not feel enthusiastic over because of the bald way in which they were set down. The form of the poem does not hope to convey feeling; and it seems a bare statement, followed by an enumeration to prove the poet's point, ending with a rather boring moral - there is nothing original in the expression, though there is in the idea.

3. +1. The object of this poem is clearly to make the idle rich feel ashamed of themselves; and though its bitterness and anger are evident, it is somewhat obscure outside the time when it was first published. Today it seems out of date; the whole nation feels concern at the death of one, let alone many, workers. As a broadside, and an attack on contemporary events, I like it; it has a clear, direct approach and the constant references to blood and death and toll are heightened tremendously by the "crimson wool": that is very effective. But it is above all a poem of its own era, with the main object of reform and cannot be liked on any merits except that.

4. +2. I like this poem because of its realism and its treatment; it does not seek to extol the pleasures of mining, nor to romanticise the picture; and while it is as true as the preceding poems in what it has to say, the author has treated the subject with more reverence. It is contemplative and sad, and not ill-fitting a subject for poetry. I liked particularly the alliteration in the first two lines of the 2nd stanza; and the final verse gives the whole poem an air of finality. I should have preferred it, however, if the author had not identified himself so closely with the miners; if it had been entirely a contemplative advertisement of their life.

5. -1. This poem has the same theme as No. 2 - though treated in a very different way. I prefer it to that one because the author has associated mankind with "life", and I agree with what he says; it is the way he says it that is annoying - too reminiscent of rhymes on calendars. It may be because too much is condensed unsatisfactorily into too
few lines — and the last line of the 3rd stanza conveys very little of what it should do, all the phrases and images in the poem are too familiar; the poet has gone to the opposite extreme of the author of No. 2: here he has not kept the language and imagery far enough above daily experience to convey the full force of the "message". Nor is verse with a "message" for the reader generally very successfully received.

6. — 2. I find it impossible to criticise this effort as poetry, because it contains no poetic emotion or feeling — only a kind of philosophising and a "woolliness" of expression. I don't agree with the sequence of thought — the origin of the poem seems to be from "be still, and know that I am God"; surely the best way to be still is to watch the perpetual, unceasing ways of the elements, but not to regard these as bringing just knowledge, not wisdom. Surely it depends what use we make of the knowledge we have gained. The poem is difficult to understand, and does not express an opinion which many people hold — I find it impossible to join with the author in the spirit of melancholy and brooding over the wonders of the world.

7. — 2. I dislike this poem, not because of its subject matter, but because of the over-simple form in which the author has expressed it. The author's vision of the future is of a social revolution, to some extent — equality for all — a kind of William Morris's dream of society. But I do not know what "men upstanding" really means — and "the houses of the future" might mean anything from prefabs to palaces. There is one simile and no image in this poem — and a sad, furious, fatal dream conveys nothing to the reader. The poem is too simple in thought, too: if those people "who withhold bread" are gone, how have they gone? Does the idea of love as recreation only, away from daily life, please me; and "delightful" is a very weak, meaningless adjective to apply to love. The poem is too remote, too simplified to convey any impression but one of distaste for bad verse.

8. — 3. I like this poem because it is satisfying: it conveys a whole, perfect impression; the thought is original and the images are familiar to the reader and yet not used over-familiarly; and the peaceful tranquillity of the poem is very restful. I like the way the two images — of the water and music — are brought together in the third stanza; and the "deaf walls crush the bloom" is very vivid, and at the same time, fascinating and vague. The "mirror" in line 1 is suggested again in line 3 — and the ripples on the water are suggested by the "ruffling" in the last stanza. Everything is carefully and naturally interwoven. The idea of
a pool in autumn is pleasing, too: for it is then that life is most ripe, most mellow; and yet fading gradually into winter.

9. - 2. I dislike the morbidity of this poem - it is sentimental and exaggerated and the verse form and rhythm doesn’t make for seriousness. Coal, steel and iron do not attract me as subjects for verse - especially when so many inferior poets use them as a symbol of unrelenting, inexorable fate grinding out their iron way, and for a mother to weep over her baby because he will one day die seems a great waste of time - we all do. I do not see how a baby can be likened to the brightness of a star - and who are the Masters? The image of buds blossoming has not the remotest connection with the mining and blasting - there is no coherence of thought in the poem, and a woman who feels as this one does ought not to have children.

10. + 1. On the whole, I like this poem; but bits of it do not hang together very well. "My brother's loss" conveys nothing at all to anyone except the author, and the last line of the poem seems very terse. The emotion of the poem is not strong enough to convey a deep enough impression to have a lasting effect; and it is too sharply divided between the 1st and 2nd halves. I do not see why the trees have to be silver; and the jump from nature to the woes of man is too sudden. It would have been better if the author could have used the same picture at different levels - this would have given more unity to the poem.

11. 0. I am singularly unmoved by this poem - the regular rhythm and position of the beat tends to slow up the force of the words, I think - also the subject matter is so one-sided that it can hardly be called a true state of affairs, and this also detracts from the poem's force. The last two lines of the first stanza are a bit ambiguous - this poem is not especially moving - possibly also because of the reiteration of "gentlemen" at the ends of lines - and because in form the poem is loosely constructed.

12. + 1. This poem suggests rather than states - and in the many examples of reflected light the picture is blurred rather than clarified. Each individual line is, if one stops to think it out, picturesque; but all the different pictures do not blend together satisfactorily. But I like the quiet atmosphere of the poem and the outdoor evening lights in the first stanza followed by the more religious setting in the second - the poem does, however, seem to lack something to unify it. This is partly because of the absence of regular lines and rhyme, and because the images are all
visual - there is no sound, no sense of touch in the poem and this makes the poet seem an outsider rather than one partaking of the scenes he depicts.

13. - 2. I disliked this poem because it is pessimistic and cynical and it seems wrong to commit to print one's feelings if they are only going to appeal to other grumblers and malcontents. The poet does not attempt to answer the first question, "what is freedom?"; he only shows the material side of life and does not consider the freedom of the mind at all, and I would especially quarrel with the 2nd stanza - what the poet seems to lack is mental discipline - of course everyone has to work, but that does not stop one being interested in it or in finding the outlets for interest. The jump from "the tyrant" to "them" and "their" in the next stanza is inconsistent and I dislike the use of "ye" in the last line - it is a weak ending to the poem.

14. - 1. This is an escapist poem - for that reason I dislike it. The author is obviously out of sorts; but instead of going for a good walk to recover his sense of balance with the world, he dismissed everything he does not care for as mad or foolish and painful - like a grumpy child. "Divine white wonder" is just as vague a term as "beauty" to me - so that the image does not clarify at all. It is nonsense to seek an abstract thing and dismiss the concrete world completely. Seek beauty through men, through nature - not in defiance of them. "Blind tides" does not seem a very convincing image either - had he Milton's "blind mouths" in mind?

15. - 1. The author of this poem must live in a prison camp or something - he is obsessed, as the authors of so many others of these poems, with hatred of the world. His cry is, as he says, feeble, because he is not doing anything constructive or helpful to others by wailing about the miseries of earth - as a human being he has power to do his best to help others and alleviate the misery of the world - much better do this than accuse others of striving for self. This is not appealing to the noblest instincts of mankind to arise and do something - it is sometimes a statement of pure fact, as in the last line of the first stanza. The 1st line of 3rd stanza is too prosaic - the punctuation is too heavy for the line. Everyone realises the imperfections of this life and our actions but we do not most of us sit down and bewail the fact. I think this would have been a much more affecting poem, if the author had bewailed his own imperfections instead of other people's.

16. - 2. I liked this poem although I do not entirely agree with it, which is a tribute to the way it is said. I liked
the simplicity of the first verse and the way it links up with the last, giving the poem unity. I liked the image in the third stanza but I find the idea of wandering proudly and vainly, or cowering afraid difficult to understand in its context with the twisted tower. But though I think the poet has a good argument, I don't think the road to joy is supposed to be simple and straight—and there is a certain amount of enjoyment to be got out of trying to solve the maze.


2. 0. Thought insignificant, unimportant, a passing fancy. Versification mechanical. The ending is disappointing, unfulfilled.

3. - 3. What I am inclined to call 'the hate-gospel'. Poetic merit nil.

4. + 2. This is better than 3, but nothing important said.

5. - 2. Obviously a gentleman (or perhaps lady?) who knows a lot about 'life'. There is no poetic merit—purely negative.

6. + 2. This poem goes so near, yet fails the heights. Its thought is tense, yet the insight is rather fragmentary; the symbol of the cycle has deeper meaning than he is aware of. This form of desolation is produced most often by the incomplete personality.

7. 0. The vision is splendid within its own sphere; the plain statement moving. But once more the vision is limited too down to earth and too uncontrolled, romantic.

8. + 2. Poetical effects, though charming, are too detailed making the effect watery. The last verse could stand by itself and be finer than the poem as it now exists.

9. - 3. Once more the hate-gospel.

10. + 1. Here I like the plain statement but it is not negative verse on account of the last line, i.e. he is not bewailing the fate of mankind and leaving at that as
in 1. One can admire the simplicity of the sentiment and the faith while not agreeing with it.

11. - 3. "Hate-gospel" again. A war-song to stir the ill-treated underdog. Hardly poetry!

12. 0. The abundance of light breeds confusion. He would have done well to restricting the amount of statement, imagery.

13. 0. Here my feelings were very mixed; it seems to me that this confusion is caused by the confusion of values in the poet himself. The diction grates.

14. - 1. No one can forget "all these". A romantic, unreal gospel.

15. - 1. The other extreme to 14. A romantic unreal answer to "all these".

16. + 3. What a superb note to end on! The vision of a genuine poet coupled by the expression of a poet. Never striving for effect or to say something clever; there is no preaching, idealism or forge [sic] thing as in 5, 15 and 14 but just the simple "look"!


1. 0. Just an ordinary simple poem with a humorous theme.

2. + 2. I liked the simplicity and rhythm of this one, and its aptness to life. I feel that most of us are strengthened by the difficulties and reverses we meet on our respective paths, and our joys and pleasures are made more distinctive as a consequence.

3. - 3. How I do dislike this kind of revolutionary poetry. It is so dated and lacks everything that we most enjoy in poetry, beauty, imagination, rhythm and inspiration.

4. - 1. This is not quite so bad as number three, having been lifted out of the stream by a certain sincerity and a little beauty in the lines.

5. - 1. A nice jingle-jangle one. Not poetry - or at least how I like poetry - but perhaps something we could tell a child when a promise has been broken.
6. + 3. How true this poem is in its philosophy. It doesn't preach but reminds us of a fact which we sometimes forget and, in any case, can't do much about.

7. - 3. This is not only dated but the words grate, especially the opening line. Did people literally "withhold bread"?

8. + 3. I like the imagination behind this, and the lines. It has a simple but unusual theme, and one that will itself echo in the mind.

9. - 2. Another one of those 'Oh you wicked landlord' ones. The poet thinks he is 'oh so right'.

10. + 2. One that rather 'digs' in at the reader. You cannot ignore its directness merely because it is only that.

11. - 3. How limited the scope of this type of poetry is. Why does it take three verses to say what could be said in two lines?

12. - 1. This seemed more like a hymn than poetry and I felt it had no stimulation.

13. - 1. Again, a poem limited in scope and with an axe to grind.

14. + 2. Masterful and imaginative but I found the last verse rather obscure.

15. - 1. Somewhat empty in content and dull in style. I can't think of anything worse than living in a world that's "gay and fair"!

16. + 3. I like the simplicity of this poem, trying to sum up something for which we are all searching. It's difficult to sum up a desire which I myself feel - if others do not - so neatly and clearly. There seems no discordant note except perhaps in the first word of the second verse "Really ....." A wide field covered in four verses clearly and sincerely.


7. + 3. Poem no. 7 gives me the impression of the writer expressing his views and hopes of a world in which there is no strife or warfare. It has a certain tranquility.
about it that makes it pleasant to read.

4. + 2. The four verses paint a very good picture of the life and conditions of the mining areas, or for that matter the industrial cities. It has a certain poignancy that appeals to me in the respect of the differences in life between the industrial worker and the relatively easier life of the office worker or countryman.

1, 10, 8, 2, 5. + 1. I have placed No. 1 at the head of this list only because of the rhythm of the lines. I have only one criticism to make on it. In the last verse second line, I think that the 'Isn't it funny" is rather out of place, considering that the poem is up till then in a serious mood. The expression tends to break the line of the poem altogether.

10. Another tranquil poem which appeals to me, illustrating the underlying currents of world affairs, giving the impression of someone regarding the world with a sense of forboding.

8. I'm afraid that I cannot give any specific reason as to my liking this poem but it just appeals to me.

2. This one appeals to me by its seemingly paradoxical statements but the general impression is rather obscure.

5. Here again I cannot give any definite reasons as to why I have placed this one in the group.

15. 0. The representation of this poem is to me in conjunction with Nos. 12, 14, 9, rather obscure and as a result I feel that I cannot give an opinion in either direction. The two remaining Nos. 3 and 13, have a political bias which in my mind is not a subject to be expressed in poetry.

11. + 1. Here again the general trait of the verses seems to dwell on the socialistic side of life which I do not agree with.

6. + 1. To me is very obscure, consisting mainly of a series of disjointed ideas all thrown together higgledy piggledy.

16. - 2. I don't like this poem very much mainly because I think that it is silly, in that the theme tends to go round in circles getting nowhere leaving a rather 'wanting' feeling.
A 7. F. (49) Surgeon. Uni. (Medical) P.O.S. 53.

I cannot say I liked or enjoyed the poems you sent on and no one of them impressed me deeply. Many I thought were more partisan or propagandist and ranting than poetical such as numbers 3, 4, 11, 13 and 14. I did not recognise any one of them (that would not argue them greatly unknown!) – quite definitely) but some I thought reminiscent – though not so neatly turned or well constructed – of poems I had known, vis. No. 8 'Into the mirror of a pool' I thought like Longfellow's 'I Shot an Arrow', No. 1 'It's certainly true that we can't do without it' like W. H. Davies! 'When I had money money o' and No. 12, 'O Light Invisible we praise thee' like pieces of G. Manly Hopkins (whom I have not learnt to appreciate). Altogether, there was an awkwardness or clumsiness in the words or phrases which left me with no inclination to get to know the poems better or have a copy of any one of them. I have felt so unenthusiastic and 'damning' about the set of poems that as a proof of good faith to myself I have quickly made a list of pieces I do like and have enjoyed and add it on here in case it would be any aid in sorting out your experiment: – Blindness – Milton; Negro Shades of Rivers – Langston Hughes; I Shot an Arrow – Longfellow; Choral Song – the Lotus Eaters and Ulysses – Tennyson; Come Away 0 Human Child – Yeats; I hear an Army Charging – James Joyce; Stupidity Street – Ralph Hodgson.


1. 0. Some truth in it but nothing to uplift the spirit.

2. + 2. Pleasing to read, daily meditations prove its thought to be true.

3. – 2. A great deal of truth in this poem but no feeling of spiritual uplift.

4. – 3. A sad poem, may have been appreciated by thoughtful people 100 or 150 years ago. Now one feels, at least in England, it is just horrible that such things could ever be.

5. + 3. Appeals to what we know to be true.

6. + 3. Expresses what one feels about life.

7. – 1. It means to express well for the future, but love is expressed badly. It cannot be explained as an antidote, recreation or delightful.
8. + 3. Very beautiful.

9. - 1. The thoughts expressed to a certain extent are what a mother might think, but a song to her baby should be soft and beautiful.

10. + 3. Expresses well what one would like to see and what one sees in reality.

11. - 3. Expresses much that has happened in the past, but reads now ugly and perhaps unfair.

12. + 3. A poem for meditation.

13. - 3. Contains some truth but not inspiring to read. 4th verse best.

14. + 3. A beautiful thought or rather truth well expressed.

15. + 3. A poem expressing what all humanity ought to feel.

16. + 3. I feel a truth in this poem. It makes me feel how life felt or was in childhood and what it is like now.

A 9. M. (Middle-aged) Ex Indian Police Force.

In my opinion most of these are unfit to be classified as poems but are pure (and nauseating) left-wing propaganda.

1. 0.
2. + 3.
3. - 3.
4. - 2.
5. - 1.
6. + 1.
7. - 3.
8. + 2.
10. + 2.
11. - 3.
12. 0.
13. - 1.
14. 0.
15. 0.
16. + 1.

I am not familiar with any of these "poems", none of them seem obscure to me but most of them appear to have been written for people of very low mentality.

A 11. F (19) Student (Father Works Manager). Uni. P.O.S.55

1. - 1. I dislike this poem because the sentiment and its expression in verse are somewhat trite. I felt this even more after reading some of the other poems, such as 3 and 11, where there is more sincerity.

2. + 2. I admire this poem because of its technical perfection. It has balance and vivid imagery, and effective contrasts. But the thought it expresses does not seem to me very profound — perhaps because I am familiar with the underlying idea already, and am not very interested in a restatement of it. It is solely on its poetical merits that I place the poem high.

3. - 2. I dislike the violence and blind hatred of this poem, though I admire the force and directness of its expression ("You ha' eaten our lives and our babies and wives"). The sentiment, mainly because of its extreme one-sidedness, is one with which I cannot sympathise.

4. 0. I might have liked this poem a little, because of its more restrained expression, and its considerable power to evoke atmosphere ("wayside dusty weed", "slag heaps", "white faces", etc). I particularly like the naming
of the plants: "Darnel and dock and starwort", which somehow makes the "wayside dusty weed" seem less sordid, as if the poet regarded them of importance, though unattractive, as he does the miners and their children. The attitude of the poet to his subject is human. What made me dislike the poem a little was not anything in the subject-matter, but only the line: "Sweet human flowers that will fall ere their time", which seems out of keeping with the impression he otherwise creates of the children, and sentimental.

5. I dislike this poem intensely. It is trite and sentimental in all its aspects.

6. I like this poem very much, because of its philosophy, which is made forcibly clear by skilful and precise use of words. I am very interested in what the poet is saying, and though his ideas are not new, they are economically and sincerely expressed. There is some obscurity for me in the first two lines. I can only associate the "Hunter" with Omar Khayam's "Hunter of the East". But otherwise the poem, on a second reading, presents no difficulties to me. Its poetic technique is inseparable from the subject, which is obviously the main importance of the poem.

7. I like very much the simplicity of this poem, and the careful yet free ("men not fearing the sack") use of words. I like the almost naive last line of the first stanza and the heavy charge of implication in the three words "sad, furious, fatal" of the last line. The sentiment inspiring the poem, however, leaves me cold. I do not believe in the poet's picture of a golden age to come.

8. I like this for the precision of its images. The image in the first stanza is not remarkable. That is, it is familiar to me. But the description of music in the second stanza is original. I like the way the two apparently unconnected ideas in the first two are united in the last stanza, unexpectedly. The last line of all is suddenly personal and emotional, after the objectivity of the rest of the poem, and is most effective. The thought behind the poem, if not profound, appeals to me in the way it is expressed.

9. I dislike this one on account of the sentimentality and almost childishness of some of its lines ("So tiny and helpless" etc), on the one hand, and the depressing outlook, on the other. I get a little tired of miners' children.
10. - 2. Again I dislike this poem for its depressing outlook, and its rather shallow thought. The poetry, also, has nothing to commend it.

11. - 1. This poem has life and vigour, but, like 3, repels me by the hatred in it. It has some powerful sarcasm, too ("The honest English gentleman"), but I am unable to sympathise with the emotion behind it.

12. + 2. I like the sensitive and imaginative use of words here ("batflight", "Glow-worm glowlight"), and the warmly coloured images in the poem. I like the thought behind it, too, of relating all lights to one Light Invisible. The poem is not obtrusively religious, in spite of the theme, and the image called up of a church, in the second stanza. (By religious I imply 'dogmatically religious').

13. - 1. I cannot admire the versification of this poem, which seems, to me, desperately dull, and the thought in the poem is again a depressing one. The theme of the sufferings of the underdog is doubtless a worthy one, but I cannot sympathise with such complete pessimism. The last line of the poem has a great satirical force, which compensates a little for the commonplace of the rest of the poem.

14. + 2. This poem is much more to my liking. It represents an almost opposite attitude to the pessimistic poems; though it expresses not so much optimism as a dismissing of unpleasant things as irrelevant. It may be a kind of escapism; but I agree with the attitude. It represents, I feel, a deliberate choice between dedication to the mundane or the aesthetic. I like the poetry of it, also: - the staccato effect of "The bitter world biting its bitter hour", and "And I, O Beauty, O divine white wonder...", gives an impression of the poet's mind relaxing as he turns from discussing of the things that he 'dismisses' as irrelevant to contemplation of what he finds all-sufficient.

15. - 2. The versification of this poem is childish, and the thought not very advanced. It is a reverse attitude to that in 14. Here is not a turning from the unpleasant facts to a pleasant world of the mind, but the other way about. I am hindered from regarding the idea behind the poem seriously, because of the triviality of its expression.

16. + 3. It is hard to say why I like this poem best of all. The thought and emotion are perfectly expressed in the verse, and the appeal of the poem is in all its aspects together, not in one or two in particular. It expresses
with clarity a thought or feeling that I knew before only vaguely and untidily (contrasted with, for instance, 2, where the idea was already clear in my mind). I like, apart from the thought expressed in the theme, the delightful apparent irrelevance of the three 'simple statements' of the second line, which have gained significance by the time they are repeated at the end of the poem, but are still a little surprising in juxtaposition. Like 14, this poem expresses a desire for dedication of self ("Really we long to give one gift"...), and an impatience with complications brought about by 'civilisation'.


1. + 1. A pleasant little moral soliloquy, though it poses the problems in rather too elementary a fashion.

2. + 2. The slow measured sonnet form fits the subject, with the contrasts and questions in the first eight lines, and the answer in the last four. It is based on a philosophy of hope, my own.

3. 0. I disagree with the sentiments. One is not responsible for the wrongs of one's forbears. The verse itself has a mordant quality suitable to the thought, and expresses it well.

4. + 2. I like this because it gives what I know to be a true picture of a mining village, and recalls memories of my own.

5. - 1. Sententious, moralising, and dull.

6. + 1. A plea against the suppression of the spiritual by too great emphasis on the material. This seems to be a plea for the simple life, hardly possible today when surrounded by the materialism of modern civilisation.


8. + 3. A pleasant gentle verse. The imagery of the pool is used to great effect.

9. - 2. A parody? Certainly one for which there is no justification, except perhaps in a totalitarian state!

10. + 1. Reflective, and reminiscent of the early English religious poems, emphasising the undercurrent of sadness at human suffering.
11. - 2. Typical early 19th century radical verse. Tries to draw parallels which are just not applicable to the subject.

12. + 1. Christian mysticism. Light as the symbol of God.

13. - 2. A slave in body is a slave in mind. Nothing more than a counsel of despair.

14. + 2. The answer to No. 13. In face of a strong will and an ideal the sufferings of the body have little effect.

15. 0. Such appeals are useless. A change of heart must result from realization on the part of each individual.

16. - 1. Rubbish. There is as much truth in complex statements, often more; and the complex life may be the more enjoyable.


1. - 1. Matter trite, manner undistinguished.

2. + 1. A simple concept illustrated by apt similes.

3. - 1. Demagogic overstatement and bombast.

4. - 1. Well digested emotion recolected quietly.

5. - 2. Scarcely poetry.

6. + 2. Sensitive and sincere.

7. 0. Slight in every way.

8. + 3. A unique idea very well expressed.

9. - 1. As unreal as any attempt at reality can be.

10. 0. Obscure.


12. + 2. A good meditative poem.

13. 0. Slight and undistinguished.

14. + 3. Beautiful.

15. 0. Slight.

16. + 2. A sound idea skilfully expressed.
Before I start writing about these poems, I must add that I've had no experience whatsoever of reading, and criticising poetry, and I find it very difficult indeed to appreciate the meaning and construction of the poetry.

1. + 1. I agree fundamentally with the idea outlined. That is, that money is the cause of more trouble and unhappiness in large amounts than in small. But I don't agree that it is so definite; that is, it doesn't follow that the prosperous and rich people are bored and weighed down by cares or if they are, they may experience real pleasure as opposed to the more automatic existence of the poor folk. The labour in attaining a position or building up one's belongings must surely be one of the most pleasurable experiences. The rhythm of the poem, to me, is too much repetition; it needs breaking up a little.

2. + 2. I like this poem because it is so true. It is told simply without being too emphatic, and the words used, and the poem construction are pleasing to me. The choice of words, e.g. the word "vivid" when contrasting day and night, and the words "proved and measured" ... swiftness and slowness are very apt words I believe, and I feel about the whole poem that it flows smoothly and easily along leaving a pleasant sensation with no obvious periods.

3. - 1. I dislike this poem to a certain extent. I have a feeling that it is trying to express some real resentment, and it is being expressed in a rough, crude and intolerant manner. The continual reference to "blood and toil" in such strong terms and the stolid obstinacy and irrational presentations of a very real problem - I don't like these details. It has such an accent of misery and sullenness as expressed in such words as "wreck", "ghastly crew", "Forges red", "cursed wealth", "doom", "charred us", and the continual reference and use of blood. My feeling is that no matter how strong the case may be as far as facts are concerned, talking and expression must be reasonable, fair and unbiased. I don't like the abbreviation e.g. "ha' eaten" and I feel the form of the poem is slovenly. I must confess that however, the truth of the poem i.e. the conditions which it is describing, is not appreciated by me, and so my dislike is mainly due to the way it is written, the words, and ideas expressed, and the manner of expression.

4. - 1. My feelings about this poem are very similar to those of 3. It is such a dreary poem, and although it
is talking about dreary conditions, I do feel it has been laid on rather heavily here. It seems as if the author has a real grudge against the mining town and conditions and has exaggerated the appearances greatly. I disagree with the fact that beauty never visits mining places. It depends upon what one is meaning by beauty; if one means pretty colours and [?], and birds and things, then a mining place falls short. I don't agree however, with this conception of beauty completely. It appears as if the poem was written by a country person trying to run down towns just because he was born in the country. It's so easy to make towns sound very depressing and dirty and make a dismal picture of it; and this has certainly been done successfully; but I disagree with it. The children are still happy children and not "sweet human flowers that will fall ere their time". The folk are not "gaunt" and they do not just "stare" from their homes all the time. There are not "grave lines" on the faces of the people and the children are not cheated of life's graces. If the author is trying to show that miners' children are always more unhealthy both mentally and physically than others - I heartily disagree. I don't like this poem because of its biased nature and misdirected ideas. It displays the ignorance of the author. The writing of it is also childish and the choice of words poor.

5. + 1. I like this poem. I agree with the fundamental i.e. it is better to be always striving and working hard for something than to be completely static. Life is a battle, and the examples given such as sunshine - rainbow, light and shadow etc. etc. are well chosen and well illustrated. The writing is pleasant, the rhythm agreeable and altogether a pleasing poem.

6, 9, 11. - 2. I dislike these poems because they do not express or convey any positive idea without bringing in political bias with particular reference to 9 and 11. No. 6 is just badly written poetry being just an attempt to be clever with words and failing miserably. I don't agree with the notions expressed; I don't believe that we have lost "life in living" or "lost wisdom in knowledge". No. 9 I think, is puerile in its writing resembling some cheap American novel.

7, - 3.
8. + 3
13. - 1.

I don't understand what the author of No. 7 is aiming at. What sort of world is he visualising? Free
love and honesty amongst all men! Ideally it sounds favourable, but the writing of the poem I think is poor, and the continual use of the word 'love' indicates the sexual frustration and dreams of the author. No. 8 doesn't get anywhere - just a lot of flowery phrases; the idea of looking into one's own conscience is ridiculous in itself without all the useless analogies. No. 13 - political bias has again turned me against this poem. The ideas are always so emphatically put. I don't think the subject matter makes for poetry.

10. + 2. I like the style - its a breakaway from the rather stereotyped verse of the previous poems. I like the form, ideas and expression of the poem.

12. - 3. What stupid, childish nonsense! It sounds like a very old-fashioned biblical children's story. The style is absurd, e.g. "our gaze is submarine - our eyes look upward" and I don't like the stupid metaphors, e.g. light fracturing water. The line "0 light invisible, we glorify thee" I could talk about for a long time, as I completely repute it.

14. 0. I don't understand it. It seems completely divided - no continuity.

15. + 1. I change to have some cheerful topic, i.e. dreams and the contrast is quite appropriate and true.

16. + 3. I agree completely; I like the writing, words and rhythm.


15. + 3. This poem has been given as my first choice from this selection of 16 mainly by virtue of its content. I agree wholeheartedly with what the poet has put over, which I think holds a greater sway than other considerations such as rhythm and metric. The language the poet has used is simple and direct - in other words easily understood, and in the first two lines we are left in no doubt as to the theme of the poem. From it there rings a very true note of sincerity. The rhythm of this poem is very pleasant and easy to read and I like the rhyming of the poem - in couplets. I prefer short stanzas of poetry to long laborious ones.

5. + 3. This was a poem which I liked immediately for it
needs no second reading to appreciate it. I was at once struck by the striking resemblance which it bears to the verses of Kathleen Partridge. In fact, I would have said that it was one of her poems had it not been written in verse form — the thought behind it is typically hers. This poem also appeals to me because of its sincerity, its simplicity of language and because I like the thought that the poet has expressed. I am impressed by the way that he/she asks us to accept the pit-falls and life as inevitable and to look on the "bright side of things" as it were. I wonder why the arrangement of lines and stanzas are not constant. I feel that it would not have spoilt the effect in any way if it had been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>1 and 2</th>
<th>Line 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 stanza, arranged as stanzas 3 and 4.

2. + 3. Unlike the previous poem mentioned, I find this one more likeable every time I read it. The first time that I read it I was not keen — it didn't appear to have very much meaning. On reading the second time I wondered how it was that I didn't get the "gist" of the poem because then it seemed so clear. With this poem I was attracted very much by the superb way it is written — especially the first stanza, as well as the unusual angle that he has shown us on darkness, stillness, etc. This way of looking at things was new to me. I like particularly the way he has used the hard sounds of "s" and "t" in the last line as in "stillness", "stress" and "tempest" — I think it gives just the desired effect to the end of the stanza.

3. + 2. In this poem I liked the way that the poet compares the effect of a word, a look, a sign and music with the effect of a stone falling in water. The fact that the sight of the disturbance a stone has on water has always fascinated me might have something to do with my liking the theme of this poem. I thought the last line of the poem, by virtue of both sound and the meaning, a particularly lovely one. I disliked the change in metre of the last line of each stanza.

1. + 1. I thought this one bore a resemblance in style to No. 5. I don't like the first two lines of this poem — I think that it is because the language is slightly too commonplace; I feel that this is fairly true of the theme of the poem — money. It is a thing that is so much in people's thoughts (very necessarily!) that we don't particularly want to read poetry about it. The main part of the poem is quite attractively written and is very true.
4. + 1. The thing which I do like about this poem is the way in which it is written - the rhythm, the rhyme and the use made of alliteration. I do not like the theme of the poem though. I look upon a poem as a thing of beauty and I believe therefore that the theme should fit this. Despairing, gaunt folk, slag heaps, headstocks are therefore I think unfitting for inclusion in a poem. There is also of course theory that children born in a mining area are doomed to work and die in the mines, which I think is quite untrue.

14, 16. 0. I have included these in the column "Neither like nor dislike because I do not understand either of them. It is therefore impossible to know whether I like them or not. In No. 14 the first two verses are quite clear to me. Is it beauty that he looks to forget all the things in the 1st two verses? I don't know. I do understand the general idea behind No. 16 but line by line I find the poem confusing, as I find the style of the poet's writing.

12. - 1. I have found this poem rather fascinating. To me it bears a vague resemblance to Hilton's poetry - its rather pompous style and the allusion to the Almighty. Had the content of the poem been wholly on the different aspects of light, I think I would have liked it very much but I don't like this allusion to God - which I rather suppose is the whole point of the poem.

10. - 1. I feel that this poem is well written and I like the unusual arrangement of stanzas but here again the theme reflects an attitude of despair and over-morbid view of life.

6. - 1. In this poem too the same morbid beliefs seem to be the central thought in the poem, which in my opinion spoils it. I also find the style of the poem rather difficult to concentrate on - I expect the fact that it has not been divided into verses is mainly responsible. I have the impression that the writer is a great poet. I like the quoted part very much indeed:

"The endless cycle of idea and action...... Knowledge of speech but not of silence".

7, 13, 9, 3, 11. - 3. I dislike all these poems so much that I feel unable to deal with them as poems at all; I therefore put them all under one "head". The skill of the poet, or poets, expressing his thoughts is undoubted; he reveals his Communistic outlook as well as it is possible to do. I feel that if he felt inclined to write all this down it would have been less disagreeable in prose form. To me he has made a mockery of poetry; if I agreed with
all the thought expressed (which I don't) I believe that I would still feel it unfitting that all the ugliness, bitterness and injustice expressed in these lines should be the subject matter of poetry which is essentially a lovely thing, created to give pleasure, not pain to the readers.


1. -3. Gives nothing, only depicts the greed latent in human nature, with special emphasis on envy of the other man's money, with total ignorance of using it to good effect when obtained.

2. + 2. Depicts the everlasting struggle of life in which we gain experience. Idea quite good.


4. - 2. Gives a false impression of life in the mining districts which is supposed to have improved. Poem fair.

5. + 2. A good poem with a sound idea behind it. Good understanding.

6. + 3. T. S. Eliot. The Rock. A poem of deep wisdom unveiling the great, urgent forces of nature and showing the fundamental creative Truths of evolving life - the Word - Silence - Stillness.

7. - 3. A future depicted that has no meaning or attraction for me.

8. + 2. Good idea, well expressed.

9. - 3. Too sentimental and to me a stupid poem.

10. +2. A pretty idea composed by a devoted soul.

11. - 3. The poet is completely ignorant of the source of all life and is going backward into complete darkness refusing to take up the challenge offered to grasp the hidden creative force of the earth.

12. + 2. T.S. Eliot. The Rock. See (6) for my opinion of this poem.

13. - 3. No will or individuality. Writer forgets that every man is "Captain of his (My) Soul."

14. + 3. Quite agree with the sentiment which is well expressed.
15. - 2. I wonder what sort of spectacles the writer puts on to look at the world.

16. + 1. The idea is not at all bad, but is not well expressed. If you really live and understand the new birth in death, you have no need to dream of what has been and to find yourself lonely, always looking back for simple action and simple statement.

A 17. (F. (22) Medical Student. (Father, Medical Officer of Health) Priv. Boarding: Medical School. P.O.S. 54.

1. + 1. I quite like this. What it says is true enough, and it is said quite pleasantly.

2. + 1. Again I agree with what is said. The words are a little ponderous.

3. 0. I dislike the bitterness of what is said, and much enjoy the way it is written.

4. 0. The message is gloomy but the words made a good picture.

5. + 2. I like what is said, but am a little critical of how it is said.

6. - 2. I find this neither interesting nor good poetry.

7. - 2. What is said seems rather feeble and it might just as well have been said in prose.

8. + 2. The imagery is good and the message true enough.

9. 0. What is said makes me faintly indignant, but I like the way it is written.

10. - 1. I hardly like or dislike this one, but have put it in category 5 with faint disapproval. Don't think much of the words either.

11. - 2. This just makes me cross, but it is written vigorously at least.

12. - 1. The first line reminded me of Francis Thompson's "The Kingdom of God". I find this poem disappointing thereafter, it could have been good but it has not made the grade. I am not interested in what is said.

13. - 2. Too bitter again. The poetry is unremarkable.
14. + 3. I like this best of all. Could read it often and be cheered and strengthened by what is said, and it is well said, too.

15. - 1. This one is gloomy again that I don't like what is said. It is written with some punch which caused me to grade it above 10 on second thoughts.

16. + 3. I like this one, agreeing with what is said. It is calm, though sad, and the words are happily chosen.


1. + 1. It's heavy and at times irritating insistence on heavy female rhythm destroys, for me, the effect of the poem. The theme is the obvious one also the conclusions "the more one has, the more one wants."

2. + 3. Has beauty as well as a conclusion apposite and true. The line "makes the summer petals burn more bright" etc. conjures up an image of brilliance and beauty.

3. + 1. Language simple and restrained. Stanza 4 is exemplary in this point. The slight echo "ghastly crew" from Coleridge (Ancient M.) conjured up from the shipwreck (Stanza 3) awakes in me ideas foreign to the obvious intention of the poet.

4. + 2. The stanzas paint a picture, arouse a clear mental image - the tenderness and pity of stanza 3.

5. 0. I feel that pure inspiration is lacking in this poem.

6. + 1. From the premise of the opening lines, the conclusion is a just one - but the vain repetitions "0 perpetual", "Where is?" spoils the even flow of the verse. The truth or the message is summed up "All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance".

7. - 2. With this poem I am out of sympathy - I feel its Banality; I abhor the philosophy enshrined in this.

8. Well worked out and everything fits. Stanzas 1 and 2 are almost similes explaining Stanza 3.

9. 0. Stanza 3 is good but here again I feel myself out of sympathy with the idea that the owners or masters in control are "planning the way" their workers "should die".

10. + 3. Two views of the same thing - the visual and the mystic. I find myself deeply impressed with the last four lines.
11. 0. Taken with a pinch of salt, this is all very well, but taken seriously it is untrue. It is false today though 100 years ago (and the poem cannot be 50 years old) it might have rung true. This in essence is the cult of the Social Revolution with which I am in little sympathy.

12. 1. This is a great hymn of meditation. The vocabulary suggests G.M. Hopkins but it is for the merits of the poem, its clarity, its sincerity and its aura of reverent adoration, not for the merits of its author that I consider this poem a magnificent achievement.

13. 3. In the words of T.S. Eliot concerning Milton "This is not poetry about its business". I do not consider that this rant is poetry - or anything like it.

14. 2. I enjoyed this poem and I felt uplifted by it in the metaphorical difference between physical reality and spiritual reality.

15, 16. 0. Neither of these poems provoke any feeling antagonistic or otherwise. 15 is a simple little poem, and in its simplicity it may pass muster; its content like its cry is "feeble". 16 I found difficult to follow. It seems more fit a subject for an essay on metaphysics. If this poem is to be dubbed metaphysical we may well assign to it the dictum of Dr. Johnson on the Metaphysical Poets "The were neither metaphysicians - nor were they poets".


1. 1. Interesting angle on the subject, but a rather monotonous metre.

2. 3. I like what the author says, in this poem, and the way he says it. A lovely poem to read, flows along rhythmically.

3. 1. Not pleasant to listen to, but the persistency of the metre does convey the depressing truth of the subject.

4. 1. Bad presentation of a good subject, some of the lines do not 'scan' well.

5. 0. Unimpressive. The first two verses start it off well but it fails to succeed.

6. 2. The quality of this poem is not at first fully appreciated, an interesting poem to read often.
7. - 1. Bad presentation of a good subject.
8. + 2. I like the theme and interpretation.
9. + 2. Pleasant to read, as in the 3rd poem the metre conveys the plodding hopelessness of life for this child.
10. 0. The simplicity of this poem has a certain appeal.
11. 0. -
12. - 2. Rather boring and obscure.
13. + 1. Good subject well expressed.
15. + 2. This poem grows on one, I like it more each time I read it.
16. + 3. The poetry of this poem is not in the metre or rhyming, but for me it has exceptionally high qualities.

entering Univ. P.O.S. 55.

1. - 2. I would term this doggerel rather than poetry. The thought is trite - there is nothing either new or interesting about the subject or the writers approach to it. The last stanza might have been quite good without the bathos "Isn't it funny" and the obvious straining for rhyme. I do not consider that one's financial position has much bearing on one's happiness. The last two lines are entirely untrue, or rather a generalisation which is exaggerated and absurd.

2. + 2. The thought of this sonnet is interesting and well-handled. I like it because of the contrasts and the moral which is drawn. It is a poem full of truth, well worth-while and expressed in well-chosen language. Since I am in full agreement with the sentiment, I naturally like the poem still more, but, as it does not touch my feelings, or stir me very deeply I cannot say that I like it "very much".

3. + 2. The hatred of the workers for their masters fills this poem with life and vigour. The poet has had sufficient skill to show and moreover prove his own point of view. De
is capable of compelling the reader to agree with him. Obviously he is a socialist and very bitter about conditions. The words have force and impact. It should rouse readers from their sloth. In the last century it would have been perfectly true - it is no longer true and unlike No. 11, the writer suggests no remedy. I do not find it as stimulating as No. 11 and do not like it "very much" as I feel the writer sacrifices his thought for the verse and I am in doubt as to his sincerity.

4. + 1. Again I am in doubt as to the writer's sincerity. I do not agree entirely with his sentiments as I can see both truth and beauty in a starwort growing among the mines. Doubtless this was true fifty years ago - at present it is the miners who are in the best position. The subject is however, well handled and therefore I like it a little. The writer is somewhat romantic and has not endured these [?] himself.

5. + 1. I like this only because of the second stanza, which is well-handled. Otherwise the thought is trite and badly explained. The writer has neglected entirely the true meaning of life; he gives no reason for the struggle; there is no indication that he has a reason at all. He has missed the strengthening and purifying of the soul which is the object of life.

6. + 3 This poem is excellent. There is a message which must stir the hearts of the readers. The poet has acknowledged the greatest truth there is - the need for God. The antithesis are admirable. I like this better than any of the other poems because it is packed with feeling and is obviously sincere, also because I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiments. The rhetorical questions are stirring. The words chosen to express the feeling are admirable.

7. - 3 The writer is living in a fool's paradise. He sees a future Utopia of socialists or even communists. Such a future is impossible. Some men will always hate, there will always be deceit - unless God is universally acclaimed. Yet the last two lines of this poem are excellent - they are in fact wasted here. The idea of women working with men and love being "voluntary" is repellant. Love, I agree is delightful but should not be regarded as simply recreation. It is the only living power which would possibly create a Utopia.

8. 0. I am afraid the mixed metaphors of this poem spoil any beauty it might have had. There is a worth-while thought but it is ill-expressed. I have no feeling toward
it at all except the natural admiration of a lover of literature for the picture in the first stanza.

9. + 1. The hatred of a woman for the mines which are to crush her child's life is well shown. But I find the poem over-sentimental. The last line is the feeling of the mother - but nevertheless she is mistaken. I believe the writer wishes to point out the evils and dangers of the mines - the second stanza does show this. But one must remember the safety-measures now taken and the compensations miners receive. It is ignorance which produces sentiments this mother feels. There was a disturbing time in the 1800's when masters did slave-drive men to pile up their own wealth - but those times have gone and it is time some of our socialists realised it. My liking for this verse is based purely on the skilful expression of the mother's feeling.

10. + 1. I admire the originality of this poem - but the thought is obscured. There is nothing to stir one's feelings, there is very little message. The thought has great potentialities but they are not well expressed.

11. + 2. I am drawn against my wishes to like this poem. It is fiery and rousing. It is an example of the fervour with which communists are inspired. But why cannot such writers forget what has happened in the past and see the present in its true perspective? The "English Gentlemen" are more oppressed than the workers! Yet they are humane and our present leaders are really working for the people's good. The poet has accused God of placing the peasants under the Czar - I fear he is mistaken. It is to God the workers should turn - not to Revolutions. Yet I like this poem a great deal - it almost (but not quite) turned me into a socialist! The hatred of overlords is so very well expressed, one cannot help admiring the sincerity of the misguided writer.

12. + 3. I like this as I like all good poems, which acknowledge truth. But I like it still more for that one excellent phrase "Our gaze is submarine". Now like II Corinthians 13. The idea of lights and the one Light is extremely well thought out. It is a poem full of small pictures each evoked in a few well-chosen words. Each picture adds something to the thought and is therefore well worth-while.

13. - 2. Again a poem filled with hatred for overlords and masters. But no one is a "slave in soul". One might add "Stone walls cannot a prison make, Nor iron bars a cage".
I do believe the writer to be sincere, but he is misled and the poem has not the redeeming features of No. 11. What was true in 1800 is not true in 1952. But I am not sure that anyone is any happier in a "welfare" state. Certainly few people behave as if they were if we are to believe the newspaper reports. We are what we make ourselves.

14. + 3. How very true "in our souls we can be queens and kings". I like this poem immensely. This is a lovely declaration of love and the power one woman has for a man. I like too the imagery in the last two lines. I like the acknowledgment that the bitter world is only temporal. "The barren god in power" and "the madman in command" are excellent phrases if not always true ones. There is a wonderful feeling of peace and security in the last stanza, despite the cruel world of the first stanza.

15. - 1. Another writer living in a fool's paradise! Or am I mistaken? Is this writer looking to God? He does not make it very clear. Why does he see only hate and greed? Why are so many people incapable of seeing what is beautiful? Are they too lazy to look for it? Again there are some men who will never be content and there are others who will always be content even if they have absolutely nothing - because they have an inner peace and contentment.

16. + 1. The thought is interesting but not very moving. Parts of the poem are obscure but some phrases are excellent. I feel this sentiment could have been expressed much better.


1. - 2. The jog-trot rhythm and lack of imagination in choice of language makes this poem dull.

2. + 3. I have read this poem before. It has the characteristic grace and balance of the Elizabethan sonnet. The choice of words is excellent, the thought worth expressing and the whole effect is most pleasing.

3. - 2. A sullen, mean poem (or rather verse). The thought could be expressed with less crudity. The blind prejudice which is the force behind the verse renders it unpleasant in the extreme.

4. + 1. A rather dull but not unpleasant poem. Words such as 'darnel and dock and starwort' give it local
colour and some life.

5. - 1. There is nothing particularly unpleasant about this poem — it makes no impression on me at all.

6. + 2. This has a note of T.S. Eliot in it. The blank verse is dignified and pleasing. Repetition of such words as ‘knowledge’ and ‘lost’ is effective.

7. - 1. The last few words redeem this poem — 'sad, furious, fatal'. It is a poem of vision but is not convincing.

8. + 2. An interesting poem which is worth re-reading. The choice of words is careful and effective.

9. - 3. This poem does not ring true. The thought is unpleasant and crudely expressed. The "Oh hush thee my baby" is a completely different language from "The steel we are casting".

10. - 2. This is a rather weak poem of the sentimentally religious kind. Religious poetry to be successful must be strong and convincing.

11. - 2. This is the kind of poem it is better to forget - rather like Kipling's worst.

12. + 3. A lovely poem. Words such as 'batflight' show exquisite taste in choice of words. I have read this before of course and find it as delightful as ever.

13. - 1. The thought seems to be enslaved to the rhythm. The rhyme is extremely weak.

14. + 1. This poem rings true; it is convincing and enjoyable.

15. 0. I couldn't care less about this.

16. + 2. A modern poem — honest and pleasantly simple. It is a poem that came to the writer naturally and was not forced. The poet sets out to say something and says it well.


1. - 3. A trite jingle: ideal for music hall comedians' 'serious' song interlude.
2. + 2. Fine expression of an idea philosophically true.

3. - 3. Generalities: overemphasised: crude exposition irritating. 1st line of last verse reminds me of Jack the Giant Killer or a picture by Hieronymus Bosch.

4. - 1. I agree with what it says but it fails because again of overemphasis. Miners' children aren't sweet human flowers who fall ere their time: it just isn't true anymore. Line 3 is grammatically baffling. This poem should disturb my conscience but, since I don't believe it, it doesn't.

5. - 3. A hurdy-gurdy version of No. 2: it says nothing new, naturally it can't on such a theme but is vulgar in expression.

6. + 2. Every time I read this I liked it more. It touches on problems which interest me personally and I like its expression which at first however I thought pretentious. Contains some very fine lines.

7. - 3. This has the same brash assertiveness so characteristic of many of these poems: it is naive but pathetically sincere. The work of a thoughtless visionary I suspect. "Love is no more the antidote for terror" - this is the only thought-provoking line in the poem and the writer has lost his opportunity to develop it. Anyway "terror" is too strong a word - he meant "despair". "Furious", and "falta" in last line are not good. This poet is dangerous.

8. + 2. This is a common psychological experience but is beautifully described. The image beginning verse 2 is very striking.


10. + 1. Rather original presentation of "what's-it-all-about-and-where-are-we-going?" theme: Nature's good and man's not: the pessimistic alternative to the wild exuberance of No. 7.

11. - 3. Words fail me here.

12. 0. A bit "churchey": with skilful editing would make a good Anglican hymn. Treatment is very effective.

13. 0. Comparatively restrained beside the others and gains thereby. Indefiniteness helps it: but we're all
slaves even if we don't live on slag heaps under Czars who are planning the way we'll die. Bit rhetorical.

14. +1. I like its philosophy and the way in which it's expressed.


16. +1. One looks for Utopia in front; another behind. This is an appeal for the simple life; as if life ever was! Harmless—and useless.

None obscure: all unknown to me.


I find it difficult to classify these "poems" as in my judgment none of them can be called anything more ambitious than "verse", and most of them are nearer "doggerel". They remind me of the sort of stuff I used to churn out when I was about seventeen, tho' my efforts were even more trite and sententious!

1. +1. Quite a cheery, neat little thing within its limits, and the sentiments are genuine enough.

2. +1. Quite a neatly contrived sonnet. Sentiment genuine and true.

3. -2. This is trash, poor metre, complete lack of any literary merit and bogus, outdated sentiment.

4. 0. This at least has more claim to verse, or, in a few lines, even poetry, than number 3, but the sentiment is still bogus or glib.

5. 0. Sheer Wilhelmina Stitch! In other words, tripe in both style and sentiment.

6. +1. Not bad, the first five lines quite promising—the sentiment is hackneyed and unsubtle.

7. -1. Dislike this both for its style, or rather lack of style, and for its sentiment which is immature and, (sorry to use this word again) hackneyed.

8. +1. Quite like this and it has some claims to poetry, tho' obviously owing something to Shelley's "Music, when soft voices die."
9. 0. Tripe in style and sentiment. All this sort of stuff misses the boat in these days of the Welfare State.

10. 0. Trivial in literary merit and in content.

11. 0. I get quite a laugh out of this cheerful little hymn of hate as it goes with a swing, tho' I think its rhythm is cribbed from a well-known poem which I can't recall.

12. +2. This comes the nearest to poetry of the whole bunch, the sentiment is dateless and is given an original twist. This poem I could re-read with pleasure many times.

13. 0. See comment on 9 and 10.

14. 0. Schoolgirl stuff from the aspect both literary and of content.

15. 0. Comment as for 9, 10 and 13.

16. +1. Liked this better on re-reading. Quite neatly contrived and the sentiment is original.


2. +3. I like this. The idea is quite complete, and naturally expressed within the compass of the sonnet. It possesses a simple dignity which savours of John Donne.

3. +1. I do not altogether dislike this tirade which might have been fair comment a few decades ago. The phrasing is quite good, with the exception of the 5th verse, when the poem seems to lose some of its intensity. I am not an admirer of Kipling to whom the author should have made acknowledgment.

4. +1. I am not unmoved by the statement, but except for verse 2 the metre is rather shaky.

5. -3. In the same category as No. 1.

6. +2. I like this poem very well. The subject is one with which I am in sympathy, consequently it is easy for me to appreciate the mood in which it was written.

7. -3. Not quite so bad as Nos. 1 and 5. Probably more
suited to the needs of the adolescent reader of the 'Daily Worker'.

3. + 2. I like the imagery of the first two verses, but my consciousness is troubled by the last line.

9. - 2. On a final reading I feel a fairly strong dislike for this. It has a lot in common with No. 7.

10. + 2. I like the simplicity of this poem, and am in sympathy with the subject.


12. + 3. I like this very well. The imagery is very pleasing.

13. 0. No feeling - no comment.

14. + 1. I have some sympathy for the subject; but for the last verse I would demote it to category No. 4.


16. + 3. This seems to me to express quite well one aspect of the truth in human relations.

A 25. F. (26) Wife of a Tool Steel Sales Representative.

Sec. F.O.S. 70.

General. I would not describe any of these poems as great poetry. To me, a lyric is something which a poet feels with such strong emotion that he is forced to express his feeling in carefully chosen and beautiful words. These poems seem to fall short of this. The subjects are often trivial and sometimes most unpleasant; they are narrow in their outlook and seem to gloat over human misfortunes instead of helping people to see the brighter aspects of life.

1. + 2. I enjoyed this as verse - not poetry. The subject is quite true to life though not original and I like the marching rhythm. It makes pleasant reading as a bit of fun.

2. + 2. This is much more serious and requires a little more thought. The thought behind it is very true and offers courage to those who most need it. I like the idea that 'blessings' and 'disease' may be 'servants of our destinies' and not the masters. Are not lines 2 and 3 synonymous?
3. + 1. It is so difficult to say whether you like or dislike a poem when you like some things about it and dislike others. The strong, dancing rhythm is very pleasing, but the subject matter and the treatment of it are not compatible. Had it been a sea shanty in the same style it would have been very stirring, but had the poor, ill-used people it is about been so full of zest and vigour they would not have been down trodden for very long. It doesn't quite ring true. I don't expect you could eliminate mine accidents and shipwrecks even from the most perfect State.

4. + 2. This is one of the few poems that is pictorial and I liked it for that. Verse 2 appealed to me very much, but surely there is a beauty in the ugliness of the miner's rows? Surely there is beauty in the courage and strength of the miners and their families, struggling for cleanliness and decency against heavy odds, fighting for health, and courageously waiting for news when the whistle blows? They are strong people, not wanting sympathy or charity; proud, too. Surely here is beauty hidden behind the dirty bricks.

5. + 3. I liked this poem very much indeed because it offers comfort and courage to the whole of mankind and accepts life as it is instead of grumbling and moaning about our many misfortunes. It reminds me of Harry Lauder's song, 'Keep right on to the end of the road.'

6. - 2. There's nothing beautiful about this; I thought the words were very ugly. I imagine most religious bodies would disagree with the last line; they believe we are spiritually nearer to God than in the alligator-worshipping days.

7. - 2. I think 'not fearing the sack' is far too coarse to be poetry. The idea of 'love' being recreation is abominable; it is far too precious. Did the poet not mean sex? And I'm cynical enough to believe that even the men of the future will be deceitful.

8. + 2. The first verse is beautiful and the idea of the poem is very tender and penetrating. The second verse is a little obscure and possibly ambiguous.

9. - 1. My first thought on reading this poem was that if life was so terrible the woman shouldn't have had a baby, and that she is responsible for its future miserable life. My second thought was that it is too sentimental, though I very much like the third line of the last verse.
10. + 3. I like the style and idea of this, and the contrast between the material and spiritual. The scope is very limited, generalisations usually are, but it's good as far as it goes.

11. - 3. I hated this, possibly because I am English and am rather proud of our heritage and our Gentlemen. The country people mostly went into the factories for the sake of an easier and lazier life, and many of the terrible factory owners were not gentlemen but clever workers who had risen by devious means and were obsessed by intoxicating power. I wonder if 'the patient Russian peasant' is any better off now, and I have an idea that the 'God-damned English gentlemen' know perfectly well what 'we' are, and make allowances for 'our' ignorance.

12. + 1. I quite liked the idea behind this, particularly 'Our gaze is submarine'. A refreshing idea, except that we do know from whence it comes, and I think we look through the light to the unknown mysteries beyond.

13. - 2. I don't like this. For a start the poet asks an interesting question but doesn't try to answer it, telling us instead something we all know and not even expressing it in beautiful language. A master may pay for the use of his servants physical strength, but I don't think he buys his soul.

14. - 2. This seems rather a long-winded way of saying 'Forget the world's cares'. I don't know what 'the jealous 0' means, nor do I see why you should forget the happy long ago, if such it was, nor can I understand the last verse.

15. + 3. I like this very much and think it is very true, particularly the last line. The rhythm is good and the style pleasant, and its application is universal.

16. - 1. After having thought for a while I have decided that I don't really see the point of this poem. The first three verses are all right but the fourth doesn't seem to reach any conclusion. Why should a lonely man in a deathly corridor ask for simple action by simple statement? I don't really see how a statement can ask anything, and I'm not sure that leaves falling, loving and dying are such simple actions. I read the last verse more than six times.
LIBERALS.

Gram. F.C.S. Incomplete.

1. - 2. I do not like the rhythm of this poem. It could almost - but not quite - come under the heading of doggerel and not poetry at all. The idea is hardly original.

2. + 3. I like the sonnet form very much. The general effect and feeling of the poem is noble and beautiful.

3. - 3. There is a cynical note underlying this. The idea of the oppression of man is uppermost. Bitter class distinctions between rich and workers is deplorable.


5. + 1. I have no strong feelings about this. The idea is rather commonplace.

6. + 3. A noble and thoughtful poem.

7. - 2. I dislike poetry which turns from the traditional and begins its lines without capital letters - free verse. The second line - "men not fearing the sack" - is most unfortunate. Everyday slang, in my opinion, should have no place in a poem but only in conversation.

8. + 1. This grows on the imagination on reading again. I feel now this should be classified under 2 not 3.


10. + 3. Very good. This poem applies Christianity to to-day's problems and troubles.

11. - 1. I wish the bitter and cynical note could be cast out. This satirical poem reminds me of some of G.K. Chesterton's poetry.

12. + 2. Though I like this very much I am not too happy about the use of the words "submarine" and "fractures". The dictionary definition fits in with the meaning of the lines, but these two words seem out of keeping with the rest of the poem which is largely traditional in expression.

13. + 1. Oppression and cynicism again. The freedom of the individual is apparently in danger from some unidentified tyrant.
14. + 3. Very good.

15. + 1. This is our world under the threat of the atom-bomb.

16. + 2. The very beautiful second line is marred for me by the lack of capitals at the beginning of lines. This is difficult to explain. I simply know that I dislike it.

I should be interested to know if you have a spare copy of poems numbers 2, 6, 10 and 14. I should appreciate having copies to keep of these if possible.


1. 0. This is a little jingling thing in which life is enormously over-simplified. Sort of thing simple souls like to hang up on the wall of their living room.

2. + 1. This is a rather neat and pleasant poem. It aims to put over a single point and does it quite well and clearly.

3. - 1. I don't much care for this. As in No. 1, we have over-simplification and emotionalism for emotionalism's sake. It leaves me rather cold and unfired with any enthusiasm for it.

4. + 1. I must say I do rather like this one. For one thing, it particularises more than say No. 3, i.e. instead of vague ravings against "they" - the nasty capitalists, we concentrate on the pale-faced children. Coming from a mining area myself, I appreciate the poignancy of line 12, "white faces", "cheated of life's graces" and "born for the mines" was no exaggeration some years ago.

5. - 2. Like "poem" number 1, this kind of "work" decorates unsightly patches on walls. We all know life ain't easy, but damn me we ain't never tried Utopia yet!!

6. 0. Not fair to judge this out of it's context.

7. - 2. Rather amusing really. Love is delightful mmmm! - but if made obligatory rather than voluntary - how lovely for us all!! How naughty of nasty deceitful people who withheld bread. Don't say it too loud, but has the nice Dictator of Utopia sent them to Siberia?
8. +1. A clever poem, but the last verse doesn't quite satisfy me somehow—doesn't seem to dovetail with verses one and two quite perfectly, i.e. it doesn't complete the sense and meaning of the poem as fully as I would like.

9. -1. I like this just a little, particularly the last line, otherwise it's just a simple lament, which does not impinge deeply on the reader's feelings, and very nearly plunges down the precipice of forced sentiment.

10. +3. This is very good, and strikes home. The contrast between beauty and ugliness, joy and sorrow, and the combination of the two in all human kind is suggested briefly and forcibly. The old sadness of humanity. Reads like Blake.

11. -1. May have been or be true, in some sense, but I don't like jingaistic-we-are-the-new-workers-aristocracy-damm-the-bourgeois stuff.

12. -2. I don't care for this forced stuff. God like the cats' lights too!

13. -1. Times gone by stuff, OK for a simple Gladstonian labourer.

14. 0. Yes we've heard it before. Your beauty makes up for the dole and rotten oppressive types.

15. -1. Man can never be master of his fate, nor in many cases does he mind counting the cast. People suffer misery for power, and like it!!

16. +1. Yes, this is quite good. A general truth, allied to a special pleading, and neatly done.


1. -2. I dislike this poem - the kind you expect to see on gift pottery - the pot having a bad shape and worse colour.

2. +1. This poem seems more sincere.


4. +3. The best of the bunch. A clear picture and message.


6. -1. Too impressive.
7. - 3. No rhythm - you do not want to read it more than once.

8. + 1. A gentle poem which moves.

9. - 3. If you believe this you'll believe anything.

10. + 1. A pretty poem.

11. - 2. See 9 above. Poems are not the best way of extolling hate.

12. 0. Competent but without inspiration.

13. 0. As above.

14. 0. A pleasant poem.

15. + 1. As above.

16. + 1. "


F.G.S. Incomplete.

None of the poems is familiar to me.

1. + 2. The sentiment is true though the poem is far from being great poetry. It is however straightforward and sincere.

2. + 2. This is nicely balanced, clear and forceful.

3. - 2. Bitterness and social hatred as expressed here worry me - by all means seek to better your social position and that of your fellow-workers but not by bitterness.

4. + 1. I have put this poem in the "like a little" section but only just. I don't feel that poetry should be used for propaganda though, admittedly, it can be very effective.

5. + 1. This expresses a truth which we realise more and more as we grow older. I read recently that in middle age you come to realise that life is one long struggle . . . .

6. 0. This poem simply did not appeal to me at all.

7. - 1. This does not ring true somehow and I did not care for it either in form or content.
8. + 2. I like the imagery here. It is more nearly poetry than any of the other poems. It seems to come more from the writer's heart and it isn't seeking to convert anyone to anything. It "sings" more than any of the others.

9. + 2. I am the mother of two little boys so poems about children and babies get me in a tender spot. Children are so very precious to their parents.

10. 0. I really did not know where to place this - I feel I ought to like it but I don't.

11. - 3. This is quite false. It is completely wrong to blame God for man's inhumanity to man. It is a bitter and mistaken indictment which could only do harm if it were taken seriously. This is not the purpose of poetry. The poor and the working classes were shamefully treated by the rich until recent times but presumably this poem was written since the Russian revolution when the working classes in this country were already well on the way to getting a square deal.

12. + 2. I like this. It isn't great poetry but the imagery is good and there are too few poems with a religious basis so that any such are to be welcomed. May I ask if you are a Christian? Your inclusion of a poem like this makes me hope that you are.

13. + 1. A touch of propaganda again here but there is truth also and I always find this metre attractive.

14. 0. I did not care for this poem - it left me quite cold.

15. + 1. No helpful comment - I am lukewarm about this one.

16. - 1. The poetry is poor and the mood rather defeatist.

I have been frank rather than polite which is, I hope, what you wanted.

I do a little reciting and tend to judge poetry from that angle. Do I want to learn this by heart? Would folk grasp it at a first hearing? Should I enjoy reciting it? Does it strike home to me or at least is it clear and uplifting or amusing? Does it strike me as something which the poet had to say or is it contrived and artificial? How few poems, really, are consistently good and yet how wonderful when they are. Great poetry lifts us out of this world.

I have never read any of these poems before.

1. 0. Neither like nor dislike - for I should never bother to read it as poetry (which it is not!) - in the main I agree with it - but I do not care for too much generalization - it leads to loose and inaccurate thinking.

2. + 2. Like a good deal. The poem deals with important truths well-expressed. Some felicitous lines - a poem which leaves one feeling satisfied with its 'completeness'.

3. - 1. Dislike a little - chiefly because I get no satisfaction in this style of writing as poetry - and while admitting that the subject matter may be more 'telling' when presented in verse, I myself usually prefer prose as a medium for the subject of social reform. I find it difficult to express a well-balanced opinion as to the subject-matter, for although I know what hard work is I have had no cause to feel personally the intense class-hatred expressed here - but I see clearly that there is reason for its existence - I also see clearly that such a poem could not be effective as propaganda were it to admit that amongst the employers of labour there will always be many who are neither blood-suckers nor slave-drivers.

4. + 1. As a poem it strikes one as being uneven, and the expression 'my fellows' not very apt. I like it a little because some of the lines are very satisfying - also, the picture painted is vivid and true. I have seen it. I also know that the lives of coal miners and iron workers are not all so drab as the poem would suggest. I have lived near a mining district, I know their singing, their cheerful disregard of danger. The way in which they were able to live before the war, etc. etc.

5. + 1. Like a little because of the sentiments expressed, but I think the method of expressing them is poor - very poor in fact - almost approaching cheap sentimentality. Not worth spending much time over.

6. + 2. Have read more than six times - as I do not read this type of modern verse easily. I like the opinions expressed very much, the poem goes straight to the heart of the matter - it is so true that our knowledge and the information with which we are stuffed have far outstripped our powers of dealing with it all. I think that the reiterated 'where is' at the beginning of lines 14, 15 and 16 very telling - the three O's beginning lines 3, 4, 5
7. + 1. I like the note of hope expressed here, but think that the English used is not always well-chosen. The last two lines outshine the rest.

8. + 2. Like a good deal — am not too sure about the phrase 'like a flower in space'! Does the writer know what he means? Otherwise, the imagery, language, etc. fall 'easy on the ear' and leave one satisfied.

9. - 1. Dislike a little simply because the poem is an unhappy one, but it is well-expressed and some of the lines as poetry have beauty. Impossible to discuss the subject in a few words — it is too difficult. I seem to remember that Alfred Moyes has a poem on these lines — depicting the Virgin Mary singing a Lullaby for the infant Jesus. Clearly man was not, from the beginning, destined for unadulterated happiness and love — there is no such thing. Neither has the 'Master' (if by him the poet means the employer of big labour) set out deliberately with the intention of destroying human life. The path leading to such unhappy relations where they exist in the industrial world has been made intricate and the issue complicated by many factors such as greed, stupidity, lack of real education, lack of knowledge of God, and lack of any desire for such knowledge, and so we return to the fears (so well-expressed) of the mother for her baby. How is she (through all the murky mists of muddled thinking — days of endless toil, clamorous propaganda, class hatred and the like) to see 'life straight, see it whole'?

10. + 2. Like very much — as poetry — and also for the subject. The appeal to thoughtful people is direct and should be both swift and urgent — surely no person whether rich or poor, highly educated or not could fail to be stirred by this poem.

11. - 2. I dislike this chiefly because the writer puts the onus upon God — any thinking person with even an elementary knowledge of God must know should be willing to admit that the onus should be put on the Devil with his powers of evil. Also I feel it a pity to make such use of the phrase 'English gentlemen', for there has always been amid all the tyranny of 'big business' and grasping landowners, an 'English gentleman' who is capable of Christian charity, care for his servants, workpeople, tenants, or those too old to work. I come of a race of
people who have been work people, tenants, yeoman farmers and the like and so I know that this is true, but of course I see that social propaganda of this kind would be useless if the poet had to admit the existence of a fair and just type of employer - all propaganda needs a dash of the fanatical or it loses its striking power. As poetry, I think that the writer knows how to write, his use of re-iteration is effective and his rhythm gives the right amount of 'punch'.

12. + 1. Like a little (in spite of its uneasy rhythm). Some of the lines very beautiful and the images conjured up are lovely. I think words very awkwardly arranged, here and there.

13. - 1. As poetry I do not care for the metre - it can so easily be made to 'jingle' instead of giving pertinence and point to an urgent subject. I like the subject matter in that it draws a striking picture of those who fail to possess their own souls, which according to W. E. Henley it is quite possible to do whatever the circumstances. 'I thank God for my unconquered soul' and he had reason to know.

14. # 2. I like this: meaning, rhythm, language and all - BUT what does he mean by 'the jealous O'?

15. + 2. I like this - I like the poetry as such. Also the meaning - much to the point and brought home to the reader.

16. + 2. Opinion about the same as for 15.


1. 0. 2. + 2. 3. + 1.
4. + 2. 5. - 2. 6. + 1.
7. - 2. 8. 0. 9. - 3.
10. + 1. 11. - 3. 12. + 2.
16. + 3.


1. + 1. I quite liked this as it has a good rythm, but cannot agree with the sentiments expressed! With our modern civilization, barter is impossible - hence the need for money enabling us to buy the things we want,
whether it be aeroplanes or books — and the price of the
latter is quite appalling to-day, as I know to my cost!
I don't wish to kill anyone for money, but I find life
much more pleasant when I have enough! Also I have seen
more unhappy and ravaged faces among the "poor" than I
have among the "rich".

2. + 2. I liked this quite a lot all round. A good
philosophy!

3. + 2. I also liked this one, but had I read this 50
or even 30 years ago, I would have been more impressed!
I think the "workers" of today in England have little to
grumble about — their pay is good, there is still a
housing shortage, but have you seen the council houses
and flats? They're marvellous! — for about 20/- — 23/-
per week! No, I have not much pity for them today!

4. 0. This poem again is dated. You should see the
miner's children today — as fat and bonny as anyone else's!
They also do not have to go into the mines, but many do as
the pay is excellent and sanitary conditions good. They
certainly had a terrible time during the depression but
there is little fear of that returning since everyone
the world over requires coal, even poor quality coal!

5. + 1. This is my husband's philosophy to a 'T'! But
I find on the whole, if I wait for a thing too long,
before getting it, I no longer want it and I can think
of nothing more pleasant than sunshine all the way! After
all, if one got tired of it, one could always shade under
a tree or go indoors. This smacks of Kipling to me.

6. + 2. This I liked, and alas, how very true!

7. + 2. This I also liked, but human nature being what
it is, I find the last verse a trifle optimistic.

8. + 3. This I liked very much — a pleasure to read.

9. + 2. I liked this but babies must grow up, and growing
up, perhaps they will find some solution to the world's
problems and a way to universal peace.

10. + 2. I liked this a good deal.

11. + 1. I quite liked this, as it has a good rhythm —
you can almost spit it out! But I feel on the whole it's
a rather trying piece of Russian Communist propaganda!
Incidentally, for the most part, the English landed gentry
or Squires, treated their dependants rather well. They usually owned one or more villages giving employment to hundreds—there was a close bond between the Squire and his villagers. Of course there were exceptions and it is these one always hears most of! I've always thought that country life in England was most pleasant, up until the end of the 18th century when mechanization of mills, etc., started. But the people who caused the unrest and unhappiness with their mills, mines, etc., in the 19th century, were, for the most part, not, repeat not, Gentlemen. They were the opportunists and profiteers. Of course, in India you have seen another type of "English gentleman". Again, a most unfortunate type, as something awful happens to English people when they are settled in colonies abroad. I've seen a little of that even in Oslo. Whether it is that they are not really gentlemen I don't know, but their manners are often non-existent, their outlook insular and the whole thing creates a most unhappy impression! However, I think on the whole, we've done better both at home and abroad than any other great power. We may have excited dislike and envy, but have never excited the hatred and fear that have some others, who shall be nameless! By the way, I don't think the ordinary man in the street in England is half as discontented with his lot as everyone is trying to persuade him to be!!!

12. O. This I find a little too ornate.

13. O. Again I don't think this is applicable today.
And even in his worst moments, the Average Englishman has a will of his own. He may have been forced economically to do repugnant tasks, but you never know what is going on in his mind, and if he has a grievance, he will air it. It usually gets heard and attended to!

14. + 2. Yes, I liked this.

15. + 1. I quite liked this.

16. + 2. This I liked. I enjoyed reading it.


Before making comments on individual poems, I should mention that "like very much" does not mean that I place any of these poems on a level with the greatest poetry, though I would class some as good.
1. — 3. I dislike this very much because of the false sentimentalitv it contains. It is not true that the really poor "laugh quite a lot" or that all the rich are "weighed down by cares". Muddled and untrue thought, therefore dangerous. The style is commonplace doggerel.

2. + 2. I like the form (Petrarchan sonnet) because it demands discipline and control of material. I like the sharp contrasts in the octet, especially "winter snow" and "summer petals burn", and the way in which the latter suggests bright colour without naming it. In the sestet, the thought is not worked out with the same sharpness of contrast and so the poem loses force a little. If the sestet were equal to the octet, I should like this very much. The pattern of the sounds is harmonious, especially the "v's" and "m's" in the first six lines. I forget the author but think he is well-known — can it be early Keats?

3. — 2. The style seems formed on Kipling in his "soapbox" mood. Too artificial and cheaply rhetorical for the subject — this is not the natural speech of working men, but if the language is to be "literary" it might as well be dignified. Here we have colloquialisms, "never a dollar", "you know", "we're told", mixed up with artificial inversions ("forges red") and archaisms ("go reckon", "bought it fair"). One archaism which I find specially irritating is the abbreviation "ha'" for "have", which gives an air of affectation to the whole; the effect in line 1 of the last verse is particularly unpleasant if one tries to read the line aloud. One phrase, "you lie on crimson wool", gains in effect by suggesting a Biblical reference (Isaiah 1. 18) associated with the idea of repentance. The rest is commonplace and unoriginal.

Regarding the subject-matter, this is obviously propaganda verse, and shows the weakness of much propaganda verse; crudely emotional appeal, exaggeration and an exclusively one-sided view of life. I think the best of such verse, on whatever subject and from whatever point of view, can never be the greatest poetry. This specimen is poor of its kind.

4. + 3. I like this very much because it seems to me to succeed in sharing the emotions and ideas aroused by the scene it describes, in the manner proper to poetry. That is, we are given a few striking details by which the scene is suggested to our imagination, and which have at the same time a symbolic value — e.g. the tainting of the yellow smoke, and the dusty weeds to which the children
are compared. A whole picture of man-made desolation is contained in the one line "There on slag heaps, where no bird poises." I do not like the phrase "sweet human flowers" used for the children; it is too sentimental, and has been too much used as a mere cliche, though here it gains value by association with the darnel and dock and starwort. There is a careful use of words suggesting drab colour: yellow, wan, white. The slightly rough irregular metre helps the effect. The poet states his own view directly here and there - "folk with no share", "children cheated of life's graces" - but he does not try to force the emotion unduly, and is mostly content to let the poem create its own response. I do not know the author, but the poem reminds me of D.H. Lawrence's earlier poems.

5. - 1. A harmless platitude expressed in well-worn cliches. I dislike it a little because of its slipshod manner.

6. + 2. This might be an extract from a longer poem, but the thought is complete and the language and movement of the lines are in harmony with it. The words used: circuit, revolution, cycle, farther and nearer, etc. and the repetition and patterning of words and phrases give the impression of circular motion; the references to stars, seasons and centuries suggest vastness of space and time. It is rather abstract and remote; not without emotion, but a cold intellectual emotion. Pictorial effect has been almost entirely rejected. Probably not a poem with wide appeal. It sounds rather like T.S. Eliot in the "Four Quartets" period.

7. + 1. I like the subject, but as a poem it is just not poetic enough. It has both feet flat on the ground where it should dance. The rhythm becomes clear when it is read aloud, but what a joyless rhythm! In the last two lines it fits the words well, and the short line gives emphasis to "sad, furious, fatal" - I like this choice of adjectives. The key of the rest is too low, too near prose - a very grey vision of a Golden Age.

8. + 2. Carefully designed. The images are developed; first ripples in water, then sound waves, then mental stimuli; the last verse taking up the first two images - "echoes like music or a stone" (itself an echo) and using them metaphorically. This in turn gives the original images new meaning - the stone in a dark pool suggests the unconscious mind, etc. I also like the comparison of music fading like a flower - spreading outward but
losing power — and the suggestion of hostility of the
"deaf walls", matched in the next verse by the opposition
of the "guarded mind". The long open vowels at the
beginning of verse 2 contrast with the flat dull sounds
of the last line, following the meaning.

9. - 2. A parody of Scott's "O hush thee, my baby, thy
sire is a knight" - an effectively ironic idea which could
have been more effective in practice if the writer had
preserved the ironic attitude instead of lapsing into
indignation and sentimentality. As it is, in trying to
pitch the note too high he spoils the effect. Again a
weakness of propaganda verse; it demands a stock response,
without which it cannot succeed. This fails for me because
it is based on an over-simplification and so does not satisfy
my reason; it overworks the emotional appeal and so does
not stir my feelings; and the language is too unoriginal
and commonplace to arouse my imagination. Like much rather
excitable writing, it overworks alliteration.

10. 0. The idea is worthy but not very original; a neat
contrast, stated in a compact form, with the repetitions
used quite effectively as a little pattern; the language
simple and direct (except for "bowers" which has no other
use than to rhyme with "flowers") - but all too obvious.
The choice of words and objects is exactly what one expects:
birds, children, green meadows, the sky's wide dome, etc.
The poem's brevity and emotional restraint are good points,
but it lacks imagination and does not arouse interest.

11. - 3. See remarks on the subject-matter of No. 3.
I dislike this strongly because I feel it to be insincere
more soap-box oratory, stock sentiments expressed in stock
language. "They stole away the soil" mostly during the
19th century or earlier; this was not written before 1917,
but the writer is trotting out a set of conventional
Aunt Sallies. Contrast Kingsley's "The Bad Squire" for
genuine feeling. Class hatred, towards any class, is a
mean and nasty emotion and this appeals to nothing higher;
there is no genuine sympathy for the oppressed. It creates
a certain effect of liveness by its jaunty metre, sledge­
hammer repetitions, and heavy-handed irony ("the honest
English gentlemen") - the use of language is entirely
unoriginal.

12. + 1. A simple thought expressed in a collection of
pleasant images which appeal chiefly to the visual sense.
The clearest picture (to me) is given by the line "And
see the light that fractures through unquiet water"; this
and the preceding line exchange direct statement for an effective metaphor which suggests ideas of depth, obscurity, remoteness, incompleteness of understanding. I like these two lines very much; the rest I like mildly for its pictorial effects.

13. + 3. In metre, language and spirit, this reminds me of Shelley's "Masque of Anarchy" and I should guess that it belongs to the same period. The style is at once plain and dignified, appropriate to the subject; the appeal is to common human emotions arising from intellectual ideas, and expressed in suitable imagery and language, so that the mind, feelings and imagination, and the sense, are all satisfied. The words carry very rich associations of ideas, especially the word "bent" - a serious play on words in the tradition of "wit" writing: men bend, literally, to their work; they are forced to it; they become themselves tools "like the poor crooked scythe and spade"; they are warped by it when they become swords for their masters' defence, etc. The language is used imaginatively and creatively; the words are those of every-day use but are given increased value. I note that most of the rhymes emphasise important words: pay, cell, spade, bent, soul, etc. - the rhyme is not mere ornament but functional.

14. - 1. This sonnet is in the Shakespearean form, and appears also to attempt the Shakespearean manner. There is also a suggestion of the rondeau form; the way in which the first three words are repeated as a refrain is ingenious, and no doubt it is not the writer's fault that this device has lately been cheapened by dance band lyrics. "Jealous 0" I take to mean the world of mankind, with the associated idea of nullity and worthlessness. Line 4 is trite; so is line 3, and the idea of being "kings and queens" does not quite fit the previous attitude of detachment and indifference to the world; the meaning is clear but the image could have been better chosen. The octet is apparently addressed to a human being who can forget, be hurt to the soul, etc., whereas the Beauty addressed in the sestet must be an abstraction, since it cannot be threatened by war or the world's wreck. This change of subject, and the clumsy construction of lines 9-12, suggest confusion of thought. I find the general effect rather pretentious.

15. - 1. Respectable sentiments expressed in wholly conventional language. Rhythm sacrificed to metre in verse 1; melodramatic flourish at the end of verse 2. Well-meant; but "feeble cry" is right.
16. O. This describes a true and common human experience, the sense of spiritual isolation, and contrasts it with the sharing of simple natural emotions. The images chosen are suitable but obvious; in this sense "tower" and "falling leaves" are almost proverbial—are they being used intentionally? The maze with "deathly corridor" vaguely suggests the Minotaur myth, but again I do not know whether this is intentional. If the poem is being very subtle, I have not fully understood it. There is a deliberate awkwardness of rhythm and intrusion of prosaic words such as "ultimately" and "inevitably", which I take to represent the frustration of the isolated spirit as contrasted with the natural flow of the simple emotions. The poem seems to suffer from the speaker's isolation; I cannot respond to it for some reason which I do not know.


1. + 1. The form is too jingly, and tends to make the theme sound too trivial—though indeed it is funny—we egpleral things should kill for money.

2. + 1. I always shy from the apologetic—and the pseudo philosophic. For to my mind evil can not be explained away—not in this life anyway—and who knows of any other-knows.

3. + 1. This is dated—takes for granted that all wealth is ill-gotten, and ill spent.

4. - 1. Dated too—for miners are more priveledged now than they have ever been—irritating the poem.

5. - 1. Ugly metre and trite.

6. + 3. This says something which needs to be said and to be recognised. Silence and stillness—without knowledge of these there must be unbalance.

7. G. In the light of my experience—"men who do not fear the sack" are slack and ungracious, and decry all they do not understand—it is wrong to generalise of course, but must do for brevity.

8. + 2. I like this one for its imagery—"music like a flower in space"—gives vista somehow.

9. + 2. Swings well and is tender, but somewhat fatalistic if intended as a lullaby.
10. + 2. Sensitive.

11. + 2. Forceful - rather than fair, amusing now.

12. + 3. There is some music in this.

13. - 1. It has rhythm - but somehow does not ring true, also so tired of the word "freedom".

14. + 3. There is perspective here.

15. + 1. Banal.

16. + 3. There is real truth in this and well expressed.

I am not familiar with any of these poems.
I have paid attention rather to the what than the how.

Sec. F.O.S. Incomplete.

1. 0. The sentiments expressed here are all very trite and the whole poem or rather verse (it can hardly be called poetry) is so trivial that it isn't worth serious thought.

2. + 2. This piece merits the name of poem. The language and simplicity of style suit the thoughts they convey and the thought behind the poem has depth.

3. + 1. Verse form and metre are catchy - the thoughts behind the poem typical of stuff that is fed to the workers nowadays to incite them to discontent. "A lie that is half the truth is ever the greatest of lies".

4. + 1. Here the metre and to a certain extent alliteration, "by the wayside dusty weed drowses" are used to accentuate the pitiful note on which the poem is written and used with a certain amount of success. The thought is commonplace now that it almost ceases to mean anything.

5. - 2. Rotten verse, rotten thoughts, rotten cliches.

6. + 3. A poem of which Wordsworth would approve in so far as it achieves the aim he professed to seek with his poetry, in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", i.e. "to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them .... in a selection of language really used by men .... to make these incidents and
situations interesting by tracing in them .... the primary laws of our nature". The thoughts here are profound and worthy of consideration.

7. - 1. Again the thoughts in the poem have the usual unbalanced propaganda touch.

8. + 1. The poetic images are attractive, the thought slight. A certain fragility or delicacy obtained by careful selection of language and metre and avoidance of jarring expressions which is also attractive. (Only word which has any harshness of sound in first verse - "cracks".)

9. - 2. Can't be bothered with this sort of self-pitying trash.

10. 0. Nothing in it either to like or dislike.

11. - 3. Same remarks as No. 9 only this is blood and thunder not self-pity. Obviously political propaganda which would be swallowed wholesale by the masses. Personally I believe that life is what one makes it; that no-one with brains or character need remain an underdog nowadays and that as few of the workers lived in the times described in these poems I can't see what they have to worry about. It is the present and the future which matter.

12. + 1. The pictures are varied and each fascinating and the subject at least worthy of a poem.

13. - 2. "I am the master of my fate, and am the captain of my soul". Obvious, by now, why I don't like this.

14. + 2. The thoughts expressed are my own.

15. 0. Again I disagree with the thought expressed as it seems only partly true, but poem doesn't make much impression on my mind either with thought or language.

16. + 2. I like the simplicity of language and the melodiousness of the poem but while the thought is interesting it is still open to question. "Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements", "man wanders proudly and vainly or cowers afraid". I don't altogether agree with those statements. There is no proof that what the poet alleges is true.
1. + 1. I like the poem because it gives a very true picture of the effect of money on the lives of human beings. The last four lines seem to sum the whole situation up in a few words and provide a very fitting ending to the poem.

2. + 3. I like the rhyming pattern of this poem very much and its rather unusual subject. The poem seems to be very well written and the words have a smooth "flow" about them.

3. - 3. I object very much to the shortening of words in poems, i.e. tho' and ha'. The subject is very exaggerated in my opinion and the poet must have been embittered by some experience to write such a discontented poem.

4. - 1. This like 3 is another poem expressing discontent. The people seem to have no hope of anything better in the future. I can't believe that their faces are always full of despair.

5. 0. This poem is a sermon. The third verse has some good comparisons of light and dark as has 2. I don't like the last verse at all as the poet seems to have put himself on a pinnacle and is preaching to his inferiors.

6. 0. I don't like blank verse and the repetition of several phrases in the poem. It needs several readings to obtain anything like a true picture of what the poet is trying to express.

7. - 2. I've read this poem through several times and have still no clear idea of its theme. I don't like the short lines without capital letters at the beginning.

8. + 1. This poem gives the reader something to think about. I presume that it is trying to impress upon us the smallness of our own particular lifetime with respect to time, but how some beautiful things can leave a lasting impression.

9. + 2. There is a "lilt" about this poem which is very suitable for a lullaby. It is very similar to a poem I once read and liked and this may have influenced my opinion of it. The third line of the last verse is a very good way of expressing the sudden change from a child to a man.
10. 0. I can't believe that anybody with such a miserable picture of mankind in his soul, would see the birds and flowers in the light in which the poet does.

11. 0. This poem makes very little impression upon me, as I was unaware that the "workers" of England were as discontent as they appear to be in this poem. It must be fairly modern and the attitude expressed in the poem has given me a surprise.

12. + 1. This poem has some very good "pictures" in it and that is the main reason for my liking it. I like the references to the lights of the world all springing from "The Light Invisible".

13. - 1. By the time I reached this poem I was rather tired of the discontented attitude of several of the previous poems. This poem is another of the "sermon" type. I don't think I really understand this poem.

14. - 2. I have no idea what "The jealous O" is. So many of these poems are terribly bitter and I much prefer the happier type of poem. These poets all seem to have a bitter hatred of the men in power. This poet does not appear to find something worthwhile in the world - beauty, which compensates for the vice in the world.

15. + 2. This poem has a pleasant rhythm and begins on a happier note than most. The poet has some hope for the future of the world but sees nothing good in it at the moment.

16. - 2. This poem is full of disconnected phrases and the lines do not have capital letters to start them. I don't like the rhythm of the poem and I don't really understand it.

I'm sorry I can't give better comments on the poems, but I've had very little experience in doing so and found it rather difficult.
NON-AFFILIATED.


2. + 3. Excellent - a simple idea, but never expressed tritely, so that one has to read this more than once to catch its beauty. Flowing metre, with splendid caesuras - that alone will get my vote for any poem no matter what the sentiment expressed!

4. + 3. I like its wistfulness, so well expressed in the first two lines and which tempers the bitterness of the later lines.

14. + 3. Expresses hope of better things, so strongly put that it compels my admiration - I like to think that the mind can conquer circumstance.

11. + 2. I have a (sneaking) admiration for the sentiment expressed, so that I can excuse the jingling metre. In fact I like its full-bloodedness.

16. + 1. For me this is spoiled by the third verse which spoils a clever idea by expressing it in a 'breathless' fashion.

7. + 1. Rather a trite sentiment.

8. + 1. I once worked in a glass factory so that I cannot stomach the likening of the dropping of a stone into a pool to cracking of a glass! Frankly I do not know why I do not like the poem better!

10. + 1. Like the pleasure of the first half, but not the rude contrast of the second.

6. + 1. Altogether too restless for me.

15. - 1. This is not true.

5. - 1. Terrible jingle: like the "obituary" verses in Lancashire local newspapers.

12. - 1. Again I do not like this poem's restlessness which the author seems deliberately to stimulate. The whole expression of ideas is good.

1. - 1. Jingle (like 5).


9. - 2. ditto: and vicious too!
13. -2. May be true, but unpalatable.


1. + 1. Not my idea of poetry. What it has to say is quite clear, though the thought itself is muddled. It isn't funny, at all.

2. + 1. Truth of a sort, and reasonable poetry, but nothing new, no positive message and too much soothing syrup for our present need.

3. + 2. A good full-blooded statement of fact. The meter well suited for the purpose.

4. + 2. Good poetry; it paints a true and haunting picture, "My fellows" bridges the gulf between the poet and the class to whom he addresses himself and the far distant miners, makes it clear that he and his children are our flesh and blood.

5. - 2. Not poetry. The writer seems to be cheering his own poor weak soul along. "See your shoes are strong" some of us find strong shoes unattainable, including the author, only he doesn't realise it. He seems almost hysterical in his lonely disorganised struggle.

6. 0. Good, well organised despair poem. This poet has the false sensitivity of the English upper class, his despair is due to his lack of roots in reality. He is an overcultured plant. The poetry is good, the message worth thinking about, but not taken at face value. I know it. I believe it's T.S. Eliot's.

7. + 1. Too flat for its message. Its close-packed ideas will appeal to the few who are familiar with them. Jumps too suddenly from one idea to another, gives a false effect of confused thought.

8. + 2. Rather lovely introverted poem. And twisting... etc. strikes a slightly cliche note, as well as being in discord with the rest of the poem.

9. + 1. Rather bitter, and I don't like the oblique use of the baby very much. Those are not thoughts to have over a baby, much less a real lullaby. If that's the way you feel, don't have babies. Or else fight for them. It's almost a whine and makes one nearly as furious with the people who whine about the planning for death as with the planners. But only almost, which is a good point.
10. 0. Again rather despairing, the acceptance of the agonies of all mankind, by a man who sees green meadows and silver trees from the windows of his house.

11. + 3. An excellent bit of revolutionary poetry with a strong rousing rhythm, bright sarcasm and a potent threat.


13. - 1. Inexpressive, poor poetry. The sort of stuff that gives the working class movement an air of Salvation Army.

14. - 3. Escapism, escaping to more dull eyed grovelling, though this is better poetry than No. 12.

15. + 2. Misses the first rate group, because it relies almost entirely on cliche, which is, however, skillfully used, the message is plain and clear.

16. + 2. A lovely poem, one feels the need of a time and place for this poet's longings to be fulfilled. That is the world we're looking for. It's contribution is an ultimate aim for the struggle.


1. - 2. A silly little poem, culminating in the stupidity of "Isn't it funny?". The poet's comments may be compared with a child's remarks upon a complex machine. He doesn't understand why the rich look bored, nor why men want money, nor that sometimes money can buy the "odd something". A worthless poem this, as its judgments are so superficial and naive. The sort of thing printed in an inferior magazine for women.

2. + 2. Poetic and imaginative. The writer has made a shrewd observation of life and follows the idea logically to express a philosophic theme. A neat analogy of concrete and abstract, very well suited to sonnet form.

3. - 3. The rhythm of this doggerel is monotonous but therefore has a certain force - it is easy to follow, to understand and be carried along by, and therefore all the reader's attention is upon the subject, which is bitter, cynical and therefore inartistic (cynicism being directly opposed to art, which is appreciation). Typical of this
provocative emotion-stirring (or hoping to) kind of verse is that it is built upon a seed of truth, viewed with a jaundiced eye. Patently ignorant of any political theory the writer has lost his head over an injustice. Destructive not constructive, therefore dangerous.

4. 0. This is just not poetry, but an echo of a score of cliche-ridden verses. The thought represents a justifiable opinion, sincerely expressed.

5. - 2. Patience Strong or Kathleen Partridge would be proud of this: philosophy for everyday, fluent and ready-made. At least it sounds sincere and appeals to some tastes. I find it irritating.

6. + 2. Elaborately expressed, but represents a universal theme and feeling - something therefore worthwhile attempting. I cannot agree with the poet, although at times in life one might be tempted to do so. A clever poem, aimed to disturb the reader. Again, it represents a half-truth rather than an acceptable theory.

7. - 2. The writer looks out of rose-coloured spectacles, which dim his perception and imagination, so that he writes his piece in short lines instead of in acceptable prose. The ideal expressed is sincere and, indeed, to be hoped for. The last verse doesn't quite hinge on to the first too, it is too undeveloped - comes out 'pat' like potted meat.

8. + 3. I enjoyed reading this and I agreed with the idea it expressed. It is pleasant, imaginative and presents visual pictures with the eye of a painter. It describes accurately, almost recreates, a sensation of the mind.

9. 0. I have come across this before. Bitter, again, and out-dated. Men with such theories are now better educated, more subtle - one could not defend this poem adequately with reference to present day employers etc. although it was no doubt more apt in harder times. Exaggerated and yet pathetic.

10. + 2. Simply expressed and very forceful. The last line is almost mentally shocking in its stark simplicity. A very effective poem. Not just depressing, but hopeful that there might be a solution to the world's miseries somewhere. Reflects not so much lack of faith as regret at the gap between Ideal and Common Practice.

11. - 3. The under-dog is at it again - jealous, bitter and advocating force for the solution of immense social problems. Thoughtless, dangerous, totally one-sided view
of history and the nature of man in general. The writer
has, of course, his righteous grievances but his attitude
is totally out of proportion to them.

12. 0. To me this inevitably invites comparison with
Milton's great Invocation to Light (Paradise Lost III)
and therefore is at a disadvantage from the start.
Otherwise I find it adequately expressed but uninspired.
Carefully thought out by the writer.

13. 0. I don't know when this was written, but, like
the others, I find its socialistic ideas out of date and
fantastic. Makes little impression apart from this.

14. + 3. Refreshing to find such a poem amid a welter of
puerile social reformers and amateur philosophers. I doubt
if one "can forget all these" but shows temporary feeling
of elation which is inspiring, encouraging. Probably
appeals to the young, because idealistic etc.

15. 0. Adequate expression of an oft-expressed idea.
Makes little impression on me as it seems all rather out-
of-touch and hardly a valuable contribution to poetry.
Reminds me that I have "heard it all before". A feeble
cry better stifled.

16. + 3. Appeals to sense of 'frustration' (in popular
sense) in a complex, complicated world. A call to freedom,
to abandon the strain of life and attempt to find peace of
mind in simple living. I heartily endorse the poet's
call, although it is quite obviously only a Utopian ideal.


6. + 2. I like the majestic pulse here. The line
"perpetual revolution of configured stars" has a slight
Shakespearian ring. I am usually taken (perhaps unduly)
by dialectical phrases like "all our knowledge" etc. The
lines (I don't know them, but suspect T.S. Eliot) convey
very well, though perhaps a bit self-consciously, a
feeling of utter despair; also, of the beauty of nature.

13. + 2. I am almost certain this is from Shelley; if
I did not think this, I might have placed it lower down
the list. However, the phrasing is tight - very good
workmanship - there is a simple starkness of imagery and
rhythm which seems to suit the emotion.

12. + 1. I like the way the image builds up through
re-iteration. It has, however, a kind of self-consciousness,
more evident than in 6 which halts the emotion - or
halts my emotional response.

9. + 1. Simple lyricism and sincerity - a bit naive,
but within narrow limits it gets something across.

16. + 1. Like the first verse - the next too crude.
The phrasing of the last verse is somewhat obscure.

8. + 1. A suggestion of a good sketch for a poem
- not worked out. The bleak atmosphere conveyed by stanzas
1 and 2 has a certain effectiveness.

4. + 1. Again, a degree of genuine emotion, and fairly
competent word-paintings. Workmanship somewhat untidy.
Rhythm loose, without cause, in places.

2. + 1. Nice sonnet-style regularity - too easy flowing,
however. The expression does not rise to the thought.

11. + 1. I like the simple vigour of this. It does
not attempt form which is greater than the content - but
the content is not very noteworthy.

3. + 1. Remarks on 13 apply here, but I am not sure if
this is not a bit above 13, really.

14. 0. I like the first stanza (except for the "jealous"
"C" - what on earth is the '0'? Othello?) "But in our
souls" is a pretty bad line. "And I, oh Beauty" sounds
false - and rather obscure. Is Beauty just Beauty, or
a white woman?

15. - 1. Forced. A good many chiches - e.g. "hell is
loosed", "master of your fate", "modern calvary".

7. - 1. It is like 15 a good deal. Hardly any sense
of rhythm and music. (If it were not for a sense of
sincerity in these poems I might say I dislike them very
much).

10. - 1. This is much better than 7 and 15. But the
contrast between the window and soul outlook seems to me
obscure and rather forced than genuinely felt.

5. - 2. No poetry, hardly, at all here. Content bad
and the form hardly any better.

1. - 2. A little bit of humour here is welcome, but
the "poem" is horribly naive.

1. 0. 2. + 3. 3. 0. 4. + 3.
5. 0. 6. 0. 7. - 3. 8. + 3.
9. + 1. 10. + 3. 11. - 3. 12. 0.
15. + 1. 14. + 1. 15. + 3. 16. + 3.

A 43. (20) Student. (Father: Colonel R.A.N.C.)
Pub. F.O.S. 74.

1. + 3. The thing I like about this poem is (1) that what it says is quite true and (ii) it is admirably expressed. In fact the whole presentation appeals to me.

2. - 1. I can just see what the poet is getting at but I don't really like the way he approaches the subject. The whole thing is rather muddled and his contrasts have no effect upon me, in. any way. In fact it seems rather illogical.

3. - 2. I don't think I like this poem as the sentiment is laid on with a trowel with nothing spared. In fact the whole thing appears to be based on a totally biased outlook and this is rather unpleasant.

4. + 1. This is a complete contrast to the last as is its theme. As I have lived for a very short time in a mining district I can fully appreciate the poet's thoughts and I like the way that he expresses them. Even so certain parts seem to be untrue.

5. + 2. I like this one for roughly the same reasons as the first but not quite so much - why, I am not quite sure.

6. 0. This leaves my mind a complete blank as I cannot really follow his reasoning and cannot see what he is getting at at all.

7. - 3. This resembles No. 3. I as such do not really like it. It does not say anything which is worth saying and is really rather repulsive.

8. + 2. I like this one mainly because of his use of simile which really does appeal to me. Especially the one regarding the pool and stone which does fit the purpose of the poem.

9. 0. This poem says much but does not in fact say anything.
10. 0. This is not nearly such a good poem as regards the phrasing as No. 6 but I can understand it. It seems to be rather childish—a complete change from any of the others.

11. — 2. This is of the same theme as Nos. 3 and 7 and equally futile.

12. + 3. I like this poem very much. The whole thing is extremely pleasing and I should not like to single out any part for special mention. It is a very pleasant change from much of the usual religious writing.

13. 0. This means nought to me as I cannot understand what the poet is trying to point out although I cannot understand what he says.

14. + 2. I like this poem. Its sentiment is sound and beautifully expressed. In fact a very pleasant poem.

15. 0. I am not really sure about this poem. I like it but then I don't!

16. 0. This is quite beyond me.

A 44. M. (19) Student. (Father: Preventive Officer)

As a general comment on these poems, I would say that none of them is great poetry. I have therefore placed none of them in the first category, for to do so would be to strain my sense of values.

I hope I have not written too much (or, in one or two cases, too little) for some of the poems have given me much to comment on, while others are a good illustration of the difference between verse and poetry.

1. — 2. I feel fairly strong dislike of this poem for two main reasons: its form strikes me as trivial, its subject banal. The main idea of the poem, the paradoxical uselessness of money, is quite unoriginal and may even be fallacious. The poetic form seems reminiscent of a popular song such as "Money is the root of all Evil".

2. + 2. This poem I like a good deal because the poet has something to say and uses the sonnet form extremely well to say it. He develops the first idea—of good only being good because there is evil—and arrives at a comforting conclusion. The poem is, in conclusion, one of faith, and because of this and of its good craftsmanship, I like it "a good deal".
3. I neither like nor dislike this poem for one main reason. As a poem, it stands or falls on its merits as an appeal to the emotions and I find that it does not move me enough. In its favour, I would say that it is a stirring poem but it is, to my mind, dated. I can judge it only from the English standpoint and as far as I know, the conditions described in the poem no longer obtain in these days of state welfare, when the working class is better off than ever before. However, if the subject has lost some of its topicality in England, it holds good elsewhere and the poet is both rancorous and convincing.

4. This poem has more appeal for me than poem 3. Though the subject matter is similar, this poem emphasizes the pathos of the "mining places". The poem is quiet, not militant, and therefore more moving. Here, indeed, the poetry is in the pity and I find the poem a good one.

5. I do not like this poem because it fails to fulfill the function of poetry, to say the "best thing in the best possible way". It bores me, and it is, with poem 1, in the sickly sweetness and banality of its sentiments. Once again I can compare this poem with innumerable popular songs about "grey skies", "silver linings" and "rainbows" and I dislike their maudlin sentimentality. Optimism by all means, but not the false heartiness of the perpetually hopeful.

6. I do not feel very confident of my ability to criticize this piece as poetry, for the studied monotony of its form is rather strange to me. However, I feel more confident in considering the thought of the poem, which I can profitably compare to that of T.S. Eliot, a carefully phrased criticism of life, it is unexceptionable and its pessimism - realistic as it is - is a refreshing contrast to the optimism of one or two of the other poems.

7. I like this poem for its simplicity and its belief. But it is, at best, only a fragment and it displays an idealism which is commendable but over-simplified. The belief in a 'brave new world' has received a number of shocks in this century and has been brilliantly satirized by such as Aldous Huxley and George Orwell. My own reaction to it is not a strong one, I cannot fail to share in some measure the scepticism of my time.

8. I like this poem for the ease with which it flows, for the aptness of its comparisons and for its perceptiveness. It portrays exactly the feeling which I
have experienced often, when some small happening or saying stirs a memory or an anxiety in my mind. An excellent poem, neither trivial nor commonplace.

9. Yet another emotional poem, with yet another approach to the problem of poems 3 and 4. To criticise such poems harshly is to seem heartless and uncharitable, but again I must say, "Considering this as an English poet's work, to what extent is it valid today?" I think that the poem is more likely to be an echo from the past and I do not find its pathos as convincing as that of poem 3.

10. This poem is an interesting one, showing as it does, the sharp contrast between Appearance and Reality. It is unfortunate that this poet, like so many others, should regard life, underneath its bright exterior, to be completely sombre. Poetry I feel should define, should state with precision. Here, perhaps, the poet generalises overmuch. However, I like the poem for its perception, even if the perception is only of a half-truth. With what irresistible pace and rhythm this poem sweeps along. What vicious blacks and what pure whites it paints, to change the metaphor. I do not think highly of this poem for, aiming at the emotions as it does, it is completely partisan in stating its case and the grain of truth is lost in its chaff of exaggeration.

11. The poem seems to me to be sincerely devout. It is difficult to criticise it as such, except to say that I like its sentiments and that I very much dislike: "Glow-worm glow light on a grass-blade" - ugly!

12. I neither like nor dislike this poem, for I consider it has little merit, and my opinion of the poem can be judged from the fact that it stirs me neither to liking or disliking it. Having noted its insignificance, I can find little else to say about it.

13. I like this poem because the writer has faith, and succeeds in imparting his belief to the reader. Poets have long sung in praise of beauty, but this poem is refreshing and indeed comforting in its approach to the subject.

14. This poem is a vision and a warning and I agree completely with its sentiments. We all know that such a warning is timely and yet it is not enough to reiterate such counsels. I like the poem well enough but judging it
by this criterion: does it say something new, or repeat something old in a striking or convincing manner? I find it wanting. It is not a bad poem by any means, but is the motive which inspires it rather than the poet's skill, which prevent it from being that.

16. + 2. I like this poem, because of its simplicity and, as I see it, its essential truth. The author shows, in clear terms, the problem of man today. He represents the wish in all of us to be rid of the complexities of modern life and to do only that which is simple. It is outside the scope of this experiment, but nevertheless interesting, to note the comparison between this poem and one of Auden's:

"... his life was overgrown,
And he forgot what once it had been made for,
And gathered into crowds and was alone,

And lived expensively and did without,
And could not find the earth which he had paid for,
Nor feel the love that he knew all about."


1. - 3. This is not a poem; it is the sort of thing one expects to see on cheap birthday cards, or in the local talent section of provincial newspapers. Moreover the theme has frequently been used with greater success in these places.

2. - 2. Inaccurate, repetitious, obvious, naive.

3. - 2. Like No. 1, this is not a poem. Set to music it would make a splendid marching song.

4. - 3. "Beauty never visits a mining place" - that line alone is good having a sincerity and directness lost in such lines as "where no bird poises" to rhyme with noises!

5. - 3. Same as No. 1.

6. + 1. "Where is the life we have lost in living?" - excellent! Knowledge of sound but not of silence - excellent! A better poem than the rest because it tries to say something original - but it could have said that in half the time.

7. - 3. Obviously bad and also silly.
8. 0. No comment.

9. - 1. "The Masters are planning the way you shall die" has a frightening sound, which is effective.

10. - 3. Same as No. 7.

11. - 2. Same as No. 3.

12. 0.


13. - 2. "Ye" and "'tis" would spoil its effectiveness, if, as I have suggested for 3 and 11, this were turned into a marching song.

15. - 3. Same as No. 1.

16. + 1. First 2 lines - excellent. "Inevitably we have established the loneliness of man" - excellent. On reconsideration, I have decided that I prefer this poem to No. 6. The T.S. Eliot-isms are sufficiently disguised to pass almost unnoticed.

Unfortunately, I like to think of myself as a poet, and therefore I find it almost impossible to obey your instructions and pay particular attention to what the poems say. If you wish me to criticise these as poems, then I believe the content would have to be regarded as comparatively unimportant; or rather, the importance of the content would be utterly dependent on how it was stated.

Thus in my opinion (and as you will see from my "marking" on the questionnaire) the majority of these poems are bad - but honestly bad rather than pretentiously so - whether Communist or Christian in theme. You ask me after having made this assertion, to award degrees of badness - this I find very difficult. How does one discover whether this poem is worse than that? And even if, as I have done, one counts the faults in each, then that with the fewest holds the very dubious position of being the best of the worst.

I believe in a poetry of essentials: if a poem of ten lines could be written in only five and still carry its meaning, no matter what that meaning was, then it is a better poem. Therefore I oppose all poetic forms such as the sonnet, and metric systems which restrict the poet by demanding the addition of unnecessary words to
fill out the rhythm and never judge a poem on its meaning alone. Because I am forced to judge all poems primarily in relation to this belief, I suspect that my comments will be of little use to you in your experiment.


12. + 3. I like this poem because it expresses the cause for praise and the need for humility and relates both cause and need to one source. The source is the Creator who is unknowable, yet his Creation reflects His nature and every stage in the course of every day in His Creation has its own symbol of light. The lights that His light has kindled range from sun to "glow worms glowlight" - from the all-illuminating to the infinitesimal; and we kindle our lights in imitation as the symbols of our worship. Moreover, the sign of the contemplative is the lighted window, and the work of man's hand and imagination is enhanced by light. Through the universality of light we come to apprehension of God, but as only the signs and symbols are within the range of our vision we do not comprehend Him. This apprehension we reach through His guidance; praise and humility are complementary aspects of the one mood the poem expresses. All this I accept.

I like this poem because it represents man as a being of power - imaginative and intellectual - and dignity, yet possessing these qualities only as a creature of God. He is infinitesimal yet not insignificant. Our acts of worship are constant and comfortable as His light in nature, and so is our capacity to create beauty; from this relatedness of illumination we see 'the light that fractures through unquiet water.' The poem really expresses a cosmology. The imagery is traditional (cf. 'When the morning stars swing together' - light as the symbol of praise) and economically used. I like the cumulative treatment of each aspect of light, giving a succession of related impressions, and the informally assured rhythm - the falling movement of the recurrent feminine endings.

I know this poem is a chorus from 'The Rock'.

6. + 2. I like this poem only slightly less than 12: I put it with the second group only after some thought. The reason that I like it less than 12 is not that to what it says I am less sympathetic, but that as a kind of poetry it is less satisfying to me. I think I appreciate it by the mind only - especially the second half.
The first part illustrates by the accumulation of great and everlasting movement in the universe, the perpetuity of nature and the 'endless cycle of idea and action'; the second part asserts in the form of paradoxes that man's progress in knowledge has been regress from God. The fundamental idea of the poem is the futility of choosing intellectual means towards a spiritual end - 'All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance.' Even that knowledge, having no illuminating or unifying purpose, becomes desiccated and fragmentary - 'Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?' This content I accept. But it is more nakedly expressed than that of 12. The imagery - as the theme of the poem changes from the cycle of nature to that of idea and action - becomes less sensuous, the vocabulary less concrete, until the poem's object is to show the twofold nature of single states - basically knowledge is ignorance on the reverse side. This kind of intellectual punning emphasises the spiritual avidity; it is itself a means without end beyond demonstration of itself. I admire this as it is serious in intention, as I admire the balance of the opposed contradictions and the rhythm by which the poet makes use of certain ideas - 'In Autumn the leaves fall .... we shall die' - that carry over association from better poems, especially Elizabethan lyrics. The imagery is familiar too - the 'twisted tower', the image, the 'deathly corridor' - and the effect of these symbols to convey tortuousness and inarticulateness is immediate. They do not bear very much examination - why deathly corridor? - to express the separation that cannot be helped, the sense requires, but there is no particular reason I can see for 'deathly'.

16. + 2. I do not think this is a particularly original or impressive poem; it expresses the theme of man's separateness - the commonplace that man has sacrificed spontaneity to complexity and self-awareness - through the imagery of the frustrated personal relationship. I do not think this poem is in the same class as a poem as 6, but I like it for the directness of its opening, and because, owing to the choice of plot, as it were, the poet may make use of certain ideas - 'In Autumn the leaves fall .... we shall die' - that carry over association from better poems, especially Elizabethan lyrics. The imagery is familiar too - the 'twisted tower', the image, the 'deathly corridor' - and the effect of these symbols to convey tortuousness and inarticulateness is immediate. They do not bear very much examination - why deathly corridor? - to express the separation that cannot be helped, the sense requires, but there is no particular reason I can see for 'deathly'.

The structure is clear and apparently logical; the poem ends where it began by repeating its values in similar terms - the quotations, and simple actions, simple
statements - and this repetition has an emotion value, chiefly because, as I have said, it plays with the courtesy English poetry has been made of. The quality of the emotion it creates in me is pity; the pathos is intensified by the choice of 'simple statement' - if there is truth only in transience then there is a certain irony in the regret that people may not communicate with one another. This irony is yet another deviation from better lyrical poetry.

I do not really accept that comfort and truth lie only in the simple, or that complexity in beings necessarily makes them incapable of fruitful relationships with others; but I think this is apparently the truth, because it is more often the truth than otherwise. This poem seems to me an over-simplified statement of a predicament together with an over-simplified remedy, but within its limitations I find the poem moving.

3. + 2. I like this poem chiefly because it is a neat piece of craftsmanship. The images of the first and second verses are analogies of the direct statement in the third; but in the third there is no stated equivalent of 'the mirror forms again' and 'the...walls...assert their permanence' - the recovery of the mind and heart from temporary assault is implied. I think the poet stops at the right point.

I like the poem secondly for what it says - that one is not invulnerable. I think the images of the pool and the empty room are only partial analogies to the mind, which is not empty or transparent - in fact, vulnerability is increased by its far from pristine nature. I think too that the confusion of music with the flower is overfanciful; and if the 'deaf walls crush the bloom' - the bloom and the sound being equivalents of the word, look and sign of the last verse - then it is out of place to find the flower image - 'tendrils' - linked with the pool image - 'muffled' - in the last two lines. The pool has been analogous to the mind, and so has the room, but not the flower.

I find the rhythm of the poem rather forced and deliberate - that is another reason for my calling the poetic prowess here craftsmanship. Yet another reason is that the vocabulary brings together two classes of words rather, I think, because the poet does not trust his imagery to speak for him. For instance, the first verse is visual in intention; the second falls visually - 'like a flower in space, fading' - and then the poet seems to
recognise this, i.e. if the music fades then the flower equivalent can hardly bloom and strengthens the impossible 'crush' with the abstract 'assert their permanence, absorb the sound'.

In spite of these criticisms, I find the intention and meaning of the poem as a whole, satisfactory.

2. + 1. I like this poem 'a little' not as a whole but by subtracting my dislike of the sestet from my considerable liking for the octave, where the quality of the poetry seems to me to be higher than that of either 16 or 8. The poet moves from the concise, dry intellectual statement of the theme in the first line to the moral application 'Were there no wrong...' through a number of illustrations of the theme drawn from the nature of things — the fundamental contrasts. I like the ingenuity shown in presenting these contrasts e.g. the first pair linked subordinately to the statement, the second pair the first in reverse, syntactically paralleled by the third; the fourth pair more extended by the looser syntax. I like the emphasis on relation by alliteration which seems natural, e.g. darkness...day, virtue...vivid, light, night. What is said here I think valid: that we know what is by what is not and what is not by what is.

But the sestet does not develop this idea. Presumably the evils exist together with the 'present blessings', but in all the illustrations the contrasts were successive e.g. swift...slow, winter...summer. The 'disease' presumably is that of recognising the evils; but since blessings and evils are going to be 'patent to our opened eyes' it seems to me that we ought now to be aware of neither evils nor blessings. I think the intention of the sestet is wholly moral — to say that we are meant to suffer quite blindly with the qualifying thought that there is some mysterious good about our suffering and both what we suffer and this good are 'servants of our destiny'. Destiny is evidently the master of which we should be glad. This view of the universe as one in which all is to be suffered and nothing to be done — with a rider to the effect that it's all for the best, is distasteful to me.

9. + 1. I have met this before: I think it is by G. Day Lewis.

I like it 'a little' because it is an efficient parody of a lullaby in traditional terms with modern substitutions. There is the conventional promise — 'The days are flying...', and the conventional affection
supporting it throughout; all is for baby, but the point of the poem lies in that all devotion is to turn out as exploitation. The villains are the vague 'Masters' and their object selfish 'Your life an investment to cover their own'. I do not accept the deliberate motive that is foisted upon these vague 'Masters'; it seems to me to be a falsification of the undoubted effects of industrial civilisation on the amount of control an individual has over his own life and even his own nature - but, I think, the civilisation as such not some unspecified 'Masters'. And so there is in the promise '...shall make you a man' some irony - as much that is unhappy and happy; but, furthermore, I should not find the passage from helplessness to maturity distressing either mainly or merely for economic reasons. I think the poet's falsification is reflected in his excessively emotion 'brain, blood and bone' - either blood or bone would sufficiently suggest the enslavement he implies. 'The way you should die' is another instance - if 'die' really means 'live' there is no support elsewhere for it (as there is in poem 6) and if it means 'die' literally it is property outside the scope of the poem. The idealisation of the baby in the last verse 'bright as a star' is a means of intensifying the horror of the exploitation.

14. 0. I am indifferent to this poem, because I cannot take seriously either its excess of scorn for the world and its values or the poet's escape to his Beauty. The poem lacks power; it is a collection of stock poetic sound and fury.

If I examine it I see that the 'bitter world biting its bitter hour' is so arid that it is laughable, that the 'city dirt' is an over-exact throwback to Tudor drainage systems, that the 'divine white wonder' is an angel in the house on whom a short-sighted poet 'peers' in order to take refuge from cacophonous military and naval disasters. But this criticism is quite pointless - the poem is far too easily demolished and not worth demolishing since it is meaningless and absurd.

4. 1. This poem's style contradicts the poet's assertions. The poet says 'Beauty never visits mining places' and then gives an impression of a mining place in romanticised terms. 'The yellow smoke taints the summer cairn' 'The cornel and dock and starwort run rife' - it is a very limited conception of beauty that excludes all wilderness or the fascination of smoke in sunlight. And if the children are 'sweet human flowers' then they surely manifest beauty? I do not like this poem because it is not honest in its
theme: I like it because it is honest in its imagery. But the first feeling is the stronger with me because I do not think the poet meant me to find his description attractive.

The poet is presumptuous too — 'Folk with no share in the beauty of life' — even if mining towns have no charm who is the poet to suppose he knows the quality of all their experiences or relationships? He is over-insistent on the tubercular element — 'Gaunt folk'... 'wan children'... 'white faces'... 'round-eyed children'. He tries to convey his pity and arouse ours for these children 'cheated of life's graces' — but they become ciphers in his hands and the conclusion 'born for the mines' serves to stress that as such he fundamentally regards them, 'my fellows' though he calls them. Briefly, the poem is sentimental. I think there is something in what he says, but he belittles the people and enhances the landscape instead of facing the bleakness of the setting squarely and giving the miners' children the vitality they deserve.

10. - 1. The distinction between the 'house' and the 'soul' is evidently that between the apparent and the real. Life is apparently 'green meadows... happy children'; life beneath the surface is sin, sorrow and suffering — and 'Jesus hanging on a Cross' — more suffering? or redemption? I do not think there is evidence in the poem for a complete interpretation.

I should dislike this poem more if it were less slight. Life is not apparently 'green meadows' etc; that it is really sin, sorrow and suffering I might accept if I knew the interpretation of the last line. But I should not accept it in such extreme terms 'tired creatures dumb and blind', or in opposition to so roseate a view of 'silver trees', 'bright birds' for a world. Possibly, however, the 'house' view represents not the apparent but what might be. If so I should tend to interpret 'my friend' as Christ — and the two verses as His intention and the failure of it. Again the first view may be of childhood; the second of adulthood. I find the poem confusing, obviously; but no interpretation I give it persuades me that it is other than feeble and, in imagery, picture-postcard-ish too.

15. - 2. This poem is an appeal for altruism, and seems to say that if we all thought of other people instead of ourselves the world would be completely without problems and everyone would be happy. Its view of things as they
are and as they might be is quite superficial; and the only sanction for the change of heart that is implored is the world of dreams it would bring about. The word 'calvary' suggests something more, vaguely; perhaps that the 'hate and greed' that are have no justification still for being. But this idea is contradicted by the call 'be master of your fate' (and captain, presumably, of your soul.) There is no suggestion that anything would be necessary to maintain a change of heart in mankind; it seems to be just a question of man's deciding not to be selfish any more.

The poem is merely jingle; the rhymes obvious, the rhythm trite. It would not be worth disliking very much if it were not fundamentally a thoroughly worldly poem. Unselfishness has its reward in a world of gaiety with no economic problems; 'love, peace and happiness' amount to charity, but not in any very important sense in this dream world. The poem is quite unrealistic; it ignores the nature of man, falsifies the world as it is by leaving everything out other than strife and war, and presents a quite unconvincing dream world in which everything is vaguely idealised — one of negative virtues.

7. - 2. I dislike this less than 15 only because it is a statement without any substantiation and not an appeal for somewhat dangerous action. It is indeed a series of jerky statements about an ideal future — but in this poem we learn as much about the present as the future since the vision is expressed by negating the present. What is said of the present is that love is for the wrong reason and hate is caused by economic strife. But is 'recreation' the right reason for 'love' — or should one understand recreation as if hyphenated? And what solution is given by which men shall no longer fear the sack or others withhold bread? 'Upstanding' is filched from Yeats and 'voluntary' suggests Auden. The poet is pompous — 'What is happening...and inverts in a rhetorical manner — Hate is no more...'. The poem is really quite empty; even if the economic situation it implied still existed it would still be a hollow, oracular arrangement of prose in verse, offering no considered comment.

3. - 3. Of the poems I dislike very much, I dislike this one the most because it is, of them, the most intense. It is not more than verse, I think, but it succeeds in conveying hatred better than 11 and exploitation better than 13 because it attempts nothing else. Blood, death and violence runs through it — in every verse — and in
content every verse is really equivalent to every other. There is no progress in thought because there is no thought, only conviction - that conviction is fully expressed only in the last verse, but its parts have been expressed before. This does give, however, a climax to a poem which is otherwise uniformly intense.

The intensity is not such that I am convinced of the author's integrity or fair-mindedness. He attacks his exploiters by means of symbols - 'still unfed', 'crimson wool', 'buried alive', 'wreck drifts shoreward', 'forges red', 'chained us in your fields', 'eaten our lives and our babies and wives' - which are not descriptive of their cruelty but merely explosive about it. The poet simply sweeps on in a tumult of viciously expressed exaggeration. I admit that I can imagine a situation in which this exaggeration might be more justifiable than a literally-expressed protest, but the manner of the poem is so offensive to me that my immediate reaction is to feel that there can hardly be less to be said for the other side.

5. - 3. We don't get all we want, certainly, and there is value in effort, but this version of that truth is cheap because it glorifies the difficulties of life, and yet at the same time minimises them. The experiences which chasten us are not adequately described as 'awkward bends, rough ruts and hills to climb'; the object of growing in wisdom in consequence of being chastened is not 'a distant pinnacle of dreams'. If it were then I cannot see, as the poet holds, that it is better that it isn't sunshine all the way etc. His interpretation of the object of life is so valueless that his setting any value on shadow, storm, pains, etc. is quite illogical. This is trivial set of verses of the 'Bright Hour' genre, full of commonplace thoughts and metaphors, supposedly stimulating in intention, but in fact enervating. To glory in difficulties is quite as much a form of self-pity as to weep over them; to minimise them is to miss some valid opportunities for becoming wiser. The tone 'For this is Life...' — one who knows to one who doesn't, is patronising.

11. - 3. I find it difficult to take this poem seriously - it reads like the libretto from a comic opera. However, the manner apart, the content is absurd because it is historically a travesty. There never was a period of English history when freemen reaped the fruitful harvest just because they chose to, and all who were on the land were freemen - which is what is implied. 'Our fathers' — the ancestors of the industrial workers - were in various degrees of manorial servitude, worked far longer hours than
than anyone at the time I suppose this poem was written, and had far less personal freedom. Anyone would suppose too that harvests were no longer fruitful or golden, and that no one any longer reaped them. The social structure is exclusively industrial and comprises two classes only—a ridiculous simplification. The account of the Industrial Revolution given here bestows upon the honest English gentleman far more guile than the text books do... but he is the cheerful villain of an industrial melodrama, the object of empty threats supported by international precedent and analogy which are not precedent or analogy at all. The verse is ill-informed and fails to convey any serious feeling since the manner is so unsuited to the matter—a merry piece superficially, but in content distasteful because it is so dishonest and unscholarly.

13. -3. This poem implies that economic exploitation involves spiritual possession—'Tis to work and have such pay... etc.' is balanced by 'Tis to be a slave in soul'. However, 'With or without your own will bent' suggests that slavery may be total or may be partial. Had the poem stopped at the end of the third verse I should have disliked it less. The first three verses do not justify much reaction from the reader at all; they are vague and imprecise; there is no distinction in the imagery or use of words. The poem is thin and colourless. The expression of the point of view I dislike in the last verse is no less insipid; I am not really consistent in feeling strongly against its content but the implication that freedom or lack of freedom may exclusively be traced to economic circumstances, and that given favourable circumstances men's natures are miraculously converted into those of powerful, saint-like beings invariably offends me.

1. - 3. The poet is mocking at the value set on money, but I think he overstates his case. He implies that the poor who have just enough are happier than the rich who have much; it is more difficult to budget with much than with little. He implies that the very possession of much precludes happiness. It seems to me that there are financial problems at every level, because what determines them is the calls that are made upon capital—and these calls are generally in proportion. And if money absorbs some attention at every level, then it precludes happiness—if it does—more or less equally at every level. And then if 'everyone wants just that little bit more' how can the poor be happily 'making the most of the little they've got'? I dislike this poem because it is a cheap generalisation—the kind of thing that is recited in music-halls and clapped as 'clever'. 

1. - 3. A platitude written in very poor verse.

2. + 2. It has a definite form and expresses a coherent idea.

3. + 1. It has a certain intensity and drive that conveys the thought behind the words. Slightly melodramatic but a certain exaggeration is probably necessary in this poem.

4. + 2. I like the sincerity of this poem. Some good description, e.g. 1st 2 lines of the last verse.

5. - 3. Trite and embarrassing. Last verse especially horrible.

6. + 2. Has some serious thought behind it. Beauty in several lines, e.g. 3. Simplicity and compression e.g. 11. (The lines seem familiar but I am not sure if I have read them before.)

7. 0. Very ordinary. Last 2 lines of 2nd verse are the most striking.

8. + 2. Conveys an atmosphere of a reality beyond the material world. 2nd verse especially beautiful.

9. 0. Ordinary.


11. 0. Makes no impression on me.

12. 0. " " " " Rather laboured.

13. + 1. Last verse very good.

14. + 1. Sincere but not particularly good poetry. 3rd line of 1st verse especially striking.

15. - 2. The form is too trite for the subject matter. 1st 2 lines childish and embarrassing.

16. + 3. Beautiful.


8. + 3. This is without a doubt the best of all. Simply, yet accurately observed.
6. + 2. Very good. Particularly "Knowledge of words and ignorance of the Word".

16. + 1. Marred by a rather maudlin pity.

2. + 1. A pleasant Shakespearean thought in a Petrarchan guise.

10. + 1. True, perhaps, but quite unoriginal.

12. 0. Confused.

9. 0. If this bitterness was directed against modern war's instead of manifesting itself in an angry class-consciousness, the verse might have been more acceptable.

13. - 1. Very Keir Hardie - or even Tolpuddle.

14. - 1. Forced and ungrammatical, i.e. "Mean are no gods". The last stanza is quite confused.


4. - 2. Sad and bitter. Surely not applicable to the contemporary mining scene?

15. - 2. Poor.


5. - 3. The worst of all. "There would be no rainbows if the skies were never grey".


1. - 1. Though there is a certain degree of truth in this poem (obviously 'a life that's all leisure' does lack something), yet the author feels so bitterly about his subject that he has exaggerated and distorted his original idea. The first two sections might be considered amusing doggerel, but the last section shows that the author was serious in his purpose. He cannot reconcile the obvious advantage of money with the frequent abuses of it, and consequently writes harshly. "Steal for it Kill for it. Isn't it funny?".

I dislike the poem because of its tone. A poet should be in harmony with his theme. This writer is not, and can only express himself by bitter sarcasm which does not induce one to agree with his point of view. I also dislike it on literary grounds. Such blatant colloquialisms as 'quite a lot', 'the little they've got', and conventional imagery 'weighed down by cares' do not enrich the barren theme of the author. He is trying to think conventionally, but the 'Money is the root of all evil' theme needs better treatment before it can rise to poetry.

2. This poem is in contrast to No. 1 in that the author has found harmony. He works out the relation between the blessings and evils of mortal life by giving contrasts from nature. Though we cannot always perceive the proportion of the whole of life because we are too interested in the present part, there is system underneath the chaotic surface. This is a sonnet in the Italian form. The octave gives the simile and the sextet relates it to the theme. It is very neatly done. The contrasts in the octave are very clear, and the moral too does not jar. I like it very much.

3. This poem is grouped with No. 1 because I entirely dislike its attitude. Down-trodden workers and prosperous aristocracy make good subjects for political tub-thumping, but not for poetry. Poetry should not be blatantly prejudiced or its appeal will be limited both in audience and time.

On the literary side this poem seems to me better than No. 1. The colloquialisms become acceptable as part of a dialect. There is no change of attitude in the poem. There is no attempt at bitter laughter. The imagery is meant to shock one (e.g. "crimson wool" - dyed with blood) and if the exaggeration becomes excessive at times (You ha' eaten our lives and our babies and wives) there is nevertheless the sincerity of the one particular point of view which we can understand, though we may condemn it.

4. This is another poem about ugly things - dust and the dead life of those who live in the mining towns. It is an unattractive subject, but it is true, and has not been exaggerated. I am not quite sure whether 'grave' is a verb in line three. On the whole the author has expressed the depression of the scene, where the weeds are as dull as the life of the inhabitants, successfully.

5. This poem is trite in the extreme, both in ideas and expression. The third verse is composed of pointless
contrasts (as opposed to poem 2). The metaphor of the road and strong shoes has been used many times in elementary poems of a didactic strain, and the author does not recreate it here, but uses it as a worn out platitude.

6. + 2. The poet here is presenting a paradox. The constellations in the heaven keep to their course. Man also has a course, but what has he made of the twenty centuries that have passed? He has learned much and profited little, and the end, as always, is Death. There is perhaps an over fondness of high-flown terms in this poem (0 perpetual revolution of configured stars); but the poet uses his words correctly, and is never obscure while treating a difficult theme.

7. - 2. The poet here is trying to be optimistic, contrasting present misery with the good times ahead. His examples are not well chosen nor well contrasted. Although the idea behind the poem is clear it fails because the separate expressions of the idea are confused.

8. + 1. The first verse of the poem is clear. In the second verse the imagery is more complicated and less effective at first. We go from the simple idea of a stone falling into a pool, to the idea of music, like a flower, falling into a room. The imagery of the last verse seems to me to be spoiled by the last line and the introduction of 'the frail tendrils of the heart'. The poet has however shown some skill in the use of imagery which is more than can be said for most of the authors of these poems.

9. - 3. This poem is a cruel parody of the lullaby 'just-a-bye-baby'. The thoughts expressed are revolting. It is doggerel. The imagery is meaningless (why is a baby 'bright as a star'? The author has no idea of childhood, it seems as though his harshness has prevented him being sympathetic to, or seeing beauty in the ideal side of his theme.) The alliteration of 'brain, blood and bone' is crude - as is the versification throughout.

10. + 1. This poem seems to me to express the contrast between the physical joy of living and the mental anguish which is also part of life. Nature is beautiful. Children are happy in their 'glad animal days'. When we stop to think however we see the other side of the picture where there is misery, failure, and a wretched nation which Christ suffered agony to redeem.
11. - 2. This is a competent piece of versification - the sort of thing one could set to rousing music and roar at political rallies. The invective against the "honest English gentlemen" is too obviously prejudiced to need refutation. The style of the poem reminds me of Kingsley's "The Sands of Dee" ("the cruel crawling foam, the cruel hungry foam etc") and perhaps this happy association prevents me from placing it in category 7.

12. + 1. The central idea of this poem is that there is an invisible radiance behind the world though we can only perceive small reflections of it. The lights of the firmament, of the animal kingdom and all lights that brighten our daily life are all part of God, the Light Invisible that we worship. A poem which is in the form of a list easily becomes tedious (cf. Rupert Brooke "The Great Lover"), and the author has only just escaped that fault. I like the image of the light "that fractures through unquiet water".

13. 0. This poem is concerned with a definition of slavery in terms of the particular. As usual among these verses the working class is considered as a mere tool for those in authority. The tone here is rather tepid. One feels that though the author feels that slavery consists in the loss of will-power, he cannot quite reconcile such a soul-less state with the working class (perhaps this is enforcing my own ideas upon the poem). The poem is clear, and the imagery (the echo, and the cell) is used with effect.

14. - 2. Although it is a pleasant change to have a note of optimism struck among these poems, this poem fails to please me. The idea of the dull-eyed man consoling himself by peering on Beauty (O divine white wonder) seems rather an anti-climax after the poet has told us that "in our souls we can be queens and kings". There does not seem to me to be any particularly clear relation between the first two stanzas and the third. The expression is also poor - is "the madman in command" merely a variation on "the barren fool in power", and what exactly is "the jealous0"?

15. - 2. The first two verses are an adequate expression of a limited ideal and a limited reality. The last verse is supposedly an exhortation which jars on the least sensitive soul. This "feeble cry" deserves to be lost.

16. + 2. If there is truth in simplicity there is truth in this poem. The two middle stanzas with the imagery of a twisted tower and a maze express the complications of life. We often wilfully complicate things and miss the real truth.
1. - 2. This provokes immediate dislike because of its associations - Daily Mirror type conciliatory middle-class essentially "comfortable" theme, the worse because it pretends it's observing while in reality judging. Atrociously written in self-consciously simple style, obviously done to catch the approval of the person who takes pride in claiming to be a "plain man". Insidious and objectionable.

2. 0. No intrinsic poetical content so no emotional reaction. The idea is familiar, its actual truth irrelevant; the triteness of expression commensurate with the triteness of the idea. The rimes are obtrusive. Lines 5 and 6 good.

3. + 2. Vividly expressed with vigorous metrical scheme. One or two badly written lines. The emotional reaction which it challenges is not produced in this reader, who, alas, is too sophisticated. Is it, by any chance, one of G.D.H. Cole's Trade Union Songs? One feels that it would answer its purpose admirably.

4. + 1. Again it doesn't come home emotionally, I think because, although its purpose is plain, it is too "poetically" written. It would certainly not succeed in the same way as No. 3. There are some very delightful phrases, though marred in one place by the conventionally poetic word "ere". Though it doesn't appeal to me personally, I should say that, viewed objectively, it is a very good poem.

5. - 3. See No. 1. Only more so!

6. 0. Unpoetically expressed after first 5 lines. No emotional reaction. The content is slightly more interesting than No. 2 but not much. Familiar ideas, pretentiously expressed.

7. 0. I regret to say that I laughed immoderately, especially at the lines with regard to love. There is no poetry in this, at least not to my eyes.

8. + 2. This is genuinely poetic, except possibly line 10. 'Tendrils' is surely the wrong word. It doesn't say much, certainly nothing novel, but it says it extremely well, which is probably why I like it.

9. + 1. This seems vaguely familiar, but I think it is due to its similarity to some parodies Day Lewis wrote in
It doesn't make much impression; the language is ordinary-ish, and it isn't funny or pointed enough to be really good parody. Familiar ideas, no new way of looking at them.

10. + 1. The sophisticated side of me tends to dismiss this as mere Victorian sententiousness, but it obviously has much more than this. The word 'towers' doesn't really make sense and unfortunately this means that unwelcome attention is drawn to the rimes. 'My brother's loss' would not appear to mean anything unless it refers to a personal experience of the writer. The form of the poem is very pleasing, and this gives rather familiar ideas colour which they do not of themselves possess.

11. + 2. Again no emotional reaction to the "message" of the poem, but a well-chosen metre and a skilful use of phrases and word accumulation make it good fun to read.

12. + 2. One is irritated by inconsistent thought (i.e. description of visible light affects in second half coupled with the use of epithet "invisible") and also by inconsistent rhythm which seems to jump about all over the place. But this is outweighed by some very nice turns of phrase, although there are some conventionally "poetical" ones. I like it because it is vivid and obviously refers to actual sense experiences.

13. 0. The third stanza appears to be gibberish. I have come across a great many pieces of verse similar to this, usually written by semi-literates with a grievance. I feel I should like to sympathise but it just doesn't reach me.

14. + 1. The last six lines are rather muddled in construction. Although the outlook smacks slightly of poems 1 and 5, the "consolation" in the last part is a much more poetic one, and far better expressed.

15. 0. The poem has a genuine ring which is absent from 13 and appeals to the reader more. Phrasing however is trite - one has met all this before. Unhappily, effect in poetry is not entirely dependent either on genuine feeling or on literal truth.

16. + 3. The writer has the assurance of the true poet. The prosaic ring of the first stanza is delightfully arresting. I am not sure that I know exactly what stanza 2 means. Interesting oblique use of epithets ("Heard", "towers").
"deathly"). It pleases because it has a clear style and an individual use of words so that one has to pause and think. One also thinks afterwards about the message of the poem, but without making a judgment, though, I am almost tempted to attribute it to Stephen Spender.


1. O. While not of a high literary standard, this poem is humorous, has a certain amount of truth and reads easily. One soon tires of it after the 3rd or 4th reading.

2. + 1. This poem encourages thought on how present life will be regarded by people living 300 or 400 years hence. There are two distinct parts, the first paragraph merely drawing the parallels which the reader has then to apply to the second paragraph.

3. +1 The theme of this poem suggests that it may have been written between the Industrial Revolution and the 1930's because, in my opinion, its sentiments could not be applied to present day conditions. The 2nd line of the last verse does not scan and is most noticeable. Presumably 'it is' should be abbreviated to its.

4. + 2. This attractive and vividly descriptive poem paints an over-sombre picture of life in mining areas. The first line in the last verse is weak. 'No slag heaps' should be 'on slag heaps'.

5. + 1. The views expressed have my complete approval. It seems complete in itself, telling the entire story from the factual statements in the opening paragraphs to the recommendations of the final paragraph (which reads slightly jerkily).

6. – 2. A poor attempt at antithesis. Very disjointed, the last two lines conveying the entire message.

7. – 2. This again paints out defects in present day life and pictures an idealistic, but rather tame, future. Doesn't attract more than a third reading. Attempts to inspire future hopes, but does not succeed.

8. + 3. This poem works on a very slender theme as opposed to Nos. 7 and 6. A distinction is drawn between the two inanimate conditions in the 1st and 2nd verses, and the human reaction in the 3rd. In the 1st and 2nd, conditions return to normal after the disturbance, while in the last verse, permanent damage may be done. The first verse is particularly beautiful.
9. + 1. Similar in thought to Nos. 3 and 4. Not convincing in its ideas.

10. + 1. A pleasant poem suggesting that nature is kinder than mankind.

11. - 1. Suitable for electioneering - but nothing else.

12. 0. Makes tiring reading, and is confusing - without purpose.

13. 0. Another electioneering slogan.

14. - 1. The whole object of this poem should be brought out in the last paragraph, but it is difficult to decide just what this object is.

15. 0. Not very sincerely written. The theme, correctly handled, could form the basis of a better work.

16. + 3. This poem contains a great deal of truth, inspires much thought and is written in an original, pleasant style.

SOCIALISTS.


1. + 1. How it is said: This poem does not have any emotional attraction nor does it attract me poetically. Has a jingling rhythm and rhyme scheme.

What is said: Its content is 'correct' morally, but the information given is not extraordinary in any way - everybody knows about the facts given in the poem and although they may not always be aware of them and act 'wisely' none the less they know in the back of their minds of these "preaching" ideas.

2. 0. How it is said: This poem is more attractive than No. 1, but is still a little obvious. Has a more pleasant rhyme scheme.

What is said: All that is said in this poem again is true, but we know it already, surely. Could we
not be given a fresh approach? An approach with more vividness and imagery. Imagery used worked out by 19th century poets.

3. +1. How it is said: I find this poem not unattractive. I'm less conscious of 'reading' the poem.

What is said: A thoroughly worldly and materialistic poem yet nonetheless it strikes home. The conclusion is wrong for no man is in the position to judge other men's sins. See poem No. 2. What would happen in this case would be the oppressed would become (in turn) the oppressors and so on.

5. 0. How it is said: All I said for No. 1 and more. It is a poor effort in the 'emotionalism' of the present day as exemplified in popular songs - "When Skies are grey, etc." A jingling effect again.

What is said: As for poem No. 1. The content is again morally correct but how revoltingly it is put over.


What is said: The poet obviously has not 'lived' in the places mentioned, otherwise he would have found quite the reverse. He has seen from afar and came to the wrong conclusion.

6. -1. How it is said: Has grandeur of a great poem but in content is absolute rubbish.

What is said: When read as a poem individual parts are reasonable, say 4-5 but not for instance lines 11, 12, 13. Otherwise the 'poet' is trying to be 'clever'.

7. -3. How it is said: Has no style at all.

What is said: Nothing.

8. +3. How it is said: This approaches real poetry, clear images, finer use of words, delicate structure.

What is said: Analogy becomes a little mundane at the end (last verse). Far better left but then reader can muse on the subject and draw his own conclusions which are quite clear with the last verses.
9. +1. How it is said: Rather on the lines of No. 1 and No. 5, though perhaps a little better in subject matter. Rather trite in form. Lacks any spirit.

What is said: Again subject is a true picture of life at its lowest ebb, but could be expressed in a far more satisfactory manner.

11. +1. How it is said: Rather on the lines of a child's nursery rhyme, only the subject totally unsuitable to this treatment.

What is said: Subject full of half truths and draws conclusion which does not take into account our 'island character', i.e. peculiarities produced by being islanders. It depicts the past injustices which were (almost) no more, surely this poem should be dated 1850.

10. +2. How it is said: First part light, gay, rather trite. Contrasts with burdened feeling of the last part. Definitely comes off with some success.

What is said: Contrast (mentioned before) - this time of subject matter - good. But that is NOT the whole story!

12. +3. How it is said: Approaching great poetry again not as near as No. 8. (1st and 2nd verses) but it has 'something' which nowadays most of us miss.

What is said: The picture is very good and comes home to me.

13. 0. How it is said: Rather jingling again. The images are not really alive.

What is said: Very disappointed as this is another 'moral' poem after a beautiful poem (No. 12). Although I know this is a moral poem I really can't understand what the poet is getting at.

14. +2. How it is said: Fine subject spoilt by lack of poetic feeling except for image: "And I, O Beauty, O divine white wonder, on whom my dull eyes, blind to all else, peer."

What is said: Jam tomorrow but no jam today. Last verse definitely better than 1st two. 'Conjures' up some feeling into the poem. 'Through materialism to the ultimate Goal'.
15. 0. How it is said: Is not really poetry - but rather rhyming, but with a serious subject with which we are all familiar.

What is said: Says the same as No. 10 but not so well but in more detail. i.e. The world as it ought to be. The world as it is. The reaction is let's go and do something about it now. Surely we know that! Why don't we do something is what I ask, because as it says in the poem "You strive for self ....etc". Strive for others is the ONLY answer.

16. + 3. How it is said: Has a stirring quality and puts over its feelings with 'intenseness' and sincerity as the poet knows of these things. Parts do not do justice to the subject but as a whole it has something.

What is said: Tries to tell of the struggle of love and fear, good and evil and achieves much in this poem.

A 56. M. (38) Solicitor. Sec. and Prof. P.O.S. -75.

1. - 1. A useful poem perhaps for checking greediness but based on a fallacy. It is not money that men desire but the things that money can buy. Money is but a symbol, a means of exchange and is not evil in itself. Some would buy drugs, some wine, some women, some power, etc. and it is these things they struggle for really - not the actual coins but only what they represent. There are exceptions - the odd miser who loves coins as another loves stamps or antiques, for example. And many, many rich folk do not look bored. And many of them have no leisure but work very hard and use their 'money' well.

The poem, however, may console a certain type, and there is an undercurrent of envy and "sour grapes". The poet was, perhaps, not sufficiently discerning in his criticisms and had an axe to grind, due perhaps to a hard upbringing which can warp the mind as much as a soft one.

2. + 3. I feel this poem reveals an understanding which contributes very much to a balanced view of life. It would be a comfort to those in trouble. It is beautifully put.

3. + 1. Out-dated in this country now. But true in the past. It is, however, a point of view that we should not forget and it is very applicable in many other parts of the world.
4. +1. I do not think the lives considered in this poem are entirely drab and without better things among them. Human beings, even in such bad conditions, do try to make the best of things very often. But the poem points to things which must not be overlooked and the dark treatment is warranted for that purpose.

5. +3. This reminds me of 2.

6. -1. Worded very well and yet, curiously, ending on a note of despair. One feels the poet was in the throes of frustration, which invited him to denunciation. In great contradistinction to 2 and 5. The feeling of frustration is not peculiar to poets but they express it so well that we sometimes feel it is.

7. -1. Too Utopian to be human. Probably written by someone with a grievance about life in general in which case the vision of a golden age might seem attractive.

8. +1. Charmingly written, but a little confused perhaps.

9. +2. Well worded. Not always true of masters, but true of so many that it is a point of view that must ever be kept before them.

10. +1. Pleasant, but confused. The two things, as here pictured, are not really comparable. The eyes of the soul see further, it is true, but the windows of a house frequently overlook things as grim as those pictured in the last lines. Similarly the soul (see 2 and 5) does not always see grim things. The meaning behind the poem is excellent, but the contrasts are not really fair.

11. +1. Not so good as 9, which was more powerfully expressed. This 11 smells of abuse and is very sweeping (see 3 also) No credit is given of any kind. One almost feels that the writer, given the chance, would admirably qualify for the post of one of the tyrannical gentry.

12. +3. Very beautiful.

13. +1. See 9 and 11. This one stands, I feel, in between the feelings expressed in 9 and 11. History proves the truth of the words in 13 though in this country now the ideas belong to the past to some extent.

14. +3. This seems to give an answer to the views expressed in 13. It is born of the same discernment as Nos. 2 and 5. Beautifull written. Poem No. 2 is more
profound, and this 14 is a less advanced view. No. 5 is severely practical.

15. + 1. This renews the note of despair and contemporary events in various parts of the world fully justify the thoughts expressed. But it is one-sided - the things mentioned in the first verse are also found on earth very frequently. Nevertheless any poem condemning hate and greed etc. must be worthy even though one-sided. It is often necessary to paint the picture in darker colours than facts justify in order to compel attention.

16. - 1. Confused in the thought behind it, and confused in its expression. To the notes of frustration and despair is added the note of doom and of emptiness.

Generally, these poems nearly all deal with injustices, largely with those endured by the underdog. Little is said of individual injustices by one man to another, whether rich or poor or neither. They deal mainly with class injustices, and their language is on the whole fully justified by history if one confines oneself to generalities. One must overpaint the picture to get action.

Intermingled are other poems which strive to see beyond the troubles and relieve the gloom. One must however realise that human beings are much the same whether rich or poor and many of the oppressed have in course of time become excellent tyrants themselves. Also there occur great brutalities among the oppressed, i.e. between themselves, and equally great strife often exists among the oppressors.

But the sentence underlined above fully justifies all the poems and other criticisms must take second place. Truth is relative, anyway, and those who consider themselves oppressed in one age are likely to be considered well-off by the oppressed of another era!

Finally, injustice must be fought tooth and nail, and injustice surely cannot complain if its antagonists are biased, overstate their case on occasion, forget credits and (under the stress of their woes) exaggerate a little sometimes!


1. 0. 2. - 1. 3. + 2. 4. + 3.
5. - 1. 6. + 1. 7. - 1. 8. + 2.
9. + 2. 10. + 2. 11. - 2. 12. + 1.
13. - 2. 14. + 1. 15. 0. 16. + 2.
1. - 1. Cheap pedestrian sentiment in cheap diction. Annoying facetiousness. I suppose it might fit some moods, however, so will not completely condemn it.

2. + 3. Bears marks of thought and real power of eloquent expression. A style which might tire for long stretches, but in this extract impressive.

3. - 2. Kiplingese pseudo-realism, now the less banal because 'red' in sentiment.

4. 0. More original in sentiment and observation, but mostly the kind of thing one has heard before.

5. + 1. Subject matter again is familiar sentiment, but the expression somehow seems rather more 'living.'

6. + 3. I know this of course - T.S. Eliot with his slow but eloquent pietistic pessimism. Has both depth and decoration. Not perhaps the very greatest poetry, but the nearest to it in this collection.

7. - 2. Simple aspirational stuff - no claim whatever to be poetry.

8. + 3. This seems to me a fine piece of modern poetic thought married to exactly appropriate expression. This ought to be by someone well-known but I don't know it.

9. - 3. This is another of those irritating parodies in leftish taste, which never of course realises how ancient its models are and that it isn't new or shocking at all. This is simply Gray's [...] unconscious of their fate The little victims play....

10. + 1. Has a little originality in it - not much and that is spoilt by unduly conventional adjectives and expression generally.

11. - 2. This is worse, because more pretentious. Poems of hate need genius more than poems of love. (No poems of love amongst all this lot, by the way: why not?) Writer derives out of Chesterton, amongst others.

12. + 2. Here, on a conventional theme, the writer has variegated an original descant of observation: (twilight... at batflight', 'glowlight on a grassblade', 'light that fractures through unquiet water'. A good piece of writing, well inspired by Francis Thompson.
13. + 2. Now here is a 'song for lefty' which does flow, being positive in cast. Conventional in some ways - 'tyrants', 'ye', 'tis', all second-rate diction in these contexts; but it is genuinely memorable.

14. + 2. A well-done Shakespearean sonnet, which is Shakespearean in diction also. No new thought either; yet the thing is well turned, and pleases.

15. 0. Cannot feel anything about this, it is feeble in movement if unexceptional in sentiment. A mistype I think in line 10, should be 'arise'. Another of these efforts at realism which only manage to express a common emotional attitude.

16. + 2. Some thought and some compositional form. States theme clearly and develops it well.

Generally - Has this poem bunch been culled by someone with an overdeveloped social consciousness for the underdog? The proportion of social criticism, all in one direction, suggests a W.E.A. course or something.


2. + 1. Better poem - 1st line is good. Movement of words good with metre fitting sound and meaning. Occasional, or frequent good choice of effective word. Sentiment perhaps a platitude but yet true.

3. - 2. Silly - workers don't die every time a dollar's wealth is created. When are mines blown skyward? Few people die in iron-forges. Muddled thought of the imagery springs from muddled thought of poem's political views.

4. + 2. Much better. Has some fine pictorial poetry so that imagery and language are used with dignity to considerable effect. But of course beauty is nearer "mining places" than towns like London. Also others besides miners, or the poor, are cheated of life's graces. Certain element of self-pity.

5. - 3. Appalling line - whoever it is by - "So that when the road is stony". Triteness of phrase echoes silliness of thought.
6. + 1. Has some power. Also seems sincere and probably true — whether we believe in God or not — but language is rather heavy and clumsy. Some effective figures of speech skilfully used. End impression is of lack of light and shade, of music and feeling.

7. - 3. Don't like 'men not fearing the sack' in poetry because line is not the heightened language without which we might as well use prose. Also this vague dream of the future seems silly because it is so old and so inconsonant with humanity's perpetual behaviour.

8. + 3. This poem I liked best. At first reading it rang a bell and my other readings have not lessened the impression. This immediate striking impact seems to me to be a necessary pleasure of poetry. Imagery is fine and moves beautifully. I dislike "frail tendrils" at the end. Poem, though short, has a beautifully finished form.

9. - 3. What a contrast to 8 — and how unfavourable a one. What nonsense. "The Masters are planning the way you should die". And what a jog-trot rhyme. Self-pity is strongly present again together with the comforting myth of the wicked people who hate my righteousness.

10. - 1. I can't understand why if the house prospect is so good the soul prospect should be so bad.

11. - 3. Back to the sludge. I prefer the horrible English gentleman to the Czarists, militarists and peasantry "liberators" that infest the world. Sounds like early Lawrence.

12. + 2. I very much like "our gaze is submarine". The central idea of poem is striking, makes us pause to think and consider an easily overlooked but valuable truth and assuming that Light means light and not God. But even though I'm not religious I can appreciate the rather beautiful sentiment. Language does not seem very effective. Gives impression of thickness, feel-language should be "lighter" to suit subject. Underwater image is most effective.

13. - 3. By now we have discovered that the "horrible" freedom of working for pay that keeps life is by no means to be despised. Too many people have been, and are being, "freed" out of life to the accompaniment of these exalted ideals, and the greatest "slaves in soul" are those forced to agree with a party advocating freedom.

14. - 1. Strikes me as being theatrical. Also rather self-righteous and "arty".
15. 0. Very pretty world is seen— but how boring and shallow.

16. + 2. Very much agree with sentiments of poem— except "there was a road to joy once". I don't think there was. But poem seems a little ineffective poetically.


1. + 2. Sounds like A.P. Herbert or "Punch". I do not like (personally) the abbreviation I've, can't, we've, we're, they've. Even though it does not pass the grade as a poem I like it for pantomime value and its familiar ring.

2. + 1. Reminds me of Shakespeare "up-to-date" or R.L. Cook. I like it, especially the first line and 12 and 14, but content is rather trite.

3. + 1. Verse 6, line 2 reads better with it's instead of it is, though see note on No. 1. There is one beat too many. I rather like it, but am not sufficiently bellicose to condone it.

4. 0. Idea is simple and effectively put over but poem has a strange ring to me as if it were trying to be Wales whereas it is thousands of miles away. I neither like nor dislike it.

5. - 2. I don't like it at all. Lines uneven and zigzag in strength. Slushy philosophy.

6. - 3. I dislike this very much. I used to write such stuff but it was juvenalia.

7. - 1. Strikes me as a translation. I don't like it. What it says has been said so often and in a much better way.

8. + 2. I like this. It has good image value and says a lot without direct statement. Again reminiscent of R.L. Cook.

9. + 1. Same feeling as No. 4 but better poetic value.

10. + 3. This is powerful and strikes to the heart. Excellent. I like it very much. It is totally effective.

11. - 1. Reminiscent of Alfred Noyes but I got the same sensation as No. 4 and 9. Too strong for me but I appreciate the truth in it and always have done.

13. + 1. Has an ancient ring "Rule Britannia" etc. I like it somewhat. It has a simplicity and sounds honest.

14. + 2. Written by you to your loved one? Shakespeare again. Line 7 - "not" would be better than "no". Good.

15. * 1. What's the use of rising? We have all "had it" now anyhow. Poem good. Idea too strong for one who has thrown in the sponge.

16. + 3. Read this recently in little magazine. It is excellent. Ranks with No. 10. I like it immensely.


1. - 1. I find it difficult to tabulate my impressions in the way required here, as I do not feel active liking or dislike for most of the poems.

2. 0. impressions in the way required here, as I do not feel active liking or dislike for most of the poems.

3. 0. not feel active liking or dislike for most of the poems.

4. - 1. I recognise No. 6, and No. 12, as T.S. Eliot, both extracts from "Ash Wednesday". I like T.S. Eliot's poetry, and consider these as in an entirely different category from most of the others.

5. - 1. I recognise No. 6, and No. 12, as T.S. Eliot, both extracts from "Ash Wednesday". I like T.S. Eliot's poetry, and consider these as in an entirely different category from most of the others.

6. + 3. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

7. + 2. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

8. + 2. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

9. + 2. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

10. 0. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

11. 0. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

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14. 0. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

15. 0. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

16. + 2. Recognise No. 13 as Shelley, stanzas from "The Mask of Anarchy". Shelley could write bad poetry and I do not consider this at all a good specimen, or characteristic of Shelley.

Of the others, only Nos. 7, 8 and to a lesser degree, 9 and 16, seem to me to have the essentials of poetry. They do not, however, make any deep impression on me as I re-read them.

The others, those I have listed as "neither like nor dislike", are, most of them, political propaganda strung into some semblance of poetry. This sort of thing very rarely becomes poetry, unless in satire. No. 11 seems to be more effective than the others for that reason, but my objection to these poems is not based on a dislike.
of the ideas expressed; with many of them I am in sympathy. I object because this kind of propaganda does not make for good poetry.

No. 14 is not propaganda. This poem makes a more immediate appeal than some of the others, but I do not think there is a genuine inspiration here. My feeling for most of them is not anything as emphatic as dislike. Nos. 1, 4, 5 are so bad as to rouse little feeling at all.


1. - 3. Subject trite - treatment crude. Needs real wit and polish to be acceptable.

2. + 2. (Familiar) Expression in harmony with subject - sonnet form satisfying - some moving and memorable expressions - "Day is made vivid" etc.

3. - 1. As poetry it is poor jingle - but it sounds genuine and is alive. Some vivid epithets "crimson wool", the blood and sweat idea maintained throughout and there is a climax. Ballad metre fits a worker's hymn of hate. I do not care for its subject and "poetic" qualities but appreciate its vigour.

4. - 1. Some good epithets "gaunt folk", "dusty weed drowses" and I think genuine feeling but imperfectly expressed - weak lines and some feeble words "making" shrill noises. Metre and rhyme irregular without purpose.

5. - 3. I have no taste for moralising jingle on the E.W. Wilcox model.

6. + 2. Harmony of form and subject - I like the antithesis.

7. + 1. Not very moved - sympathetic to subject, maybe.

8. + 2. True imaginative insight, I feel.

9. + 1. Smooth jingle - a fair parody.

10. + 2. Much expressed in this "Stupidity Street" form.

11. + 1. Good rousing rhythm in harmony with the mood. It works up to a good climax.

12. 0. I feel that this is not genuine. There are some bad lines and a studied "poetic" air.
13. 0. I am tired of this theme by now.

14. + 3. Richer in texture and imagery. It is moving.

15. - More facile verse.

16. + 3. Subject and mood appeals - feeling, mastery of words.


1. - 2. The sentiment is unctuous and it is expressed in a manner which combines the rhythm of the worst nursery rhymes with the naive vocabulary of decaying music halls.

2. + 1. I like the beat of the verse but am not very happy about the involved expression of truths.

3. - 1. I like the gusto of this poem but the politics bore me - they don't seem vividly expressed.

4. + 1. I think the political feeling is happier expressed here than in 3.

5. - 3. As for 1 save that the words here are more pretentious, the poem less honest.

6. + 2. I knew this poem as well as 12. I enjoy the rhythmical expression of contrasts and feel sympathy with what is said.

7. - 3. What is meant by the word "fatal"? It seems to have little significance here and yet it is led up to in the last line. What is said in the poem is too blurred to be moving.

8. - 1. Expression is not clear. "Twisting the frail tendrils" does not follow from the echoes of a stone on a pool or music in a room. The poet is involved with too many different pictures and phrases.

9. - 2. Forthright and honest but I don't like the staleness of similes and comparisons: "bright as a star", "buds break to blossom".

10. - 3. The contrasts between the pictures seen from the windows of a house and from the windows of a soul are hackneyed and dull.
11. - 2. I dislike the violence of the ideas - they are not correct historically and the poem tries to be historical - but prefer the honesty of this poem to the unctuousness of poems like 1 and 5.

12. + 3. As for 6. I like the play on the word "light".

13. - 2. Dislike "ye".

14. - 3. I feel about this as I do about the sentiment of 1 and 5. The rhetorical attempt is falsely said, I think.

15. - 2. As for 9 particularly the staleness of expression.

16. - 3. Ideas are too pretty-pretty and quaintly lyrical: the repetition of the 2nd line at the end strikes a new note of banality.


1. + 1. Little imagination is needed to make one realise that money is the subject matter affecting all people. The early verses give the poem a reasonable start. I find myself agreeing with most of what is said in the verses that follow, and to the way it is set out: - Poor Folk seem happy - they laugh quite a lot - is often true since poor folk do not brood over past misfortunes, it's a part of their lot. The poem has a weak ending in my estimation, a satirical note to finish would have been apt. The inference "Isn't it funny" is commonplace. Surely money is the malady of the age.

2. + 2. Here I feel the poet is reminding us of life's course consisting of a series of contrasts, one following the other, until the end of time. Nature considers the human element by making things balance out, is what I feel the poet is conveying to the reader. In the latter verses it is felt that neither right nor wrong can be truly supreme in a human's destiny.

3. - 2. A most unsavoury poem, whose fragments the poet derives from the dark ages, intending them to apply today which of course is contractictory and absurd. Maybe the poet has a grave imagination or believes the sacrifices of the working class Nationally or Internationally in blood and toil has more than met the wealth built up by capitalism. Complete morosity lingers in this poem throughout, and I cannot associate myself with this if it is
supposed to represent Western standards. It would be an insult to the intelligence of the working class who are achieving a tolerable standard in a very uncertain world.

4. Although real beauty is absent in many mining districts, happiness is surely present. The poet picturing serious faces and rather drab surroundings forms the opinion that despair grave lines are ever present. But a mining community is a happy one if only one considers the Welsh Singing Miners alone who dig the riches of the earth. The children playing on slag heaps or picking wild flowers are happy hearted. The poet is giving a false impression, unless reliving a depression.

5. I enjoyed the simplicity and easy expression of this poem. One is soon aware that the poet has in mind, success cannot be met halfway! Constant struggle in life is the rule more than the exception. To enable the journey and ambition to be realised make sure of the rough going by wearing strong shoes, what better advice could be offered? I feel a commonsense approach is evident to our problems here. I am sure this contribution and that of poem 1 are alike in style and probably by the same poet.

6. Unquestionably the best poem of the 16. The first part of the poem shows how the earth's relationship in the path of the stars, the rotation which takes place, the seasonal cycles occur in a defined manner, quite orderly. We are led along cautiously by the poet who reveals the disorder of mankind by and large. The speed of learning scientific knowledge, the blitz of technical subjects are putting us completely out of step, literal and cultural pursuits being left behind, and soon we may find ourselves becoming illiterate. The satirical touch is applied at the end, man drawing away from God, spiritual values declining, in the end a most inglorious death.

7. My first reactions are a crushing blow to morality, possible however - could be attributed to the aftermath of say a third World War. However since I believe in the education of the masses, this sort of poem is a serious threat to that becoming possible, an abuse of the senses. I dislike intensely the loose attitude of mind and moral code prevalent in this poem. The poet should know this type of vice machine if founded could only be fulfilled on totally ignorant beings.
8. + 2. The poet here is endeavouring to make the reader appreciate harmony, and I believe succeeds to a large extent. A stone causes ripples on the water, or the ether carries musical sound waves, which are finally absorbed to return the harmony which had been temporarily disturbed. In the third verse the human heart cannot endure harmony unless the 'hurt' is absorbed just like with the ether or water.

9. - 3. With this poem a poem seems at large and a grim one at that. The implication is sinister enough, babies must sleep until they are awakened to the facts of a sinful world. The masters are supposed to represent the steel kings and industrial monopolies who are willing to gamble one nation against another and the grownup babies having become useful cannon-fodder. Not really my idea of poetry, too revolting, and surely enough books have been written covering this school of thought.

10. + 2. Looking from behind a window at the outside world is one thing, the poet leads us pleasantly along the prime of life is noticed, nature wearing the lightest green, the world does not seem a bad place after all. Continuing with simple versing the poet asks one to look through a different window - the window of the soul. In the spiritual sense this is more after Jesus's life, one realises that thro' the real window of life it is hard, full of struggle, sacrifice and intimate and close experience of those people facing handicaps.

11. - 2. I found this poem too one-sided, somebody obviously making political capital out of it. Little sympathy is shown towards the gentlemen class. At the beginning and end part of the poem the Russian peasant has set the example the others are to follow? What I feel the poet loses sight of is that the Industrial Revolution heralded a peaceful revolution in this country, the process is still continuing as we believe in democracy. The gentleman class is learning the lesson gradually since the advent of socialism, the Russian war lord has learnt him, but the Kremlin is still awaiting theirs, by our practise of political education not subjection. The poem is definitely degrading and unrealistic of the whole 16.

12. + 1. The beginning is crystal clear, God is the greatest light of the world, who is responsible for the shining of all the other countless sorts of radiant lights. We have met this sometime or other in varying experiences but have not really appreciated them. The poem goes quite deep - it requires absolute concentration, even spiritual appreciation.
13. - 2. I fail to consider this poem one of inspiration, probably due to the poet looking back too far giving the reader so called facts about a bygone feudal system. Is the reader expected to imagine slavery when today comparative freedom exists. It is hard to attempt to connect it up with war verse. The last verse does suggest that few men act of their own free will because their soul is dead, the vast multitude of the human race are but sheep taking orders at the least opportunity.

14. + 1. This poem must surely rank as a satire. It seems a familiar set of verse, but fail to remember who the literary scholar is. Much of the ridicule is true, power is not lasting with any one individual. The Prince of Peace rides above all is implied I believe in the closing verses. All other passions associated with actions of men counting for little. A very close knitted poem, but more intelligible the more one studies it.

15. + 1. A poem of three moods, where peace reigns on earth one day, the next it has disappeared, war is upon the humble, the vain, the reckless leader of men. The final mood can prevent the other two by heeding folly. The poet has in mind that to convince one and all, a world of reality must exist, but as the closing verses are in question, the poet has doubts as to its possibility.

16. 0. Most ambiguous, and quite without sense of direction. Some parts of the poem are quite recognisable but one can easily stray from the point. Truthfully I cannot really make up my mind about it.


16. + 3. I like this best of all because in its writing it carries out its own theme, that there is truth only in simple statement: yet the poem unobtrusively shows that true simplicity is very profound, very subtle, and that truth is difficult, unless we approach it with utter simplicity and humility. The sense of man's loneliness of his crying for comfort in a darkness of his own devising: the personal cry of anguish in the last verse, which is also the universal cry, in spite of the "laughter": the contrasts of "laughter" and "cry": the rhymes and half-rhymes of die, cry, only, indirectly, ingeniously, inevitably, cry, die, which weave the poem together like the grieving note of a complaint: and the feeling, after reading it, that this poem, in spite of its anguish, is not one of despair, but a positive and simple re-assurance.
that, ultimately, all must be well, for it is the
expression of our ultimate acceptance, (which is true
happiness) of what must be — in Autumn the leaves will
fall, and we shall die; but there is love, too, and those
things which are, and which must be, are ultimately right.
All these things make me like this poem, in which I find
no fault at all. The writer has spiritual courage.

14. + 3. I like this equally with 16, for the same
reasons — the writer’s assurance that all the "horrors"
of the world "are not lasting things". The idea of
ultimate calm and peace is a most important one. This
poem, in its last verse, rises to a magnificent dignity
of language that matches the thought’s sublimity.

2. + 3. I like the skilful simplicity of language in
this poem — the force of the antitheses, and the idea
of contrarities carried right to the end. Again it is
a poem rising above one single and narrow viewpoint, and
embracing all our life in a sublime comprehension.

6. + 3. This is the only poem of the group that I know.
I like it for the philosophy of acceptance it implies —
the greatest virtue is in consenting to our fate, this
is indeed "wisdom". Knowledge of stillness is what we
lack. "Teach us to sit still". But I feel the last line
is not quite right — the nearer we are to anything, even
to the Dust, the nearer we are to "God". If we accept
the Dust, we are accepted. There is a rather negative
quality in this poet's acceptance. It is still passive.
True acceptance is positive and active, not outwardly
so, but in the deepest sense of joy in self-forgetfulness.

8. + 3. I like the imagery in this poem, and the thought
that in human actions, however trivial, each has its
place, its influence and its meaning. It is a well-
shaped poem, well written except for a certain looseness
of expression in the last line — I do not care for
"frail tendrils of the heart". But it actually says the
same thing as No. 5, which I loathe for its smugness and
cheeriness; No. 8 is expressed with restraint and artistic
skill, and these things are what will always give the true
value to any thought, however trite.

10. + 3. I like this poem's simplicity and compassion;
the telling contrast, and the ballad-like form is very
appropriate to the subject.

12. + 2. I like this poem for its idea, which is gathered
up beautifully in the last four lines: the expression is
often rather woolly, but those four lines bring it off.
I seem to know this poem, vaguely.
I like the idea in these poems, but it loses much of its urgency and even its truth by not being expressed in the very best way; the language is falsely simple and the falsity corrodes the idea.

Bad temper is inexcusable in a poet if his language is as indifferent as this. One just ignores this sort of thing, even if one agrees with what it says.

Awful; the antitheses here, (v. 3) are so feeble compared with those magnificent ones in poem 2. Its pedestrian optimism is truly depressing, and this feeling of misery is increased by the sloppiness of the form of the first two verses. The poems 16, 14, 2 and 6, which face human despair, transform it: this poem degrades despair's nobility and its inherent optimism by a misplaced and insincere jollity.

I don't like funny poems, and this is too facetious for words. The product of a petty mind. The couplet would make a certain type of silly listener laugh if read aloud with great heartiness, but they actually contain not a shred of wit or wisdom. Facile, empty rot.

No comments.

No comments.

As indicated I liked this poem very much. I liked both the form and the content expressing as it did my own feelings, for the world in itself is very beautiful but there is much agony and heartsache in it.

This is a good indictment of the British imperialist system as it was since it has now given way to the American. I like also the crisp, concise setting of the poem though I must confess that the use of the recurrent rhyme (of gentlemen) strikes a familiar chord though I cannot place it.

Here it is the form which greatly attracts me and the use of words. I realise that it is almost defeatism and also to a certain extent escapism but I respond to it as I too am often assailed by a feeling of despair and futility. I think I should actually place it before 11.
15. + 2. This poem looks to the future and is an appeal for the people to wake up and grasp that future which awaits us all.

3. + 2. This one I like almost completely for its content but from that point of view I rate it quite high.

8. + 1. Here again the form interests me and I like particularly the last verse. Again I have the feeling that I have placed this in the wrong position. Perhaps I should interchange 3 and 3.

4. + 1. This one I think I like out of sympathy since I myself am employed in the mining industry and know something of their history. But somehow I feel that it hasn't quite come off as it might or as the author wished.

2. + 1. There is a certain amount of truth in what this poem says though it is difficult to tell what sort of person wrote it or for what reason. Two people of opposing viewpoints (I feel) could use this to illustrate their arguments.

7. 0. I like what this poem says but not how it is said so I had to place it under group four. I somehow don't feel that it is poetic. Of course I am not so simple as to demand rhymes for poetry but this strikes me as being just a little too prosaic to be poetry. There is something missing (perhaps in me, for, I repeat, I like the content).

9. 0. Again the content is good but again I do not find it poetical (and it does rhyme!) It strikes me as being an amateurish effort - worthy, of course, in its content and object - very worthy.

13. 0. This falls into the category of 9 except that I don't think it is quite so amateurish but I don't like the form or the style.

6. - 1. Leaves me completely cold. It rambles on and on getting tied up (very cleverly) and in the end the sum total wasn't worth saying. I find it so bad I can only dislike it a little.

14. - 2. The world's problems are seen here but the solution seems to smack of the "Pie in the Sky when you die" idea. This, to me, is insidious.
5. - 2. "...See your shoes are strong" so that you can walk over anyone in your way. This poem is completely antisocial although I am sure its author would disagree violently.

1. - 3. This is an old fable which has been spun for many, many years meaning to make the poor feel content. It is very difficult to be content on an empty belly.

12. - 3. The author of this one is not of this earth, or perhaps I should say shouldn't be. This is a perfect example of walking with your feet miles off the ground, your head in the clouds, your eyes shut tight and your belly rumbling mumbo jumbo through an open mouth. There is no thought whatsoever in it and I find it very distasteful.


2. + 3. Content particularly appealing (Blake: .... Without contraries is no progression....). I agree with the philosophy expressed. Sonnet form is one of my favourites. Phrasing — particularly avoidance of end-stopping, makes for easy and rapid reading. Masterly construction.

6. + 3. Here construction is the deciding factor. Modern form of T.S. Eliot. Repetition of words most effective. This is the only one of the set of poems which I can definitely place. Opening of poem, by association, puts me in a receptive frame of mind.

That eagles fate and mine are one,
Which on the shaft that made him die,
Espy'd a feather of his own,
Wherewith he went to soar so high. (Waller)

Only the content prevents it from being rated above 2. but in spite of this, I still cannot rate it below 2. Subject deeper and more profound than 2, but marred by the foreknowledge of Eliot's reactionary tendency. I find myself almost liking it in spite of myself. Not at all obscure to me.

8. + 3. Use of words more often thought of as technical terms, is the appeal here. I have a particular weakness for this type of poem, being a scientist by temperament myself. Only the fact that the lines do not lead anywhere, detracts from enjoyment on reflection. The imagery is very fine, leading to immediate enjoyment, but it is frustrating
to find, on reflection, that the poem does not really have anything to say.

16. + 2. Structure again the important point. I feel the poem is almost pseudo-profound. The masterly construction suggests that I might be missing something, but cannot call it obscure.

14. + 2. Ten syllable line brings its usual appeal here. The start arouses interest (alliteration on b in second line is particularly fine). Poem finely constructed with effective climax. Marred only by disagreement with the idea expressed, although I can still sympathise with the writer's feelings. A slight note of defeatism (not as great as would appear on first reading) recommends this to elderly persons. A fine poem in all other respects.

9. + 1. The 11 syllable line spoils my first impression and the rather trite content does not overcome this prejudice. Although I agree with the opinion held by the poet, I cannot praise his work, e.g. the tetradic alliteration on b in the penultimate line is nothing like as effective as the triadic alliteration on b in the 3rd line of the previous poem (14).

10. + 1. Only just fails to be a very good poem, but it is so slight in itself that one simple fault is enough to make it totter. A common failing of short poems, with me. The fault:— the first line and its repeat or the first two lines only, leaving the rest alone. Cannot see an alternative myself.

3. 0. The good start does not provide sufficient momentum to carry one thro' the poem. Some good ideas, but poet's natural indignation has not been sufficiently tempered to make a poem, as opposed to a pamphlet.

7. 0. Better form than 5 but writer is a little too idealistic — or perhaps immature.

12. - 1. The only poem of the set which I condemn as obscure. I just cannot warm to it. Words like 'batflight' put me off as jarring. Only good line:— "...And see the light that fractures thro' unquiet waters". Have put this poem on top of the "dislike" pile as it seems to be written by a good man at an "off-moment".

13. - 1. Another poem which I feel should be at the top of the "dislike" pile for similar reasons to above (12).

4. - 1. One or two flashes, but not enough to save it. More harsh words used where the effect is not called for, e.g. starwort. Does not flow. Content quite good.
15. + 1. This got out of place by accident — should follow 14. Well constructed — easy flow. Content OK as far as it goes, but not enough of it.

1. - 3. Out of sympathy with both form and content. Just happen to prefer more serious stuff.


5. - 3. Disagree so profoundly with its sentiments that I cannot judge its value. Life, with all its limitation should be enjoyed not "suffered".


1. - 3. The idea is banal in the extreme, and has been churned out in various forms for centuries — usually in a little more subtle or amusing a manner. In any case I doubt if the author has ever experienced personal poverty and privation, although he may have been bored by tiresome cocktail parties. The chatty cliche ridden semi-slang of the verse is intolerable. If such things must be committed to paper, why in verse? "Rich folk", "poor folk", "got", "lacks that odd something", "Isn't it funny?", "Just that little bit" and so on. Finally, are rich people taxed to the limit? Or has the "poet" been reading the Daily Graphic again?

2. + 1. The use of rhyme is pleasant to the ear and the metre apt. The language is also quite suitable although none of the similes are particularly unusual. Line 7 seems to be a little too naive for the tone of the poem. As for the idea, it again is not new. We are burdened with it in every Victorian Hymn Book. Very useful dope, but too sickly for today. There is enough suffering we can dispense with today. A poor attempt to answer the "problem of pain".

3. + 1. Monologue type of verse to be declaimed at political meetings. I dislike abbreviations such as "ha!". The ideas of course are true enough.

4. + 1. Bringing the Rhondda into the drawing rooms of Chelsea. The children would probably be happier with better nourishment before the poet brings along his beauty.

5. - 2. Yes, we know! "Excelsior" and all that. Rhyming couplets make this even more banal. I suppose the idea is fundamentally sound, but is progress merely an escape from boredom? Does one struggle merely to strengthen one's character.
6. 0. Declamatory, flowery but not particularly poetic. Yet there is a certain force in the poet's sense of futility and yearning for escape. Are we really worse off after 20 centuries? This smacks of the Pre-Raphaelites or William Morris or someone. Anyhow the solution does not lie this way.

7. + 2. Crudely written and some inaptitudes - surely not "love is delightful"? The first two lines of the last stanza are excellent. There are plenty of ideas and hope for the future - a good healthy outlook.

8. + 3. The best. The description is economical yet completely successful. It seems as if the poet has observed his data himself and absorbed their significance.

9. - 1. Poets should beware of rhyming couplets in this metre. It can lead to dreadful things. This is one of them. The idea is rather sloppy and helpless. Particularly disgusting is the idea to keep the baby as he is.

10. + 3. Good. I do not know what the "window of the soul" is, but the description is economical and to the point. It is not particularly sentimental. The contrast both poetically and ideologically is excellent. No solution is supplied - the suffering Jesus is here purely symbolising man's suffering and has no religious significance, but it is not here necessary.

11. + 2. Strong, healthy, unsentimental. The description and vituperation are very apt in spite of the new atmosphere.

12. 0. Hymn of Praise! I object to "Thees" with capital T's. He has a pretty comprehensive list I suppose, but nothing sensation. The final idea is quite ingenious.

13. - 1. I find the use of "ye" a tiresome affectation of hortatory verse. The solution is too vague and abstract. The verse is stilted and similarly the expression of the ideas. In any case the attempted statement of the position of the masses is confused and valueless.

14. - 1. Pure escapism! This aesthetic line is discredited and positively blasphemous in the modern world. The expression is patchy - not particularly successful.

15. - 2. Egotistical, he means: listen to me before it is too late! Once again the writer is confused and vague. His discontent is unrealistic, this is particularly evident in the train of pictures the writer uses. They are conventional stereotyped ideas and conventionally described, furthermore.
16. 0. An expression of the individual "human" problem, and human essentials, good enough - though slightly crude. But this is not enough today.


1. - 3. I find great difficulty in saying just why I do not like this poem. Probably it is the assertion that everyone is striving for money, and that this peculiarity of the human race is something to be accepted and joked about. I particularly dislike the line "Steal for it - Kill for it. Isn't it funny?" I suppose the author means funny-peculiar and not funny-comical, but the implication of amusement is there. I do believe that everyone wants just that little bit more - but it is not money.

2. 0. Vaguely familiar. While admiring the technique and perfect balance of this poem, I think what repels me is the fatalist philosophy expressed; that we should be content to endure evils and misfortunes, so that our happy moments may be more happy by contrast.

3. + 2. The author has something to say and he says it. It may lack subtlety, and play rather evidently on the emotion, but it is the expression of man defiant and for this reason I like it.

4. + 3. The same criticism of "emotional" writing might be applied here, and yet the picture painted of the mining landscape is only too correct, and the use of the word "fellows" makes one feel with the author, as a poem should.

5. - 3. One of these damned platitudinous efforts, like the cricket that kept saying "Cheer up! Cheer up" until everyone hated him like poison.

6. - 1. Vaguely familiar. The use of the words appeals to me here. The incantations of the lines 3-5 are enjoyable yet repellent - the kind of thing one likes to chant to oneself without bothering what it means. Being an agnostic myself - I feel no sympathy with the author in his religious meanderings, and I find the whole thing rather vague.

7. + 3. I like this for its simplicity, although I would like to argue with the author about love. The author has something to say, and says it with the minimum of words and frills.
8. + 1. Again a roundabout way of saying something very simple; but it is well-done and pleasant to read.

9. + 1. Again the author has something to say, and says it quite simply, but I'm not in complete agreement about the planning of the Masters. Again, there is a fair element of doggerel.

10. 0. No comment.

11. + 3. Man defiant again, and in a fine tub-thumping mood!

12. - 2. The religious element again, with the light that obscures everything. Only the lines 6-9 in the first verse prevented me placing this poem in the last category.

13. + 1. Has the element of simplicity which I like so well. But it seems unfinished. He starts off with a question that he never attempts to answer.

14. - 2. I am not quite sure what the author is talking about here. He seems to be suggesting some sort of escape from the realities of living - a view with which I find no sympathy.

15. + 1. I agree with the thoughts expressed here, but I feel it is not well done. Probably the criticism of being doggerel could be levelled again here.

16. + 3. Not only simplicity here, but the advocacy of simplicity. There is a longing here, which I feel myself, in this world, when words can be made to mean anything, for simple unequivocal straightforward statement and action. I feel entirely with the author, and find the poem compact and to the point.

COMUNISTS.

A 55. F. (43) Wife of Engineering Representative, Sec. P.O.S. 123.

11. + 3. I like this because it expresses my own feelings. It's alive and to the point.

15. + 3. I like this because it is easy to read and a true picture of the world today. It is hopeful at the end and urges action.
9. + 2. So very true. These thoughts are expressed by mothers of to-day over and over again. It leaves me depressed.

3. + 2. It happens to be the ghastly truth, but interesting because it's the other side of the picture we don't often see.

1. + 1. It's snappy, easy to remember — so easy I might have read it before.

4. + 1. Just a sad little picture, it doesn't affect me much.

13. + 1. Just a sad little picture, it doesn't affect me much.

16. + 1. I like what is being said. I don't like ultimately statements, indirectly, inevitably, established.

2. 0. Not interested.

5. 0. I don't agree with it. One appreciates comfort when one has suffered discomfort, but comfort is none-the-less enjoyable when it is prolonged, or a permanency.

7. 0. —

8. 0.

14. 0. I quite like the first two verses. I am not quite clear about the last one.

10. - 1. The last two lines I don't like.

12. - 1. I may be feeling tired by now, but there is too much ruddy light in this, they have forgotten to put in the cat's lights.

6. + 1. I'm not religious. On reading it through a final time I find I don't dislike it, particularly if it could read "goodness" instead of "God".


1. +1 Clumsy, but with a peculiar attraction. A little too deliberately casual.

2. + 1. Pretentious, but has something to say. Although the style seems ponderous, it just comes over.
3. - 1. Goes on for a long time, and doesn't come to much. Also, rather clumsy in construction.

4. + 2. Laurence, perhaps? (I haven't checked on any of them, though some seem familiar.) Good stuff, with an understanding and simplicity. The fact that it is just a little commonplace keeps me from outright approval.

5. - 3. This is frightful Sunday School stuff. Content criminal, style Woman's Weekly.


7. - 1. Oh dear, these are becoming a little boring. A false simplicity, cf. 13.


9. 0. The writer is clearly moved, but communicates little of his feeling. A mere statement without either cause or cure. Dull.

10. + 1. As 9 above, but with a little more message. And nicely expressed. But without the fire of a mystic or a revolutionary.

11. + 1. The best thing about this is the rhythm, which is borrowed. A lot to it, but uninspired. I like the centre stanza. Perhaps worthy of higher rating, but cf. Marseillaire.

12. 0. Oh dear. Not terribly interesting.


14. 0. "Man stand on thy own". An appeal to the inner light. As such unacceptable.

15. - 1. By this time I fear I am a trifle bored. But it seems once again trite and uninspired.

16. + 2. I feel a little guilty about liking this, but it is true for me. And needs saying. After all, it is what I am fighting for.

1. + 3. I like the easy rhythm of this, also the words. Simple little thing, easy to understand.

2. 0. The rhythm here is very uneven, and does not read well at all. Rather mixed up, I find.

3. + 3. I like this one very much - reads beautifully. Very, very true and very good rhythm.

4. + 1. Quite good. Do not like the number of syllables in last line but one. Some very good words employed.

5. + 3. Very good. I like this - and how true! Poetic influence excellent.

6. 0. Do not think this makes good poetry - would be better used in prose.

7. - 1. No - not a good poem - altho' I like the words, and am trying to change it to my liking.

8. - 1. I do not care for this one - maybe because I do not understand it all.

9. + 3. Lovely poem. I like this very much - rhythm excellent.

10. + 3. Lovely poem. I like this very much - rhythm excellent.

11. + 3. Excellent poem in every way. Rhythm etc. very very good.

12. - 1. No - I cannot understand this one. Very little poetic sense to my mind.

13. + 3. Very good little piece. I like the words very much - reads very well.

14. + 3. Yes - I like this very much. Good rhythm.

15. + 3. Very good. I like the words, especially the first verse.

16. - 1. Words are very good - but not in a poem. Yes, lovely words.
These opinions may be biased, being an apprentice-poet am very aware of the craftsmanship as well as of the content and the impact of any poem. Here goes — 

16. + 3. Am consciously and convincedly aware that social environment can make or mar personality, but am even more convinced that stable human relationships between individuals are the basis of ultimate happiness. Therefore I find these two poems most completely satisfying. 16 makes articulate all my inarticulate convictions about simple human needs and the overlaid complexity of artificial needs — in which the loneliness of man is most desperately established and his unipotence finally demonstrated. (Comment on style; content excellently served by simplicity of language and clarity of grammar.) 14 is sheer unashamed love poem; in the hands of a lesser poet or lover have been sheer escapism, but as written makes permanent a moment of ecstacy. Its sincerity is self evident, it is a crystallization of love, an individual love whose passion promises to spread later into the universal love (love of mankind) which is the root of the ideal social conscience. I think this is proven by the poets awareness of "the barren fool in power" and the bitterness of life, which he consciously intends to forget in the consummation of personal love but which obviously he does not otherwise ignore, or accept. Style excellent, vocabulary simple and rhythm flexible but gloriously full of punch and power.

12. + 3. Two more which are satisfying because they are visionary. Like them immensely for their very opposite reasons, 12 for its richness of vocabulary and breadth of visual imagery; each image touches some personal experience of my own where I have felt the urgency towards praise, causing the whole to feel like my personal testament of praise. (Purely subjective approval, this, isn't it?) 10 is as terse as 12 is rich in words, but has the same ultimately devout conception of life. 12 turns to God in praise, 10 recognises the sorrow of God related to the suffering of man. (Realise here must correct earlier statement — include in the term stable human relationships the God/man relationship as the foundation of happiness, both individual and social. This accounts for personal delight in these two poems, and later dislike of others.)

2. + 3. Like the measured philosophic tone of this and intensely admire the technique of this sonnet form. On second thoughts rather think have been quite overwhelmed.
by the stall of the poet, for the subject boils down to a rather fatalistic conception of life. The poet presents a dramatic conflict of good and evil within the circumstances of man's life, but not between man and man — lack of social content? But can't condemn it for that, since the style indicates it was written before social struggle was consciously recognised (or am I hopelessly out?) (Think I read this one often at school.)

15. + 2. Two more visionary ones, but now the
7. + 2. visionary has his feet on the ground and is acutely aware of the present evil. Is definitely in the modern style with a very pleasant springing rhythm, well balancing its antitheses of long and short phrases of contrasting or complementary images. The colloquialism "the sack" was a jarring note at first but on fifth reading seems inevitable to the tone of the poem. 7 has more optimism, is a bewilderment of anger and frustration; nevertheless has power in its contrasted images. Think its value has a universal appeal of imagery (dreams, children, this world-hate-greed, dreams can come true) and its quality of being easily memorised. Structure rather obvious, of course!

6. + 3. Not sure now whether this is in its right place, belongs with 12 and 10 I think. A piercing poem, considering man's relationship with his worlds, himself and God. It has a grandly inevitable progression of ideas, though the last line seems to be admission of hopelessness. Still, the rest of the poem emphasises per contra the good that should and could be attained when knowledge is replaced by wisdom. Vocabulary simple and unfolding of the theme extremely clear, main fault a rather sledge-hammer effect in the rhythm.

3. + 2. Now we come to obvious "propaganda poems", some better than others. This is probably the best because its springing rhythm and internal rhymes are too well handled to become monotonous, and the punch it carries is sincere and mightily vigorous.

13. + 1. Would be better than 3 but the couplet form very rapidly begins to "jolt" and jog. Verse three first two lines excellent, equaling the man with the machine not in a simile but in a factual statement.

8. 0. This is lovely, delicate, but so completely "out of context" that I couldn't place it in any category. Exquisite "introvert" writing, but in a collection of poems all of human inter-relationships this is quite out of place. I don't find it "obscure", but the other poems had destroyed any inclination to sit and dream with it.
4. - 1. Yes, a powerful poem, but disliked it — perhaps because of its very power of ugliness! Presented the visual image much too clearly. Chief fault, though, verse three — first two lines I could not frame into a grammatical form, and what is that last word of line two?

1. - 2. Two of the "de-dah-de-dah" variety; 9 has a bit more depth to it than 1, but the rhythm was irritating and if it's meant to be a parody I've read much better — e.g. Cecil Day Lewis, "Come live with me and be my love". No. 1 jingles on, harmless clutch of platitudes with no backbone or punch.

5. - 3. Patience Strong at her worst!! "Beginners" elocution class — string of "bright" proverbs, de-dah-de-dah. No. 2 accepted misfortunes with dignity, this makes an impudent jig about pleasures and pains. "See your shoes are strong" makes me see red!!

11. - 3. As for 11, (Kipling, or pseudo-Kipling) a jingle with neither grace, dignity nor real strength. Has only a petulant sneer in it; as for its theology —!

"God placed the Russian peasant" etc. He did not!! This poem seems to blame all man's evils on God placing them, instead of on "man's inhumanity to man" and the end implies that man without God will alter the men that "God placed" — a vile conclusion arrived at from a false premise. If the set-up of society was ordained by God it would be both blasphemous and impossible to change it; being man-made, man can change it but he can only change it for the better with God's help.

A 75. M. (23) Tescher, Uni. and Prof. F.O.S. — 119:

1. - 3. I cannot comment on every poem: Nos. 1, 2, 5, 8, 12 and 14 are so bad that it would be difficult to say anything about them individually.

8. - 3. Not only is their content meaningless in its expression but equally so in its original feeling; nothing of value has been experienced and no attempt has been made to understand whatever prompted the versification. In other words not even the first stage of cognition, sensual experience, has been felt or realised.

6. - 3. Eliot's (No. 6) may be slightly preferable in that at least this elementary stage of feeling is there although heavily controlled by his reactionary formula. It is, too, honestly priestly and does not try to be chummy.
10. - 3. Recognises that there are contradictions in our life although it fails to tell that they are really there and that both can be seen through the same window (the first one) and are there even when the window isn't.

16. - 3. Praises the unconscious but at a very low level indeed. Suggests that there is something wrong with men. (It is tempting to throw these three in with the rest of section 7.)

4. + 1. Both 4 and 15 are weakened by their concern with form: 4 with its unnecessarily complicated rhyme scheme and its 'dead' words; 15 with its couplets and its abstract words and ideas which finally obscure and disarm the last verse.

9. + 2. In comparison with these 9 is more effective. Like them it is a poem of protest but the second verse, for example, is most concrete; and in the parody and the humour of it the negative statements get a toughness which is not negative.

7. + 2. 7, which was written in the 30's, has the ideological weaknesses of the sympathetic left of those days: Love is to become 'recreation', 'delightful'—these conceptions weaken the important idea of 'voluntary'. The concreteness of 'not fearing the sack' is lost at the end in this peculiar "sad, furious, fatal(?) . . . dream(?)" which the future will consider the present. The first 6 lines, however, are quite good.

11. + 2. Is more consistently what it is. It is popular, direct and has fight.

13. + 3. Shelley's No. 13 is great for its seriousness and realism, placing the reality of slavery in terms of its own sharp reality, economic and ideological. It strikes straight at the knowledge and feeling of the workers to whom it is addressed.

3. + 3. But 3 fuses imaginatively, as no other poem does here, the reality of Capitalist slavery. The overthrow of Capitalism is implicit in the poem, in its strength of understanding and protest, in its terrible awareness of all the suffering of humanity, the exploitation of man by man. But this is not a vague sense of history, or a false dogma of history like Eliot's, but a real, tangible one (see the last but one verse). This (with 3 close behind) is the only poem of the sixteen which has any claim to the expression of the real consciousness of our time, and any
right to rank with the work and speeches of British working class leaders from Mann, Connolly, and Maclean to Harry Pollitt. All the others are the work of either idiots and enemies of the people or of the half-awake, and the only half-human.

A 76. M. (29) Student (Father: Civil Servant; Administrative Grade) Uni. P.O.S. 117.

1. - 2. Its not true that "everyone wants that little bit more". An insincere poem: if the rich are "taxed to the limit" then presumably they wouldn't have much leisure, and they should be happy? Besides, its not "funny" that people "risk their lives for it". (I am justified in taking the statements literally, since the poem expects to be treated like this.) Almost put it in the "dislike very much category" but the poem is a rather effective statement of a bad idea and a poor attitude. Horribly patronising.

2. + 2. I think I have read this poem before. It is a good statement of the idea that difficulties as well as joy, help to lead to understanding. There are also, interwoven in this idea, comments on the nature of life, growth and change. I thoroughly approve of and share the attitude. Also it is extremely well expressed; the words obviously were chosen for their effectiveness in conveying the meaning (and not for any artificial reasons). A beautiful and sincere poem. My only criticism is of the line "It is remembrance of the winter snow, That makes the summer petals burn more bright". Remembrance seems not quite the right word here; remembering is too conscious? but I'm not sure. Hesitated whether to put it in the "Like very much" category. The last line is very good. It may be by Shakespeare.

3. + 1. I agree with what the poem says, but I don't think the poem conveys the right feelings. First of all, I think the poem takes too long to say what it wants to say. Also, it gives me a feeling of "despair and hopelessness". But I like the "Good God, we have paid in full" and all the last lines. Found it hard to make up my mind about it. Might be good as a song. But why "hail us", and why "crimson wool"? Also, I didn't see the idea of the wreck and the "ghastly crew". On second thoughts feel inclined to change the category to "like a little". Seems sincere, although rambling. (Previous category "dislike a little").
4. Though I do not altogether sympathise with the attitude expressed in the poem — there is so much sadness — yet I feel it is a good poem. The way it is expressed is very adequate to convey the attitude. I think the images are very vivid and well chosen. It seems as if the author actually has felt and seen what he describes. The idea that the mine spoils the incipient beauty of both flowers and children, is skilfully and sincerely expressed. The poem has a good rhythm. Half-inclined to upgrade it to the "like a good deal" category.

5. Seems to be a kind of "masochistic" feeling in this poem. What the poet says is true enough, yet somehow one feels that the poet is glad that there is suffering — not only for the sake of the contrasted joy but also for the sake of the suffering itself. The poem seems weak and pointless — why take so long to state a simple idea? Feel indifferent to it. Trite. Might be an advertisement for shoes. Quite a good swinging rhythm. Incidentally, the subject-matter clearly has something in common with poem No. 2.

6. In this poem, I am not at all in sympathy with the ideas expressed — in fact, I dislike them. On the other hand, the poem is sincere — the poet has truly felt the difficulty of finding a meaning in life. The idea that there is "a something" beyond knowledge — and which, by seeking after knowledge, we get farther away from — is an idea I am very much opposed to. It appears to assume that science leads away from true understanding. (Is it by Wordsworth?) All the same, these ideas are worked out at a high level. The poet has felt real delight and wonder at the world. It is beautifully expressed. And it is a very interesting poem, rich in thought. What does "The Word" mean? "Knowledge of motion, but not of stillness" presumably means (among other things) that even though we can know what change is by observation, we cannot know what the parts of which change is made up consist of. We "lose the essence". The poem surely refers to the philosophical problem of the relation between subject and object? I may have read the poem before. The poem is (at the end) somewhat disillusioned.

7. I did not understand the line "love is no more the antidote to terror". I did not like this poem very much because the images seem forced and arbitrary. I disliked "men upstanding" very much. Also "sad, furious, fatal" was unpleasant, though I'm not sure what the poet means. Why will our here and now look "sad, furious, fatal"? Also I am very much opposed to the attitude
implied in the poem. Its a kind of "Utopian" conception, like a dream. It gives one a feeling of dreaminess and vagueness - the last feeling on earth likely to bring about a better society. Also it is inclined to make the future sound entirely pleasant and the present entirely black - which is false. "Love is delightful" is very weak. I'm not sure if I haven't over-rated this poem.

8. + 2. This poem moved me quite a lot, so I rated it "like a good deal". The poet has successfully observed nature and his own state of mind. The rhythm (metre) is particularly good and effective - it emphasises the meaning of the poem. The words are good, though I didn't like "frail tendrils" on second reading. I puzzled a bit over "a flower in space, fading into an empty room". Why "fading"? It is a good idea to start with images taken from nature and then to approach music and then the mind. It prepares the reader in the right way - by making him concentrate on nature, he is "taken by surprise" when he instead of looking into a pool, looks into himself.

9. + 1. Had some difficulty making up my mind about this poem. Decided I like it a little. The poem is rather sad and has not the kind of rhythm I like best. Yet it is rather moving in its way, and the ideas can be expressed successfully by this kind of rhythm. Very sincere. No attempt to be "poetic". The idea of the masters are "planning the way you should die" is a grim one, yet the previous line "But buds break to blossom as brief moments fly" shows that this need not have happened, i.e. the tragedy is not in the baby's nature, but in external circumstances.

10. - 1. I just didn't understand this poem, and in so far as I did I didn't like it, although I think it is sincere in its way. I don't particularly like the rather abstract images - such as "sky's wide dome", "flecked with flowers". What does "my brother's loss" mean? And why should the friend see "Jesus hanging on a Cross"? Is he upset by the sinfulness of mankind? I confess I was "put off" by the reference to Jesus, and also to the phrase "flecked with flowers" which sounds stereotyped. Is the poet talking about the outside world and humanity, or about his "friend's" state of mind? If the latter, then I suppose he means that his friend's happiness is superficial.

11. 0. The subject-matter and overt content of this poem is alright, though I think the poet attempts to range over too wide a field. But the way the ideas are expressed is
feeble and uninteresting. Could have been better written in prose. Completely indifferent. Didn't think "wondrous" wealth was suitable, and I suspect it was put in because it scans.

12. + 1. Rather old-fashioned poem (might be a hymn?) but quite vivid. The whole poem a little too conscious I think, as if the poet had decided he must write a poem about "light". Didn't like "submarine". Also I'm not sure if I like the rather self-abasing kind of worship expressed by the poem. But I like the "eastern light our spires touch at morning" and "glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade". The words and images are quite well chosen.

13. + 2. I like the spirit of this poem. Although it does not answer the question "what is freedom?" directly, it has a pleasing vigour about it (conveyed by the rhythm and the words). Also, the implication is that freedom can be obtained when the loom, plough etc. are made to work for the benefit of the people and not for exploiting groups. But mainly I like this poem for its vigour and definiteness. It "breathes" freedom. Although the words are mostly ordinary everyday words, they are used effectively as poetry - without trying to be "poetic".

14. - 1. Found it hard to make up my mind about the merit of the poem, but I do not like the ideas in it. If in our souls we can be "queens and kings" then how is it possible to forget the world in the next stanza? But who is "O divine white wonder"? Why "white"? Is it a love poem? If it is, it is of course quite a possible attitude for a lover to take, but rather out-of-date. But the "white wonder" may be some object of worship - not a spouse. Of course, I suppose I should not take the exhortation to "forget all these" too literally, since they are not a statement of a belief but of an attitude of mind. But I don't care much for the attitude anyway. "Though all men's passionate seas Roar their blind tides" is good. Is it by Shakespeare?

15. - 1. This poem has some of the faults of 7, although I feel it is a little more sincere. I don't like "children stricken". Stricken with what? "O man rise" does not scan very well. But my main criticism is that the poet views himself as outside society, lecturing it and telling man to "rise". I don't feel the poet feels himself part of a struggle to better society. No wonder the tone of the poem (whatever the words) sounds despairing. The last line is very weak. It looks as if it's just tacked on at the end. The feeling of the poem does not inspire me to
"rise". But, like 7, the whole poem has that vague "Utopian" attitude which is probably excessively motivated by the poet's own personal problems. The words and images are very uninteresting.

16. - 1. This is a better poem than 15 and I like it better, though I still dislike it a little. I find the ideas annoying and very stereotyped - the poem looks like a typical 20th century poem and the theme of "loveliness" is hackneyed. All the same, the poet has felt what he writes, and it is a true description, no doubt, of his own state of mind. I don't understand "laughter to which I listen". One feels the poet longs for sincerity, longs for understanding. He is trying to face up to his predicament. Underlying the poem, however, is the false intellectual idea that complexity is the enemy of spontaneity, i.e. civilisation is the enemy of love. I profoundly disagree with this idea and that is why I don't like the poem. However it is genuine though a little pompous, as if the poet is "striking an attitude". Metre and images are very good and effective.

1. - 3. Trash (presumably not written by a socialist to ridicule this superficial - comforting - Boy Scout school of verse?)

2. - 2. Far away from the good poetry of contraries (e.g. Shakespeare's sonnets). Shakespeare feels imaginatively with the sea advancing on the shore, for instance, his contraries have power and probably philosophical truth. Verse 1 of this poem is a superficial, platitudinous statement of contraries. Verse 2 is an unconscionable twist of the meaning of Verse 1.

3. O. At the moment this sounds a little exaggerated and crude. If, however, it refers to a tough epoch, e.g. any time in the 19 C, or tough times in the USA, it is fair enough. The poem is certainly sincere, and, in spite of its sternness, is wholesome.

4. + 2. The more often I read this, the more I appreciate it. It is deep in feeling, not exaggerated, but exact in its observation. It is real, serious and indeed grave. I note with approval the emphasis on fellowship. But one feels something of a humbug in appraising this type of poem in the expected way. It says with feeling what we all know to be true, and what should have attention drawn to it.
5. - 3. Feeble, of course.

6. - 1. (T.S. Eliot) The last 2 lines rather give the game away. What has been (portenously and) repetitively (according to Eliot's method. Cp. also Spenser and Hitler, who repeat dicta rather than develop thoughts) said in the rest of the passage is now said undecoratively and how hollowly didactic it now sounds! A ready-made untruth out of a monastery!

7. - 1. I particularly dislike this poem because it is the product of a conceited, literary person falling for fashionable affectations in poetry and generalising about socialism after a "progressive" style which is (or was in the 30's) a mere literary convention. I suggest that such a person looks like the photographs in Penguin New Writing and is in no sense one of "the people".

8. - 1. The carefulness of the Autumn and Music descriptions led me to expect a quite interesting little discovery concerning a state of mind. But the last verse is disappointing and doesn't mean much. Again, it gives away the whole effort.

9. - 2. I had difficulty in making up my mind about this one. The message it contains is worthy. The style is at first (to me) unconvincing, too facile, very much like Kipling's verse, apparently incapable of expressing deep feeling, especially a phrase like "brain, blood and bone" can flow easily without real feeling or thought. And yet re-reading strengthens the conviction of sincerity. The facile rhythm and rhyme are probably a commendable sign of a respect for technical efficiency: tidiness of form. And some apparently stock phrases are more than redeemed by the last line of each verse, both "The Masters are planning" and the equally effective conclusion to Verse 2. These lines are strong stylistically and do justice to the intended message.

10. - 2. Rather like Christina Rossetti. It is almost too neat. It does, however, carry a sense of responsibility; or is it only a sense of what responsibility one ought to feel? The way "Jesus hanging on a cross" rhymes with "loss" is almost flippant. I am not sure of the meaning of "window of your soul": is he seeing the contemporary sorrows of the world he knows, or the mystical sorrow required by a Christian outlook? But perhaps, as in 9, the neat verse form does not indicate smug thought. The poet could do many worse things than think sympathetically about the seamy side of life.
11. + 2. Not very great in feeling or style, but good enough as a campaigning rhyme; lively.

12. C. Hopkins? I like many separate phrases. Yet the thought in the end is not so solid as the clever technique might suggest. The connection between the two kinds of light is of a slender nature. Even for a Christian, this particular pseudo-mystical connection is surely little more than a poetic conceit, not reaching down into the depths of religion. On the whole rather less ado about nothing than in Poem 6.

13. + 3. Shelley? The note of authority, quite different from all the other poems; one could demonstrate in detail the technical superiority of this poem to the others (in the list) having simple rhymed verses. An impressive example of great and complicated truths expressed with that magnificent and elegant simplicity which is a hallmark of the master.

14. - 1. Some of the phrases suggest sincerity. But the thought is muddled and unreal to the point of being pathetic; the more pathetic as the writer seems to have meant it all.

15. 0. Very pedestrian, so much so that it is difficult to tell whether any of these ideas meant much to the writer. If the poem is intended as a call to action, I don't think it would make a very strong impact.

16. - 1. "Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements" is a flat statement which doesn't convince me of its truth. What "simple action" (verse 4) is required? The same simple action as in "To His Coy Mistress"? If the dilemma (whatever it is) is real, I can't sympathise with the attitude. If (again) the dilemma is real, the attitude (which creates it) is cowardly. If (as I think) it is not real, it is merely an intellectual affectation a fashionable poetic pose. The one line which could carry conviction "inevitably we have established the loneliness of man" is so lacking in any kind of poetry as to betray the fact that the "poem" was written without feeling, without inspiration. It came from a dry mind, emptied of whatever it is that is inspiring. Also the writer does not really seem upset at the loneliness. I doubt if this is poetry. Is this also Eliot?
12. + 2. I like this poem because of its descriptive beauty. The fact that I do not share the religious viewpoint of the poet does not detract from my appreciation of it.

8. + 2. I find it difficult to say why I like this poem. I like the choice of words, the similes and the metre, rather than the idea.

11. + 2. I like the satirical humour and militant revolutionary sentiments expressed in this poem. It has a good rhythm, and although it has weaknesses, I feel that it is the most successful of the "political" poems in this group.

3. + 1. I like the vigorous protest expressed in this poem, and the ballad style is handled effectively, though I think the last line of each verse is unsatisfactory.

4. + 1. I like some of the lines in this, but think that the poem on the whole fails to be as effective as it might have been because of lack of subtlety in choice of words and rhymes, and also perhaps because of a slightly negative attitude to the subject.

7. + 1. Again, this poem fails because a good idea is too naively expressed. The quality is uneven. I like the line "Hate is no more against those who withhold bread", but feel that the next line, "Those people have gone", is weak and unsatisfactory.

9. + 1. This has a certain appeal as a satirical lullaby, especially the last verse, but I disapprove of the negative approach to the subject.

13. + 1. I like this poem as a whole (I prefer the first part to the extract given) because of its bold revolutionary appeal, but I think it suffers from the same weaknesses as the other poems of the same type - i.e. poor technique.

I feel that numbers 3, 4, 7, 9, 13 and 15 were all written by people who consciously and sincerely attempted to express feelings (with which I agree) of protest against social injustice, but who failed (in varying degrees) to make these into good poetry because they lacked knowledge or experience of the technique of poetry.
2. + 1. I like some of the lines of this sonnet, especially lines 5 and 6, but I dislike the implication of the second part, that "the evils we endure" may be blessings in disguise and that therefore we should accept them.

6. + 1. I like the words of this poem and admire its craftsmanship, but I disapprove of what I would call its defeatist outlook. It expresses despair, and says in effect - "mankind is doomed and there is no escape".

15. - 1. I dislike this (altho' I agree with its content) for reasons stated above. I consider it technically inferior to 3, 4, 7, 9 and 13.

16. - 1. I think there are a few good lines in this, chiefly in verse 3, but I dislike it because it expresses a negative defeatist attitude.

10. - 1. I dislike this for the same reason.

14. - 2. I dislike this more because it advocates escape into a dream world, and it has no technical compensations.

1. - 3. I dislike these very much because they express superficial sentimental reactionary ideas, implying a justification of poverty and unnecessary suffering, expressed in a verse form that can only be described as doggerel.

The only poems I recognise are the two extracts (12 and 6) from "The Rock" by T.S. Eliot, and the extract from Shelley's "Men of England" (13). (I am not quite sure if I'm right about 13.)


1.-1. Feeble. The poet does not seem to have much to say. Light and trivial.

2. - 1. I dislike it on account of its dull, second-hand, literary flavour.

3. + 2. Deeply felt and quite moving. I would have liked it better if it had ended up with a more militant and optimistic message for the future.

4. * 2. Well written. Good imagery. Again, though, there is no message or hope for the future, and this makes it a poem of despair and defeat.
5. + 1. I like the plain, direct and "popular" imagery. But the poet has little to say here.


8. - 3. I dislike this individualistic, esoteric kind of poetry. Art for Art's sake.

9. + 2. Sincere and quite moving. But, again, no message or hope for the future.

10. + 2. Simple, moving imagery. Plain and straightforward. These qualities I like. But, again, no message of hope.

11. + 2. Succeeds very well in achieving the effect that was desired. Slick technique. Form and content well matched.


13. + 2. This poem I know well, and like. It's meaning is plain and militant, and its technique is accomplished.

14. - 2. Quite well written - but I dislike its message of defeatism and escape.

15. 0. Does not seem to have a really genuine ring. But I like the straightforwardness of the style.

16. - 3. Personal, private. I have no liking for this kind of poetry. The poet may have genuinely felt all these things - but who cares?

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1. - 2. I feel a fairly strong dislike for this poem. I think it is a silly, unanalytical, petty, little ditty. From "Isn't it funny?" to the end I find the most objectionable part of the poem because it is just that sort of illogical catch phrase which people most easily mistake for eternal truths. Therefore I think this poem is a socially harmful one. The juxtaposition of "Kill for it" and "Isn't it funny?" makes me angry.
2. I particularly like the first verse of this poem because the thought is worked out very neatly and I think poetically. The second verse is disappointing both in form and content. It would seem to say that the harder the lot, for instance of the working-class, now, the better for them will be true socialism when they get it and therefore let's be rather pleased when we are particularly badly off. Or you'll be happier when you're happy if you've been unhappy, and the unhappier you were the happier you will be, mainly because you'll realise by contrasting your unhappiness with your present state how happy in comparison you now are— which seems the same as saying if (a) and (b) are both as happy as each other, but (a) has in the past been very unhappy, he needs less to make him as happy than (b) because the first rays of happiness in contrast to his former state make him very happy indeed whereas (b) needs much more to attain the same degree ... so what?

3. I like No. 3 very much because it is, I think, true, and worth saying and well written, but I haven't put it in the top category because although it is a justly angry and bitter poem the anger and bitterness seem to me static and verbal—it curses but no more.

4. I like this poem because, although I have never seen a mine or a mining town, this poem moved me and helped me to understand more about it, in fact it was an experience to read this poem. I do not put it in the top category for the purely subjective reason that it is full of words unfamiliar to me (starwort, darnel, dimb, headstock) which makes it difficult to read. I put first of category 2 because it seems to me to be full of human love and sympathy.

5. I suppose I might have put this in the category dislike a little—but it doesn't seem worth wasting dislike on. It seems to be a mixture of No. 1 and No. 2 as far as content goes and is full of dull, boring, righteous platitudes some of which, of course, have truth in them. It makes me want to say—de-da de-da de-da de-da.

6. A very bad piece of trance-minded playing on words and associations to produce nothingless nonsense. I just feel sorry for the bloke who wrote it and should surmise that his death will probably occur by being run over.

7. A rather feeble poem but with a faint spark. Not very well written—"Sad, furious, fatal" seems to me a singularly irrelevant collection of adjectives to apply to our here and now!
8. + 1. A rather pointless poem about a phenomenon we all experience and know about, but very beautifully written with evocative imagery and beautiful words.

9. + 2. This should be sung and for me hovers between categories 2 and 3. I think that the poet has used the medium of the traditional lullaby very well to get his points across - and I think they need getting across. On the other hand, I don't think it is very well written.

10. - 1. This isn't what I would call a poem, it sounds like Q and A for bright boys, therefore I can't evaluate it as a poem - if I must, it is a rotten poem - very unintelligent.

11. + 3. This I think should be sung. I like it enormously - is it a parody on something familiar or is the something familiar a parody on this? I like it so much because it is in our tradition - it is very English in every way and of course I like it because it expresses what I feel - I could sing it with great gusto.

12. 0. This poem conjures up some pleasant resting places for the eye but I don't like it because it doesn't mean or say anything to me.

13. + 1. I think this poem is clumsily written, e.g. verse 2, but I like it a little because it is a simple and angry poem, angry about the things that make me angry.

14. - 1. This poet can't even say simply and poetically that he likes to be alone with his girl-friend because then he doesn't have to think. A very pretentious, pompous and trivial poem.

15. + 1. I don't understand the last line of this poem. It has one good line - the 2nd one in the last verse - powerful, poetical and rather egocentric, self-righteous poem and I have doubts if his 'fleeble cry' will be anything but 'lost'.

16. + 2. I like the rhythm and working out of the word order of this poem. Living in London makes you realise how true this poem is for many people. I think he is stretching out his hands to people, asking for fellowship and clarity and I think he may find both.
1. - 2. This poem does not pretend to be more than a trivial little nonsense rhyme and nonsense it certainly is. The sentiments expressed are an insult to the reader's intelligence, but as the poet can't expect to be taken seriously, I have not put the poem at the bottom of the list. It's a jingle, to run quickly off the tongue and forget as soon as read.

2. - 3. This poem is more pretentious and asks to be taken seriously, with it's grandiose language and rolling rhythms. This makes the philosophy it expounds all the more dangerous, by cloaking a falsehood in fine words. As I thoroughly disagree with the message in this poem, I have rated it below No. 1 poem; its message seems to be, (not, as in No. 1 it's best to be "poor but happy") but that misery, evil, sickness etc. are necessary and must be tolerated.

3. - 2. This poem has been written with real feeling and passion and I think the style and rhythm help to convey the emotion to the reader. It seems to be meant to be a kind of battle song of the working classes, with its constant reiteration of "we" contrasted to "you" - a song that should unite and organize workers in their struggle against the boss. I do not think it fulfills its purpose as well as it might have done, firstly because of the use of words such as "ghastly", "doom", "cursed" which rob it of the dignity of simplicity and restraint, and secondly because it over-emphasizes the role of the working class as a bleeding victim and slave, and does not show it also as a strong, creative and lively force which can change the world. Every class song should have a note of hope to inspire the singers, this poem is too much a dirge of despair. However there is a militancy about it which I appreciate, and judging it by how far it fulfills its purpose, I should say it does so fairly well.

4. - 3. Now realize that I made notes on No. 16 where I should have commented on No. 4, so here is my opinion of No. 4. It is a beautiful poem. Musical and lilting in sound and rhythm, full of feeling and love for people, for childhood, for nature. Again the words are simple and chosen with great economy and restraint. The feeling is more poignant than that of any poem so far read, the picture the poem creates in the mind is clear and sharp. It is a great poem, in every way, a poem that can be reread indefinitely and always yield new riches for the heart and mind: end yet that is so passionate in its protest against the ugliness of the Industrial Revolution that it is almost unbearable to read it through once. I like it very much.
5. - 3. This very moral rhyme is obviously meant as a text for a backward Sunday School Class, whose teacher has got stumped for a text. As such it is more or less adequate, half the class is asleep anyway and the rest aren't listening, but as a poem it can't be judged, it just isn't poetry.

6. - 3. Here is another very highfalutin' essay in blank verse, breathing blank despair and no faith at all in man. If things are as bad as that I wonder the poet bothers to write poetry -- a humanity sunk as low as he seems to think us is hardly worth speaking to. But I suppose the poet is just muttering quietly to himself. It's a pity to eavesdrop. I pass with relief on to No. 7.

7. - 3. This I like very much (perhaps all the more because of past suffering after undergoing No. 6). I think the writing beautiful and dignified, every word chosen with economy and every word simple and forceful. The thought and the feeling of the poem are profound, its simplicity is the outcome of much hard work. I find the construction and the meaning very moving, it is the sort of poem one can cherish and learn by heart. My only quarrel is with the last two lines -- I cannot believe that men of the future will not find a great deal to admire and understand in the world of today, as they look back. But the poet has the essential virtue of faith in mankind.

8. - 2. Back to my first order. This very obscure poem is very much like a stone dropped into a pond -- it's upsetting for a moment to the mind to be ruffled by such unintelligible stuff, but a second later no trace of the poem's message remains in the mind. This analogy I borrow with acknowledgment from the poem, but in fact the poem has no message or meaning at all so it is not surprising it leaves none behind.

9. - 2. I do not like this imitation lullaby very much, the theme is too serious for the light way in which it has been treated and the request of the mother that the baby should stay tiny and helpless seems utterly ridiculous following on from verse 2 -- at least allow the poor little beggar to get a little strength to resist oppression -- but his mother seems determined he's going to die and she's going to cry -- he mustn't get big enough to take a hand in determining his own fate himself. What a horrible mother! As a matter of fact no mother could be so horrible -- obviously the poem has been written by a man.
10. I like this poem enormously, it expresses an emotion and mood that could never be expressed in prose and that only a great poet could express. Such a poem enlarges the horizons of man's heart and feeling, by making clear to him something that he has never been conscious of or clearly understood before it was written, by putting into simple clear and forceful words something every man must feel - as he looks at the capitalist world today. The poem is so beautiful I am at a loss for words and leave it to speak for itself. Such a poem arouses thoughts and feelings that lead to action, action to change the world for the better, and so such a poem is of direct service to humanity.

11. I like this very much, it seems to be the same type of working class song as No. 3 but I like it much better, because its language is plain and sincere, because it is witty and lively and not with a whining note of self-pity, and most of all because it is a song of hope and confidence in the people. It is one of the best Jolly revolutionary ditties I have come across and should greatly add to the zest of any mass meeting.

12. This poem seems sincere, beautifully written and full of deep feeling. But as I cannot share the feeling, having no belief in God, the poem makes no impact on me, and I can only admire it from a distance for its calm beauty.

13. This is a wonderful poem, vigorous, direct, shouting aloud belief in the dignity of man.

14. This is an illustration of love as an "antidote to terror" (No. 7) but such love is neither fruitful nor productive or anything good, and nor is the poem that glorifies such love. Love that tries to live on itself, separated from all the world, is harmful.

15. This poem is well meaning but utterly spoilt by the bathos of the last 2 lines. The emotional level is rather shallow and the atmosphere very priggish. Although the sentiment expressed is very good, it is not expressed in such a way that it stirs the heart at all. It is rather a tract in rhyme, like No. 5, but preaching a different moral.

16. This poet speaks of love, but in all the stage setting of deathly corridors, twisted towers, mazes, falling leaves, the poet seems to wander "vainly", "afraid", "lonely" and utterly lost, as far away from knowing what love is as from understanding anything about the human
heart. How dare he write about love, when he lives in such a vacuum, self created, cut off from humanity - love should mean warmth and a longing to give happiness, should mean a keener awareness of the beauties of life; a poem like this profanes love and turns its back on life. I abominate it, its sterile self pity and self conceit, its assumption that the artist is alone and no one else matters. The great love poems of the past glorified humanity and breathed faith in the goodness of man.

1. - 2.  2.  0.  3.  + 3.  4.  + 2.
5. - 1.  6. - 1.  7.  + 1.  8.  0.
9.  + 2.  10. + 2.  11.  + 2.  12.  0.
13.  + 2.  14. - 1.  15.  0.  16.  - 1.


General: (i) The first thing I look for in a poem is its meaning. Poetry which has nothing to say which I consider significant is of little interest to me.
(ii) But even if the poet has something to say, he must say it in a way which proves to me the depth and sincerity of his feeling. If he fails to do this it may be for one of two reasons - either because he doesn't feel strongly and sincerely about what he is writing, or because he hasn't got the technical ability to convey this feeling to his reader. (iii) Finally, I consider it a merit if the poet writes in a way which is easily intelligible to all-English speaking people, and not simply to people with a secondary school and/or university education. This final point is, however, less important than the other two.
4.  + 3.  4 has all three of the above points and
9.  + 3.  I like very much the warmth of his feeling and the way in which he clearly identifies himself with those of whom he is writing, regarding himself as one of them. 9 is less positive than 4 in feeling, and more sophisticated. In technique it is more sophisticated than 4.
11.  + 2.  There is less positive and moving feeling
3.  + 2.  in these poems than in the first group.
8.  + 2.  11 has the most. 3, tho' equally bitter, is marred by its negative, pessimistic note. 8 doesn't say much, but what it does say is said extremely well and gives the impression of strong and sincere feeling.
7. + 1. I like the idea, but there is no force or appeal in the expression of it.

13. + 1. Begins with a question which it doesn't answer. The main body of the poem is negative and devoid of any strong human feeling, tho' what it says is true enough. The more disappointing because of the contrast with Shelley, reminiscency of whom it is presumably intended to invoke.

16. + 1. Would be good if the "simple statements" were significant besides being simple.

15. + 1. Positive, but hackneyed. Moreover the implication of the last line that to "strive for self" is in itself bad, is false.

14. - 1. A well-expressed, apparently sincere feeling which one can understand but not share.

5. - 1. Comparable in spirit to 2, but more banal both in form and content. By Patience Strong, I believe.

2. - 1. A true but platitudinous sentiment; objectionable because so often used to inculcate resignation and not resistance, to evil. I have a feeling this is by Shakespeare.

10. - 1. Sounds like Ralph Hodgson. The poet's professedly deep sympathy for all those who suffer would be more convincing if coupled, as it is in all true humanists, with an ability to take an equal zest in the joys of life. Moreover, his sympathy for the suffering appears as a purely passive and ineffective thing and one gets the feeling that the poet is congratulating himself for being such a sensitive soul and inviting others to praise him on that score. This makes one suspect his sincerity.


12. - 2. Trite in its theme and moreover "phony" in its sentiment. There is a precious and snobbish atmosphere about it, as tho' the poet were concerned to advertise his profoundly poetic nature, which cannot only derive intense emotional satisfaction (as ordinary men presumably cannot) from various light effects, but can moreover philosophise about it quite in the classical Platonic style.
1. - 3. Dislike very much, both for its content and for its complete absence of any technical merit. It conveys the thoroughly hypocritical idea - as always inculcated by the rich as a weapon against social discontent - that riches bring unhappiness and only the poor are really happy. "Taxed to the limit" is a piece of brazen effrontery which defies comment! The poor are always taxed proportionately more than the rich by means of indirect taxation. By Patience Strong, I believe.


11. + 3. I like this poem for two main reasons: (i) as a socialist I admire the forceful way in which the poet has accused the English capitalist exploiters of their past actions, and (ii) as a patriot I enjoy the exposure of the hypocritical English ruling-class which has oppressed my land for centuries. The last stanza of this poem is particularly expressive, containing, as I see it, the prophecy of the victory of Popular Democracy and the promise of National Independence.

3. + 2. This poem pleases me in its clear, straight affirmation of the Rights of Man to the Fruits of His Labour; in its announcement of the coming of the People into "their own" and the end of the power of the exploiter-class, of the robbers of the World's Wealth. The poem is easily read, with a flowing rhythm, and the words used are sharp and sure.

5. + 2. This poem pleases me in its reminding verses that we shall not obtain all our desires by merely wishing them, and that life is a test of fortitude, a trial of strength, and an everlasting goal which can never be completely fulfilled but which inspires continual striving on our part. The rhythm of this poem flows easily along, and the words are well chosen.

2. + 1. The message which is conveyed by this poem of the emphasis our blessings acquire when contrasted with our misfortunes is very wise and very true. The whole theme of the poem indicating the revelation of beauty and truth by contrast is admirable.

15. + 1. The message of peace and goodwill linked with the inevitable advance of the People's Power and the call to strike for freedom and happiness is inspiring. It is a pleasing poem to the reader.
13. +1. The definition of slavery and oppression is a cell against craven submission to those in temporary power. It is a true piece of worker's verse. This is a simple and moving poem.

10. +1. This poem portrays the sharp contrast between the visible appearance of things and the real background to life, stripped of decorations, in the so-called "Free World". The last line is most effective.

9. +1. This poem portrays the truth of the exploitation of Man by his self-styled "Masters". It reveals a desperate philosophy of the servants of Capital. The poet sums up aptly the outlook of his comrades.

1. +1. The verses of this poem are lively, clear and simple. The last stanza, in particular the second line, is very effective in its allusion to "the root of all evil".

16. -1. This poem appears rather obscure at first reading and it does not show any great improvement on re-reading. It may be true that there is truth only in simplicity but it can hardly be maintained that there is comfort only in impulsive actions. We do not readily admit the loneliness of man as portrayed in this poem and are out of sympathy with the poet's native philosophy.

6. -1. This poem also is rather complicated. There is an essential truth in the consciousness of ignorance which is experienced with the acquisition of knowledge but the poet's conclusions following on the discovery of this formula seems despairing and hopeless. The poem is well-written but its message is not appreciated.

8. -1. This poem is not very clear to the reader until it has been studied a number of times; in spite of this, however, it does portray an interesting incident in our mind's experience. There is a lack of rhythm in the verse of this piece and the natural flow of sound is disjointed, with a somewhat jarring note.

12. -1. Another poem which is not very clear at first. The salute to Light is commendable and the theme of the piece can be understood and appreciated. The chief criticism of this poem is its lack of rhythm; there is but little music in its verse which appears "modernistic".

14. -1. A poem which again is not very clear at first and which does not appear to enjoy a musical choice of words. The most effective lines in this poem are the last two lines of the second stanza, this stanza makes the
poem more likeable, yet it would not succeed in progressing beyond the category of "pieces neither liked nor disliked". Who or what may "the jealous C" (line 2) be?

4. - 2. Irrespective of rhythm, this poem displeases by what it asserts because although it is definitely true in parts, it commits the crime of generalising. It is simply not true that "Beauty never visits mining places" - a visit to Cwm Rhondda itself will prove this. There are beauties of Nature around many pits and there is nothing more beautiful than a Choir of Miners. It was once true that miners were almost living-dead but not today. The miner has begun to come into his own - thank Heavens - and this poem can only serve as an echo of the bad old days which are gone. Today there are no longer the hateful slag-heaps around our new pits and we shall clear all slag away - including "slag" poetry!

7. - 2. The poet who sees "the houses of the future" appears to be of the "school" of modern poets who care nothing for beauty in verse, for the music of sound, and who completely disregard the elementary requirements of rhythm. The choice of words is out of any conformity with style and varies from 'semi-slang' to 'pseudo-pedantry'. The content of the poem is even more unpleasant than the style. It is interpreted to mean a call to free-love and the abandonment of all moral and social ethics; an encouragement of a modern tendency to throw of responsibility, in short the application of the attractive teaching of taking everything out of life without putting in anything of value - "something for nothing" - "spivverse". The reader may be too harsh in his judgement of this piece, if so his defence is that this piece had the effect of irritating him into attacking it.


11. + 2. I like this because it expresses something I agree with in strong vigorous language, in a regular form. It is not merely a passive expression of suffering, but a call to action. It is not consciously 'poetic', perhaps lacks a certain depth and has a certain lack of variety about the rhythm.

3. + 2. As for 11. The strong feeling of class hatred attracts me in this as in 11. The poem is weakened, however, by a certain triteness in phrases, e.g. "ghastly crew" and by the unvaried sing-song rhythm.

9. + 2. I find this poem moving, and the rhythm appropriate. It has an excellent last line - but lacks a feeling of struggle against "The Masters".
13. I recognise this poem, and my response to it is affected by the associations which it has for me. In the form given, it lacks the feeling of a complete poem with a climax. Stanza 3 is obscure in its structure. There is the same strong feeling as in 3 and 11 with more variety of rhythm, but there is a sense that the ideas in Shelley's mind have not reached full expression and that he is struggling unsuccessfully with the form—compare certain speeches in Prometheus, which express the same ideas more successfully.

4. I find this poem only partially true. In his pity for the stunted lives of miners the poet has ignored the facts which show that beauty does "visit mining places"—an active struggle of the miners for better conditions. It reminds me of the grim "realistic" kind of paintings of Industrial districts in which all the stress is on despair. There is no hint of the positive side and no call to action; on the other hand, there is some technical skill in the poem which considered with the feeling of sympathy, results in some effective line—e.g. "There on the slag heaps, where no bird poises". I feel that the comparison of the children "sweet human flowers" is sentimental and tripe.

7. I like the first two lines of this poem very much, but after that it seems to me to suffer complete decline. It suffers from lack of clear rhythmic form, from prosaicness and declines to a mere passive contemplation of the horrors of the present. There is no bridge between the present and the future in the poem—because this bridge must be built by action. Similarly, it suffers from feeble imagery—contrast the class hatred of the ruling class in 11 and 3 with the weak "against those who withhold bread". I suppose that this is a middle-class poet trying to write a "progressive" poem.

15. Again, a poem with a strong opening, which seems to me to decline. The main weakness here is in the imagery, which is too vague—"Hate and greed, a modern calvary", "hell is loosed". There is also a feeling of no real confidence that "Dreams can come true". But as in all the poems so far mentioned, I like the simplicity of language, the attempt at definite form, and the lack of pre-occupation with merely personal poetry.

10. This seems to me to be rather a weak imitation of Blake. I do not like the formal poetic language—"flecked with flowers", "silver trees", etc. On the other hand, it has the virtue of simplicity and comprehensibility, and a certain human feeling—"The stranger's need, my brother's loss".
5. — 2. I feel impatient with this kind of poetry. There is no real problem to resolve as in Shakespeare's sonnets, where the richness of imagery and complication of movement express the thought perfectly. I find this empty and pretentious.

14. — 1. This seems to me an essentially artificial production. I am baffled by the period — on the surface it seems late Elizabethan — but this is contradicted by "O divine white wonder" — and the idea of an abstract "Beauty", in fact, a bit of a mess all round.

2. — 1. As for 14. The imagery is weak, the sentiment trite, but there is some point in using the sonnet form.

8. — 1. Too consciously "poetic" with no real content. The imagery in the third stanza is inconsistent with that in the first two.

6. — 1. I do not sympathise with the main idea of this poem but my chief reason for disliking it is its poor poetic quality, e.g. "Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" (N.B. Contrast with Donne "Death be not proud" which I like for its power, altho' not agreeing with the overt theme.)

1. — 2. I dislike the facetious tone and commonplace ideas of this. Also it is not true.


16. — 3. I do not know why I dislike this more than the others poems above. Perhaps it is the note of decadence "in my deathly corridor", "life a twisted tower", and despair.

I hope you can read my comments. May I criticise the choice of poems? It seems to me that many of the poems I have classed as "disliking" are weak as poems. Surely a fairer test would be to take poems representing the same kind of ideas which are at the same time great poetry — e.g. Donnes "Death be not proud". Also none of the neutral poems are poetically up to much as e.g. a lyric by Herrick would be. Or have I misunderstood the purpose of the questionnaire? Why not also include a real example of 'modern' poetry — e.g. Eliot?
None of these poems was familiar to me or even known to me. None of them is at all obscure. The thoughts expressed seem to me to be rather obvious and the poems are not of a very high standard.

The poems I dislike most are those which express bitterness and hatred. These are negative and even as propaganda I think they are less effective in the long run than a constructive approach offering hope for the future rather than memories of the bad old days. Seem to me to be definitely out of date. The poems in 3 beyond the line I have marked seem to me to be very much on a level.

In the last verse of 5 the metre is jerky "You can always get along ..." and "You've got to keep on" would have put this right quite easily. It is not the type of poem in which roughness in the metre is any advantage.

"It's certainly true that we can't do without it", with its jaunty dactyls, on the subject of money, cannot be called poetry; it might do for a calendar or a motto to hang in the bathroom of a business magnate.

This, which is a sonnet by W.R. Latham, the winning entry for the Sonnet Competition of the "Poetry Review" 1949, and published in the issue of March 1950, is a good poem. Although it is marred by archaic inversions, and its philosophic point is familiar and of doubtful truth, its tone, maintained by sonorous phrasing, has a dignity that raises it out of the commonplace.

"We have fed you all for a thousand years", a political piece, has the force of personal resentment, but does not rise very high as poetry.

"Beauty never visits mining places" attempts to blend political resentment with a sentimental strain. Not very successful.
5. 0. "We don't get all we want in life", a moralising piece, is jejune both in sentiment and expression.

6. + 2. "The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven", from Eliot's "The Rock", has a definite meaning, eloquently expressed. Although the prophetic tone is of Christian orthodoxy, the form is reminiscent of Whitman; I do not consider this a fault.

7. 0. "I see the houses of the future, and men upstanding". Proletarian futurism expressed with simplicity. I remain unmoved.

8. 0. "Into the mirror of a pool". Weak, sentimental feeling, competently expressed.

9. 0. "Oh, hush thee, my baby, and sleep while you can". More political resentment, this time combined with lullaby rhythm. Inefffectual. The first line is particularly inept and is not even grammatical; the archaic "hush thee" is followed by "you can" (causing an anacoluthon) to gain a rhyme.

10. 0. "Tell me what you see, my friend". Moralising simplicity; might be appreciated by children.

11. 0. "God placed the Russian peasant" has the Chestertonian swing, but its power seems largely to have left it.

12. + 2. "O Light Invisible, we praise Thee", which, like 6, is from Eliot's "The Rock", also shows a considerable intellect touched to eloquence by religious fervour. These lines have a trace of Hopkins as well as Whitman.

13. 0. "What is freedom? -- ye can tell" is simple in expression; the desire for liberation it expounds strikes me as being more genuine than the feeling of most of the political poems in this collection.

14. + 2. "Forget all these, the barren fool in power" is infused with a sense of urgency very well expressed. I regret only the deliberately unnatural enjambment in the second line; this is an affected technique too widely practised at the moment.

15. 0. "In dreams I see a world that's gay and fair". A hortative poem with no particular force.

16. 0. "Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements". A technically good example of modern colloquial form. The desire for simplicity expressed in it is more thoughtful than emotional, and finds its corresponding level in the mind rather than the feelings of the reader.
I think this is really "poetry". As the poet drops a stone into the water, the thought comes to him of the effect of a word, or look, or sign, on the heart. There is some beauty of expression and no sense of strain. The comparison is clear and sustained throughout, with no irrelevancies.

12. Here, too, is "poetry" — something really 'made' — the lesser lights lifting the mind to the 'Light of lights'. Again, there is some beauty of expression ... some originality in the use of words ... the verb 'fracture' ... 'batflight' ... 'submarine' (though here its use is a little obscure, perhaps).

2. A poetical idea. Life's light and shade ... but language a little unmusical at times ... 'patent' ... 'emphasise' ... should 'stillness' be the contrast to 'stress'? 'Time's eye' is not very clear, I think.

14. The solace of 'Beauty' when life is almost unbearable I like, but I think the third verse does not follow quite naturally from the end of the second, in which the poet says he has riches within which compensate him for the 'city dirt' without.

15. The idea of making actual the beautiful world of one's dreams is good, but the final verse seems to me feeble — could not the poet himself 'arise', not merely call weakly on others? And the last line is rather banal, I think.

10. I like the contrast of the 'windows of the house' with the 'windows of the soul', but I do not care a great deal for the way it is expressed. And yet, I think I may not be doing this poem justice, since the author may have suffered so terribly in the past that he cannot be glad when he looks on happiness in the present. I am half to put this under Phrase II.

16. The thought of a desired simplicity of life seems to me good, but to my 'old-fashioned' taste, the language is that of prose ... 'simple statements' ... 'simple actions'.

5. I like the hopefulness of these verses, and the easy rhyme and rhythm are in keeping with its optimistic spirit. But — is it really poetry?

1. The remark under 'Heading 5' is, I think, applicable to this effort, but I place it below 5 because the sentiment is not 'balanced'. All 'poor' folk are not
'happy', and all 'rich' folk are not bored. Happiness or boredom depend on one's attitude to life, and have little to do with the possession of money, or the lack of it!

6. 0. Reads to me like the pessimism of a tired old worldling - "Vanity of Vanities".

13. 0. I cannot quite acquit the author of this of possible insincerity. The 'tyrant' and 'slave' ideas are echoes of the past, at least, in England. Unless the horrors of war have so clouded the vision of this writer (which I can understand) such opportunities are open to the young of all grades of society today that such weak sentiment should not be expressed.

3. 0. This, too, might have been written years ago with good reason, but again, today, does it ring quite true? Isn't it rather the expression of one who enjoys whipping up his feelings?

7. 1. I dislike "the awkwardness" of this. I think I see that the author looks forward to a happier future, but he offers no contribution to it. And his expressions are entirely those of prose and 'slang' prose occasionally at that. 'the sack', for instance. Then, 'love is voluntary'... (when was 'love' anything else?) And is 'deceit' every 'needed'? There is no courage, no inspiration here.

11. 1. My objection to this is the way the word 'gentleman' is used. The sort of people the writer describes were never 'gentlemen', but usually those who had been 'slaves' themselves in a previous generation. And can a threat of destruction ever be really poetry? I am sure the writer knows the Greek origin of the word 'poet' to be 'maker'. Should he not try to suggest how evil can be transformed into good. His is a creative work, not mere senseless destruction.

9. 1. Now that every opportunity is being given to every child, is it true to talk of "masters planning how you shall die"? The regret one often feels that a beautiful, innocent child cannot remain so is a subject for poetical talent, but could it not have been treated more 'honestly'?

4. 1. Had this been written 50 years ago, I would have given it a high place. But is it a true picture of today?

1. - 1. Banal doggerel.
2. + 1. 'Polarities', conceit, hackneyed thought; interesting variation of rhythm.
3. 0. Hysterical; phoney rhythm.
4. 0. Could be stated better in prose.
5. - 2. Patience Strong stuff.
6. 0. See note on 2.
7. - 1. 'The sack' Ugh! Surely not in a lyric of this kind.
8. + 2. Interesting imagery.
10. + 1. Shows some insight into human experience; unpretentious.
11. + 1. Lively militant rhythm to match words; would make a good song for a 'left'-service.
12. + 1. Vivid portrayal of the concrete.
13. - 1. Trite; laboured.
14. + 1. Redeemed by imagery of last two lines.
15. 0. No depth; trite.
16. + 1. A superficial view of human experience, expressed in parts in interesting imagery.


1. + 2. Almost a record of the past for under the new socialist democracies quite unreal. Good and true, plain enough also for every reader to enjoy and understand. The real mission of the writers should be made plain to the multitude and not a catering for the intellectuals.
2. + 2. Good. Needs reading more than once to grasp the whole of its goodness. Second line I think might be improved. I think, at least in English. As darkness, virtue are revealed by light.
3. Very good, true and plain. The stuff to give 'em, especially the new Yankee imperialists and empire builders, the war-mongering of the backward nations for capitalism and the Christian way of life.

4. True, but not so good. Too realistic to be well expressed in poetry. Prose is a much better medium for most realism. Even blank verse cannot always make for enjoyable reading for the great majority.

5. Good advice to the chronic grumblers who do little or nothing to improve their own lot or that of others. Emphasises also the need for stabilising items of progress so that pioneer work should not be wasted and history repeat itself so often.

6. Blank verse wasted on false and obsolete philosophy. From Confucius to Pope we have been told that the proper study of mankind is man.

7. Prophetically true for many of our realities are the fruit of our day-dreams and as we are living in the age of speed mental progress may exceed that of the ice, stone and other of the ages of mankind.

8. Good writing but obscure to too many of the world population at present and poets should make far less use of the heart and soul for work done by the grey-matter in the brain. The blood pump is credited with far more than it is able to perform.

9. Very good and true but the rule of those masters is getting hourly shorter and the freedom of all the world's babies is near accomplishment, when the babe of Bethlehem superstition has been destroyed.

10. More false philosophy and even the last line has lost its appeal to many millions because of the outrageous and barbarous demonstration of the Christian way of life by the free capitalist nations in Korea, Malaya, Indo-China etc.

11. Very good and very true, except for the fact that mankind is solely responsible for the evils that are voiced and not God and the sooner mankind realises this responsibility, the sooner the obstacles to progress will be removed and the new and long overdue brave new world be created. NB The almighty dollar gentleman has rushed the English gentleman from this page.

12. Cultured and classic but neither useful or clear, see remarks on No. 6.
13. + 2. Very good. True and plain to many though far from strong enough to rouse people in the present crisis of despair. May appeal to many of the millions who have only learnt to think for themselves for the first time, as the result of the modern wars of this period.

14. - 1. Only words, but hardly useful for destroying any of our evils and certainly of no use for the creation of the good.

15. + 3. Good, true and plain. Such dreams are more likely to come true with greater emphasis for the need of their reality. Such emphasis for instance as the substitution of arise for rise in the 2nd line of the last verse.

16. + 2. A plea for plain language but the use of words like 'ultimately', 'ingeniously', 'inevitably' do not lend themselves to poetry and song, except maybe in oratories. In full agreement with the sentiments expressed, but the words used are far from the poetic type.

N.B. With the present great difficulty of getting literary work of any kind printed and the greater difficulty of booksellers distributing the same, as one who has had 4 years and more experience of those difficulties, would advise a trial of the editors of some of our magazine for their inclusion.

A 84. - F. (30) Student, Uni.

1. - 3. Jingly, monotonous rhythm. Only half-truths and they're not expressed with conviction. Blind to too much. Rings hollow. I suppose it might help some people, but it's got a touch of the false whimsey, the cheap sentiment; "Isn't it funny", "that odd something" are ghastly phrases. Far too shallow, and petty. Reads like a bit of commercial cheerfulness from a magazine or a calendar. This unconsciousness or deliberate ignoring of reality's complexity is an insult to those he's (or more likely she's) talking about. As poetry it has no value.

2. + 1. The idea is true, but leaves me lukewarm. It would need to be expressed far more forcibly before I got at all excited about it. The antitheses are somewhat obvious; should perhaps be livened by more vivid vocabulary? But at least it avoids cliches fairly successfully, and does not distort facts as the half truths of No. 1 did. A neutral sort of poem, which slips easily from the memory - it should either be more epigrammatic and terse, or else have more striking images; as it is, the truths aren't driven forcibly home and so remain platitudes.
3. + 1. Is this a song? It makes a good propaganda hymn, and does not pretend to be anything more. It aims to rouse emotions, by rather simple means (internal rhyme, strong rhythms, repetition) and succeeds. It won't teach emotion to someone who hasn't got it already, but would express it well if one already had it, and susceptible to this sort of poetry. But it too tells only half truths, it's a party song and unashamedly so. The repeated "our" proclaims as much. A good specimen of its kind; perhaps not much depth and undertones - the lines and nothing between them? But perhaps for a socialist, it's steeped in associations. The writer certainly means what he says and that's good.

4. + 2. More imaginative statement of point of view rather like 3. Now this one might make a convert, the previous is for the converted. The images selected are typical, well observed, well selected. They're allowed to make their own impact, not underlined. Touch of sentimentality? On second thoughts, no. The pity is a fine emotion, quite in proportion to the subject. Opening line's good. The quiet tone, occasional understatement, are effective. No hysteria, thank heaven! Sincere. Has more poetical merit than the previous ones. Probably a good description of a mining town, but I've never lived in one, but it rings true.

5. - 2. Again, the thought is at least part of the truth - but the images (pinnacle, rainbow, roads) are flat, usual, cliches. Last line really anticlimax. Nothing in it but the very barest bones of ideas, mechanically set out. One must perceive imaginatively before anything good comes out. Browning's "Fear Death, to feel the fog in my throat". Has lines on this sort of theme, and so has much of his work; he makes something powerful out of it. This is just insipid. Good theme wasted.

6. + 3. This is, I think, T.S. Eliot, but I'm not sure. It is good. I find the thought hard, but not the words it's expressed in; it's something worth thinking over, working at. He means something subtle and important, and can express it intellectually. This does not cheapen, lower, or emotionalize. It expects the reader to do some work, it can be read again and again. I think he's saying that all men's strivings for knowledge are, the good in themselves, leading him away from true knowledge - or rather wisdom. And the words to clothe this rather difficult idea are precise, well weighed, clear, uncomplicated by emotion. The poem is not, however, arid, because of the fine images of the eagle, the constellation Orion, and the wheel of time with which it opens. Admittedly a slightly different vocabulary would have given it more force, something nearer
a sense of wonder—but such things are out of place in a poem of theological argument, and should not be sought. This is written with the mind.

7. 0. This poem is too closely bound to a system of thought I do not belong to for me to appreciate it. It does not stir me as a poem, and I don't believe it as a prophesy. It hasn't even got the energy of No. 3, which was a merit. A vision of the future should have some ecstasy in it, this doesn't seem to have. Plain statements of fact only move those who believe those facts. But they're worth making and so I respect this poem as sincere, tho' I can't say I like it, as it finds no point of contact in me.

8. - 1. Elegantly expressed. Not really worth saying. I like a few of the details, especially the comparison of music to a flower. But as a whole it's boring. "Frail tendrils of the heart" is affected.

9. - 2. Touch of irony in opening lullaby lines. The images are not very well chosen, and the whole has no very great emotional power—not as much as it tries to have. Also it tries too blatantly. The nineteenth century could do this better. And the trumpety rhythm which is all very well in a poem like No. 3 is deplorable here.

10. + 2. This is a more universalized perception of suffering than the social-purpose poems so liberally included in this selection. Interesting that what poet actually sees is a happy scene and it's by contrast that sense of sorrows is awakened; quite a complex state of emotion, compared with the rest and therefore more acceptable (to me, at least). The images selected are simple, comprehensible, forceful. There's an unfortunate ambiguity in the last line, as the Crucifixion might be a symbol of great hope, or of a particularly futile piece of cruelty, according to the poet's beliefs. If it's the first, then it's a finer poem (tho' still not very great); from the general tone I think the second is more likely. If a poet wants a work to be judged on its individual merit and not in relation to his other works or what one may know of his background, he shouldn't leave an ambiguity like that.

11. + 1. Chesterton, surely—I think I've met it before. Propaganda poetry is not a high form of art but I like it better when it's quite open in its abuse and vigorous in its vocabulary, as here and in No. 3. I can't stand it if it pretends to be philosophy, or poetry, but has no added depth to justify the claim. There's a rollicking gusto about this, with its repetitions and its great scorn, which is pleasant and vigorous like a good slanging match. But such poetry can never be taken seriously, either as poetry or as politics.
12. One could make the same objection to religious poetry as to political — that it appeals to the initiated or not at all, that would be true of hymns, but not, I think, of this. It is both sufficiently generalized to be comprehensible to many and sufficiently intense to be valid. Also praise and delight in beauty is a subject far better adapted to poetry than indignation — or at any rate particularised indignation, for there are great satires. This particular poem has fine observation of details fittingly subordinated to a scheme. It has the beauty of a psalm or catalogue-poem. It is deeply felt. There might be danger that the individual lights would distract from The Light, but there are continual subtle reminders of religion — spires, altar, sanctuary, meditate, coloured panes, polished stone "gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco" — all associated with a church and also beautiful in themselves. A delicate balance between the physical and spiritual is skilfully maintained. I find this easier to grasp than the Eliot poem, which is the product of a very highly developed thinker. Which is the better poem? I therefore find hard to judge, but I think Eliot's, as the difficulties he had to overcome were so much greater.

13. I think this is possibly Shelley — part of a long poem he wrote especially to rouse the people, which I read once. (It's not a 20th century poem, because of "ye", "tis" and general tone. Last 2 lines of stanza 1 sound rather Shelley-ish, and "tyrant" is one of his favourite words.) In comment, I can only express my general feeling towards poetry-with-an-obvious-purpose. This is less offensive than some because less hysterical in tone, but though competent work, I can't say it's good poetry. And I'm totally incompetent to judge whether it's a fair picture of the average worker's life either then or now, though I should think there's a lot of truth in it.

14. A state of mind — probably selfish, almost certainly impermanent, but very comprehensible, is well expressed here. Fine resonance of tone, especially towards the end. Occasional platitudes as in line 3; is it by Yeats, or influenced by him ("divine white wonder")? I am moved by this poem; it has the intensity and impressiveness of a good sonnet. It's a good interpretation of a mental and emotional attitude many must have known. And it does not necessarily imply that the poet will refuse to play his part in the conflict, only that he claims the right to keep part of himself inviolate, enshrine love and Beauty there, and retire there sometimes in justifiable, and rather like some of Shakespeare's sonnets.
15. 1. Lot of cliches - "gay and fair", "fade away", "hell is loosed", "my feeble cry" - so not as powerful as it might be. It's a neutral sort of poem, all colourless. The poet is incapable of giving the necessary impressiveness to the theme. And it's too vague, woolly in thought - "be master of your fate". All so easy to say. Not that I think the writer's insincere, but it just doesn't come over. Good intentions, frustrated by complete lack of poetic talent.

16. + 2. Am I supposed to decide whether this is true? Because there are 2 sides to the argument, both equally convincing: "In this sea of life [?] we mortal millions live alone", and "ye are all members one of another". Man's loneliness is only part of the truth. Also I don't agree that "ultimately there is truth only in simple statements" if that means that other things are to be learned only to be forgotten again. If at my age I believed that, I wouldn't be here at all. On the other hand, those statements could include almost all philosophy, religion, ethics, if they were studied in all their implications - though they could be the starting point for discussions leading in infinite different directions. If he means that, I understand and agree. But if he demands that one should concentrate on the individual and ignore wider, more complex issues, I don't. The best road to joy is not necessarily thro' simplicity. He seems to be advocating an almost animal level. I rate this poem rather high in your selection because it is not crudely expressed, and containing considerable matter for thought, which it presents as elements for discussion, not as an over-dogmatic assertion. But I think it's rather pretentious and perhaps affects greater depths than it has.

I have on the whole graded them relative to each other, as my first impulse was to put them all except 6 and 12 pretty low, but it didn't leave enough categories for subtle distinction. But considered absolutely, or in relation to any great poem, they're very insignificant; as a whole they gave me little pleasure and some are ghastly.

A 85. F. (33) Student-Teacher. Uni.

1. 0. I neither like nor dislike this poem. I feel neither the sentiments expressed nor the language seem worthy of poetry.

2. + 1. I like sonnet form. A truth is well expressed here.


5. + 1. Quite a pleasant poem. True sentiments expressed in rather everyday language.


7. 0. A well expressed poem, but the thoughts and sentiments cause me to class it in Group 4.


9. - 3. Another hysterical poem. I am not fond of parodies unless they are amusing.

10. + 1. A balanced poem which I like a little.

11. - 3. A most unpleasant poem. I think poetry should be above class warfare.

12. + 2. A good poem. The best of the collection I think, both in language and sentiments.


15. 0. This poem moves me little.

16. + 1. This poem expresses a truth quite well. A little obscure in the last stanza.


1. - 1. 2. + 1. 3. 0. 4. + 1.
5. - 3. 6. + 2. 7. - 2. 8. + 1.
9. - 1. 10. 0. 11. - 2. 12. 0.
CONSERVATIVES.

B 1. F. (22) Shorthand-Typist. Sec. P.O.S. (Incomplete 15/35)

6. + 3. The main theme of this poem is very true. I think the idea is to try and emphasize the fact that with all the progress in science, etc., mankind has become too engrossed in the material, thereby creating wars and displeasure between nations, and paying but little heed to the innermost, or spiritual truths.

10. + 3. This reflects a little on the previous. The first part is what an ordinary person considers the world to be, but the second part is how the 'soul' sees the world and its inhabitants. There is deep meaning in the second part, but many people could not interpret it, even intelligent (as rated on earth) as, again, they are engrossed in material things only.

12. + 3. I like this poem because it is in simple praise of the 'Invisible Light'.

14. + 3. This is a very consoling poem. It is simply written, but brings the meaning of its verse to you superbly.

8. + 2. This, I think, dwells upon fact that no matter how guarded a mind may be, how much within that mind may be dormant trying to be forgotten, it is still in the subconscious and will come to the fore at the least sign, whether causing pleasure or pain.

2. + 2. I like this poem because it helps one to appreciate both the pleasures and grievances, and also to understand and gain experience easily and by the hard way.

15. + 2. A plainly worded poem. It emphasizes the material greed of man.

16. + 2. This is poem which contains some truth. The theme is very similar to that of No. 6. It's very simply written and perhaps would appeal to the majority of people.

5. + 1. A nicely composed poem, with a huge amount of truth contained in it. But the majority of people are aware of this truth about "life-is-what-you-make-it".
1. + 1. A simply written, but charming little poem, and also true.

13. + 1. Quite an easy-to-read poem. It is true in it's meaning, of course, but I don't think it would be very much appreciated today.

11. + 1. I like the rhythm of this poem, but the words and meaning do not appeal to me very much. It is rather like an epic of war. It seems to harbour a feeling of hatred and retaliation and this should not be.

7. + 1. I do not like the way in which this is written. There is no rhythm or beauty in the verses - but I put it in the class "like a little", as there is hope and truth in it.

3. + 1. A poem giving full vent to the feelings and emotions. Very well written, with even rhythm.

4. 0. A "sorry-for-myself" poem. There is beauty everywhere and in everything, if only we look deep enough for it. And, there is a reason for everything, whether it is obscure at the time, or not. If it is one's destiny (or Karma) to be born in a mining village, it is not without either purpose or beauty.

9. 0. A nicely written poem and easy to read, but is rather light - more like a lullaby.

B 2. - 1. I really do not like it. It is not poetry - by that I mean it has no artistic value, and is certainly not creative. I think it is rather prosaic. The message it contains is well known, i.e. money alone cannot bring happiness, but the method of expression is not original. The comparisons are too extreme; poor people are not always happy and rich people not always bored. I don't really feel that money is a subject which contains much poetry about it.

2. + 2. I like the message here, it is perfectly true and one which we would do well to think about - without unhappiness there is no happiness. The one makes us appreciate the other, and if there were no violent contrasts in life, it would be very dull indeed. I like the line: "Were there no wrong, how should we judge of right?". This is far more poetical than No. 1, because it dealt more with a spiritual theme instead of a purely material one.
3. - 2. This is a poem of hate, and like all things motivated by hate, it savours of unpleasantness. There is a definite political theme here, class hatred, and this is very much dramatized by talk of blood, chains and toil. The last verse, may I say it? sounds as if it were spoken by Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

4. + 2. Yes, I like this. I know it is another cry of despair, but I have spent several years in the mining valleys of Wales, and I agree with the poet — there is no beauty there (at least no visible beauty). The children are certainly "cheated of life's graces", but who has cheated them and whether they have been born to be cheated so, is another matter. There is, however, too much gauntness here, for there is certainly a type of beauty in the mining districts — maybe not beauty of scenery but beauty of spirit. I have never in my life come across so much genuine comradeship, unselfishness and loyalty of man to man, as I found in the mining valleys — and those too are beautiful in their own way. The poet has not gone very far below the surface.

5. + 1. This is really No. 2 all over again, but phrased differently. I do not like the last line, I think it falls rather flat and sounds as if the poet just couldn't think of how to end his rhyme. The metre seems to me to be rather clumsy in parts and some lines are much too overcrowded.

6. + 3. This is a sad message, but in these days of worldwide horror, a profound one. I like it because it expresses sorrow at a lost ideal. We did know once, perhaps when we were very young, both the "Word" and "the Life", but it is true that we have lost them in living. It is perhaps a bit too despairing, and maybe that the last verse of No. 2 would be a fitting answer to this one. However, the poet has thought deeply about life and the way of life. He has recognized true values and seen how far from them we are.

7. - 1. Another political theme. Not so violent this time, but bitter. I wonder, is love "the antidote to terror"? I don't think so. Should it become "recreation"? I think not. I am not really clear as to the poet's meaning there — does he mean recreation in the sense of filling up leisure moments, or does he mean re-creation. The re-making or perpetuating of something beautiful? The latter sense would, to my mind, be more truthful. The men of the future will certainly think our times sad, furious and fatal, but we, in our turn, should realize that our time is of our own making.
8. + 3. I like this very much. It is abstract, peaceful and calm. I particularly like the wording of the second verse. The third verse has expressed something which most people would find very hard to put into words. We have all known those moments when a chance word, or look, have twisted "the frail tendrils of the heart" but we cannot explain why; they are, indeed, rather like moments of music.

9. 0. This has an easy lilt and rhythm, but it really does not tell us very much. It is rather defeatist. No child is doomed in the way the poet means. I don't feel very strongly about it because I feel it is an ineffectual lamentation.

10. 4. 2. Again we have the theme of contrasts. The material beauty as opposed to the spiritual sorrow. This is very expressive of our own times. The outward beauties of the earth have not changed, but the spiritual values are gone. However, there is hope as long as men like the poet exist - men who can see what is wrong.

11. - 3. This is pure Communist propaganda. I hold no brief for it. I find it nauseating and horrible. I have lived for one year in a Communist country and for another year in a Russian occupied territory and I have seen the true meaning of Communism - it has nothing to be proud of. I think the Russian peasant, if given a chance, would welcome the English gentlemen with open arms. This is the sort of literature which entices the mob and puts ridiculous ideas into the heads of fools.

12. + 1. This is undoubtedly a religious poem. I prefer the second verse, I cannot say why exactly, except that the various forms of light described appeal to me more than those in the first verse. I do not really follow the phrase "Our gaze is submarine". I like the poet's idea - that we are incapable of worshipping God except through the wonders of his world, that we must have something to see, to touch, to feel, before we can appreciate God. On the whole, it is not a poem, which I should really remember for long.

13. 0. This is badly written. There is no cadence or rhythm and the idea is confused. It tells us nothing at all of freedom, but only of slavery. I do not like the use of words such as: "Tis, ye, and other semi poetical tricks.

14. + 2. I like the theme very much. It is perfectly true that everything in this life is transitory and cannot last for ever, whereas the more spiritual feelings
are permanent and survive material horrors. The poet is lucky to be able to fix his mind more on the things that matter and thereby suffer less from the things that will pass with time. I like the first verse the best. I think the last few lines of the last verse could do with being re-written—they do not sound well.

15. + 1. This is a poem of our times, but I think it is overdone. Man has always been selfish, and doubtless always will be. This does not prevent the world from holding many beautiful things. Again, I think the last verse is badly written. It is too disjointed and does not run smoothly or musically.

16. + 3. I like this poem the best of all. I like the theme and the way it is written. I like its frank simplicity. We have indeed wandered far along the complicated road and it really is the simple things in life, the small everyday things, that matter more to most of us than the isolated great events. The source of all happiness lies in simplicity. The poet has captured this theme in his simple, but pleasing style.

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B 3. M. (22) Portqualified Quantity Surveyor. Sec.
F.O.S. (Incomplete $25)

1. 0. Somewhat immature in conception and not very original.

2. + 2. The theme is attractive but the first stanza appears a little too insistent.

3. - 1. A lower rating here because of the reason behind the poem although the formation is better than average.

4. + 1. Good "picture painting" although about 25 years behind the times.

5. + 1. At last one which extolls the worker to help himself, not bitterly attack the employer. Falls down in construction through lack of metre, particularly the final two lines.

6. 0. Being an agnostic I will not criticise what appears to be a religious theme.

7. - 1. Same reasons as number 3. Cf. number 5.

8. + 2. Stumbles a little in scanning but by far the best in the idea behind it.
9. - 2. Why blame employers and landowners for every hardship?

10. + 1. If more people were content to aid instead of criticise the bitter poems would be useless. Good idea and construction.

11. - 3. Too disgusting to mention. The English gentlemen have been a backbone of the country before the worker started his whimpering.

12. 0. Sorry - see number 6.

13. - 1. Rather disjointed - gives the impression of being unable to help oneself in the face of adversity.

14. 0. Rather difficult to analyse. Escapism.

15. + 1. The scanning is better than most and the idea behind the poem is reasonable but why so hopeless?

16. + 1. No comment.

8. 4. F. (52) Various (nursing, photography, etc.)

Een. F. O. S. 52.

1. + 3. Because there is truth, comedy and sadness in it and rhythm.

2. + 1. Because there is "Vision" in it.

3. + 1. Because of its "forthrightness" but am sorry for the sentiments expressed about the ones it is written about.

4. + 2. For its truth.

5. + 1. For its truth and wisdom.

6. + 2. I like this poem but am sorry for its sorrow because beyond the Dust is God again!

7. + 3. I like this for its lovely idea and vision.

8. + 2. I like this poem for its hidden truth and beauty.

9. - 1. I dislike it a little because it is so sad.

10. + 3. Because it is true.

11. - 2. I like it for its poetry but am very sorry for the writer's idea of English gentlemen because it is mistaken.
12. + 2. I like this for its nice ideas and new words, "batflight", "owl and mothlight".

13. + 1. I like poem 13 a little and hope the writer will know freedom one day.

14. + 3. I like these poems very much for their strength and vision.

15. + 3.

16. + 3.


1. + 1. I liked it for its truth and commonsense or rather, logic!

2. + 1. Good substance as in 1 but not so well put.

3. - 3. I dislike: too much the cry of the non-productive 'Red'.

4. - 2. I dislike: my experience of mining areas is of far more open-air facilities in the vicinity than the townsman. Here again the poet forsakes poetry for bitter expression.

5. + 1. Pleasant, as in No. 1, the matter of fact poem of my choice.

6. - 2. Too Picassio! Nor even good poetry.


10. - 2. Dislike: The window of the soul wants cleaning!

11. - 2. Dislike again - complete disregard of human nature for the embittered soul!

12. 0. Only fair - too far from mother earth.


14. - 1. Too far above me.

15. - 1. Too bitter! Still not my humble idea of poetry.

16. - 2. This poet created a maze and left me in it.

N.B. I dislike poetry anyway!!
1. - 2. This one reminds me of popular comedians who end their "act" with a song concerning "smiles", "keeping your chin up" and such-like obvious cliches.

2. + 2. I very much like this flow of words, dignified and reasonable.

3. - 2. Uncontrolled, out-of-date, and sheer propaganda, and incitement to unreasonable behaviour.

4. - 1. Absolutely untrue, I've lived there.

5. + 1. An old theme, but not a very fresh way of putting it over. I like a more "impersonal" view. The last verse is the best.

6. + 2. I so thoroughly agree with this, and I admire the sincere, impassioned way of asking.

7. 0. This has no rhythm for me, nor do I care for the lines "Love is voluntary" (surely it is now?) "Love is recreation". The last verse has more truth in it.

8. + 3. Nostalgic. A lovely sentence "twisting the frail tendrils of the heart". This poem brings pictures for daydreams.


10. + 1. I do not really care for poems divided into two people's thoughts - it breaks the thread of thought and spoils the web that a poem ought to spin before your mind. Besides that, this poem seems apathetic, as if the author is quite content just to look on at the terrible scene.

11. - 3. This kind of stuff was all very well 50-100 years ago, on a par with Ireland still cursing Oliver Cromwell; it keeps alive old prejudices and appeals to the lower class of intelligence. Very poor, ranting rhymes.

12. + 3. A splendid poem of praise. Poems should mean pictures of pleasure to me, and here are many. It is always better to uplift thoughts than encourage hatred. A poem of beauty.

13. - 2. This is silly, having asked what is freedom? the author promptly switches to the opposite. If we are supposed to draw a contrast I feel he has overdone it, and let his feelings run away with him. The last line
seems weak to me "... make of ye". It ought to be "you" but the author has sacrificed strength of words to rhyming all the way.

14. + 2. Here is another poem with a lovely flow of words it goes smoothly along, I can feel the roundness and satisfying words on my tongue. And they are such true words.

15. + 1. Similar in view to others, not much power or thrust in the words. I feel that a lot of beauty is ignored and he harps on well known strings.

16. + 1. I like the expression of ideas here, although I don't altogether agree. But he has new ideas and a fresh simple way of putting them. The choice of words clearly shows the straight simple "road to joy" (one syllable words) and the complex "twisted tower" and "ingeniously constructed maze" of life we live in.

LIBERALS.


1. + 3. No comment.

2. + 2. Liking for this poem because it touches upon truth in everyday things, as I believe it, and it conjures up a picture of a tranquil existence in rural surroundings.

8. + 2. Liking for this because it has an air of quiet in it.

16. + 2. Liking for this because of its simplicity and once more the touching upon truth.

7. + 1. No comment.

15. + 1. No comment.

5. 0. No comment.

12. 0. No comment.

6. - 1. No comment.

11. - 1. No comment.

14. - 1. No comment.
3. - 2. Feeling of dislike for these in as much as they deal with the turmoil and unrest of the industries concerned. We see enough of it without writing poems on it.

4. - 3. Dislike because of the revolutionary theme, and for the reasons stated below.

It would appear that the majority of these poems deal with subjects which would tend to cause discontent, or even a mild feeling of rebellion against authority, especially in certain elements of people employed in large industries.

My own view of these poems is that they have been very carefully chosen and compiled in order to test the individual's feeling towards our everyday routine, and possibly foster at least a desire to break with our usual way of industrial life as we know it today.

B 7. M. (20) Student (Clerk) Uni. P.O.S. 55

A poor selection of poetry as a whole - far too many political poems - which I dislike. These poems with political flavour seem suited more for the 'Daily Worker' than for any anthology compiled with regard to the quality of the verse. I have not read any of them before, and shall have little desire to read them at a future date. They appear to be recent verse and yet lack any of the qualities of good modern verse. (I prefer contemporary verse to the pre—Yeats verse.)

1. - 2. ) Strike me as being merely silly.
5. - 2. )

9. - 2. ) Poor efforts at propaganda.
11. - 2. )
15. - 2. )

13. - 3. ) Falls on the ear as idiocy.

4. - 1. ) Suffer not so much from what is said as to the poor way it is said.
14. - 1. )

3. 0. ) Are more political propaganda but the verse is rather better.
7. 0. )
2. + 1. } Are quite pleasant poems, the verse is
10. # 1. } fairly good and the ideas are better than those
shown in the previously mentioned.

6. + 2. Only just makes class 2 — there are one or two
rather feeble lines in the earlier lines.

8. + 2. } Are the best of a poor batch — they are
16. # 2. } easily the best verse and there is something
more profound in the ideas contained in them —
16 especially.


1. - 3. This to my mind is a mere jingle of words, too
trite and puerile and expresses only the obvious; amateurish,
the ideas should be expressed more trenchantly and
satirically to be of any worth.

2. + 2. The writer's quick appreciation of and use of the
contrasts are excellent and please me. Phraseology is
good and the appraisement of the value of contrasts in
life is true. The last two lines put a key in our hands
- to unlock the perplexities and doubts of life.

3. - 2. The construction is good, but there is too much
of the 'bloody' atmosphere about it. It is I feel too
overweighted with memories of social conditions long past.
It is too biased a picture of modern social conditions
and savours too much of a class warfare.

4. - 2. I feel this is poor in the literary sense. It
does not seem to scan properly and is awkward and jerky in
reading. It does perhaps reveal a true aspect of one
section of the community but it fails to show one that
'beauty is where you find it'. A drab poem.

5. - 3. This I feel is amateurish; could be said much
more strongly in blank verse; the rhyming is poor. The
ideas expressed are so obvious; it is simply not worth
reading.

6. + 1. I like this a little because of the wide use of
ideas. Rather uninspiring and reveals an agnostic
attitude to life. It is poetry, anyway, but leaves a
hiatus in my mind after reading it and a question: is this
all that the universe of mind and matter amounts to?

7. + 1. This reads rather roughly to me; I do not regard
- it as poetry. It has a certain vision of truth in it, a
reflection of the present chaos of events but the con-
clusion 'look like a dream' seems to me to be wide of the
mark.

- 164 -
8. +2. The imagery is very good and is expressed rather finely. The absence of rhyme enhances the poem to my mind; the writer has grasped the function of expressing delicate 'incommensurables'. Ideas and construction are good and the poem leaves a feeling of ethereal beauty in my mind.

9. -1. This is too dogmatic and pessimistic and seems to ignore the force of individuality. It rhymes well but the effect left after reading it is one of cynicism and pessimism.

10. +2. I like this quite well; the question and the answer are well phrased, and the inner vision expressed is poignant and real. Simple but good phraseology. It is the perpetual cry of the sensitive soul. I would like to see a third verse: 'Tell me... from the window of your heart!', portraying the final achievement of love.

11. +1. This is very bitter and cynical but is likeable in a certain amusing way. It rather emphasises past social conditions, but is put quite well, and has a small pinpoint of truth behind it all.

12. 0. Neutral opinion! Obscure to me: what is the writer trying to convey? Metaphysical idea of God? Phraseology is good but it leaves me cold.

13. -1. This reads quite well but is again a comment rather overweighted of possible social conditions. It may be that the writer means us to emphasise the very opposite of the sentiments expressed and spur us on to be masters of our own souls. It does not please me at all.

14. +1. Parts of this I like but the last verse seems to me to read awkwardly and is a bit obscure. Seems to ask a question "have you for peace..." that remains unanswered.

15. +2. I like this because it expresses a hopeful vision or dream of what can be. It does not neglect to see things in life as they are, but it also conveys something of a hope for the future and the way to achieve the fulfilment of self... if we are prepared to count the cost.

16. +2. This is well expressed, but the way it is expressed rather seems to me to go counter to the sentiment of 'simple statements', because the writer makes it all rather heavy going. He does point out a truth which is necessary in a world where simplicity of action and word is much lacking. He is not consistent; the poem rhymes in parts only, which I feel is a mistake. One thing or
the other would be better. The imagery is good and the poem shows thought behind it.

None of these poems is familiar to me.


1. - 1. Dislike a little. This poem is doggerel. Suffers from birthday-card sentimentality. Jaded theme and full of cliches.

2. + 1. The traditional tone is true poetry. Reminds me of Shakespeare. Suffers from the defect of pointing out the obvious.


5. - 1. Same comments as for 1.

6. + 2. Passionate, reasoned, but tails into gloom. Would have liked a more triumphant note in the development. Traditional style appeals but some ugliness of phonetics spoils piece slightly (e.g. "in-information").

7. + 1. Marred poetically by the word "sack". Otherwise of delicate conception and structure. Very slightly leftish on the ideological side.

8. + 2. Well constructed. Free from suggested morality. I seem to have read this somewhere.

9. 0. Rather cynical but perhaps true in essence. A bit leftish.

10. + 2. Poem has good style and is colloquial. Moral division in verses 2 and 4 very sharply and forcibly put, with dramatic effect.

11. - 2. More cliches and doggerel. Communist and archaic. Would have been seditious in Queen Victoria's time. Written by a socialist summer school student?

12. - 1. This poem, exalting light has a slightly pagan flavour about it, obviously unintentional. Redeemed by passionate language.

13. 0. Reminds me of "Song of the Shirt" for some reason. Archaic "ye" spoils structure for modern reading. An effort by a trade union poet?
14. + 2. Arresting images and good language. Stresses the poetic view that beauty is all and the hurly-burly abhorent. Written under the influence of Greek verse?

15. - 1. Childish and immature sentiments. Too many cliches. Neither one thing or the other in the sphere of instruction. Last two lines obscure and pointless.


1. + 1. Subject matter banal but like the metre.

2. + 1. The philosophical outlook appeals as well as the rhythm.

3. + 1. Same comments as for No. 1.

4. 0. No appeal whatsoever.

5. + 1. Same comment as for No. 2.

6. + 1. A certain amount of truth appeals.

7. 0. Same comments as No. 4.

8. + 1. Same comments as No. 6.

9. + 1. This appeals slightly more than No. 1 owing to the subject matter.


11. 0. Same comment as No. 4.

12. + 1. Again emotional appeal.


14. + 1. Again the philosophical outlook appeals.

15. + 1. Similar comment to No. 6.

16. 0. Similar comment to No. 4.

1. + 1. I liked this mostly for its bright rhyme and lively satire — good verse, but not poetry.

2. + 3. I liked this sonnet by far the best of the lot. It has philosophy, imagery and a certain word music — also it is without hate. I particularly liked the last line.

3. - 3. This I intensely disliked — it has nothing to recommend it, save perhaps its swinging gait. In a world already torn with distrust and envy, such verses only agitate and ferment — besides in this year of 1952 it's theme is grossly exaggerated.

4. 0. As poetry I do not think much of it. I do not think that today it is a completely true picture. William Blake might have had cause to have written of such things, but with their improved housing, cars and television, the miners are not the creatures of these verses.

5. 0. As a wholesome rhyme for the seven year olds, it is quite good, or as a worthy effort for the Sunday school anniversary — neither liked nor disliked.

6. + 3. This, I liked very much, probably because I agree wholeheartedly with its philosophy. By its quiet statements it builds the tragedy of life, and moves one to think more constructively than all the 'rantings and railings'.

7. 0. As poetry I thought this singularly poor — have heard its theme expounded more poetically at local labour meetings.

8. + 2. I liked this for its imagery. Its words achieve a quietness and a restfulness to the reader, and gently stirs the memory.

9. - 2. Again, I dislike these verses as they seem to be written only with one idea — to agitate.

10. + 1. I liked this a little, perhaps because of its plaintiveness — it gives us a short sad little picture of life.

11. - 2. I dislike this intensely — because it is just purely an incentive. It has absolutely nothing to recommend it — it offers nothing constructive, it just arouses hate, and the wording is shoddy.
12. + 2. This I liked — at least it has a certain beauty and some lovely imagery. I very much liked "The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight" and "Small lights of those who meditate at midnight". Such thoughts, I feel are good for men's souls — and help to uplift him, and make him look more kindly on his fellows — and so is worth the writing.

13. 0. I think this is very ordinary. The last verse is the best, and taken away from the rest of the poem it has merit.

14. + 1. I liked this — for it is without bitterness, and tells us that the soul can achieve content and peace, if it is steadfast.

15. + 1. Didn't care for this a great deal — it is the old theme but lacks originality in its presentation. Liked the last line best.

16. + 2. This I liked, because it deals simply with ordinary human emotions, and does so poetically. That simple statement — "In Autumn the leaves fall; I love you, we shall die" — by its sheer simplicity stirs the emotions and moves us to contemplate on the mystery of existence.

I am familiar with Nos. 2, 3, 6, 12, 14 and 16.

I have reserved "Like very much" for the poems 12 and 16, which alone produce what has been called "the authentic spinal shiver". It is the line introducing "batflight" which produces it in the one, and in the other the statement "In Autumn the leaves fall; I love you. We shall die."

I feel I have been too kind to the writers of some of these verses in not descending below "Dislike a little" in some cases. Probably the fact of being a versifier myself prevents me from condemning more strongly! What I dislike is untidy rhymes and metres, trite phrases, and trivial ideas. And, usually, propaganda in any form, though I have raised 3 and 11 to the "Like a little" class because their technique is superior to that of the others of this type.
NON-AFFILIATED.


1. + 1. Happy, everyday theme said with an attractive lilt.
2. 0. Obscure theme.
4. - 1. Unhappy theme - why write about such material?
5. + 3. True to life with ethical value - I like the change of metre - I like the presentation - tells a story that without being in the clouds is appealingly put over.
6. 0. Obscure theme.
7. 0. No appeal to any sense.
8. + 1. Has something to say and is gentle.
10. - 3. Why bother to write this? I see no point therefore it doesn't appeal to any sense.
14. - 3. Unable to trace the theme - first verse vicious.
15. + 1. I understand this - but second verse is too blunt - I prefer more middle course words.
16. + 1. Gentle and the metre is understandable to me. I can understand the theme therefore it appeals.

B 14. F. (35) Civil Servant. Sec. F.O.S. 113

6. + 3. I like this poem the best because it seems to be the work of a poet capable of detached observation and able to express himself simply and also artistically. He
tells us something about ourselves of which we were perhaps vaguely aware but unable to express. He shows us that our way of living is wrong.

16. + 3. I like this poem because it is true according to my experience. Again it is the simplicity of the idea of which I approve. The poem seems to protest against complication and cleverness.

10. + 3. I must have chosen this also for its simplicity and truth. The simple method of looking first outward and then inward produces a complete picture of the essentials of human life in a very few ordinary words.

7. + 2. I like this poem for its optimism and again for the simplicity of its expression and its truth content. It is comforting and hopeful poem expressed with dignity.

14. + 2. This poet is showing us a way of escape from an unsatisfactory material world into a satisfactory spiritual world which is all very well for those with sufficient self control or natural ability to achieve it. I don't like the line "But in our souls we can be queens and kings". It seems to be out of place in a poem which is rejecting material things.

15. + 2. This poem looks forward like poem 7 and warns us against the mistake of selfishness. It is perhaps not so successful a poem because it lacks originality in the choice of words.

11. + 2. This is an honest political poem written with humour but also with (probably justifiable) bitterness. The rhetoric perhaps obscures the truth in the lines about the English gentleman. It seems unfair to say that God sent him. Perhaps the Devil sent him?

12. + 2. I like this poem because it shows the sensitive appreciation of someone who has meditated on beauty instead of taking it for granted. In acknowledging what he believes to be the source of all light, he shows a fitting humility. I do not put this poem with those I like the best because it seems to be more deliberate, less spontaneous.

4. + 1. This poem also expresses a painful social truth but in a sentimental grieving way unlikely to attract sympathy.

9. + 1. Here is another painful and perhaps slightly exaggerated social truth expressed with understandable bitterness.
13. + 1. This is a similar poem which evokes sympathy but is just a statement of an unsatisfactory social condition. The rhythm of the poem is perhaps too rapid to express its tragedy. It reminds me of Shelley's poem "Men of England" (which I like).

2. + 1. The poem expresses its author's belief in the value of proportion and balance but does not allow the possibility of material progress. I do not wish to accept the line "were there no wrong, how should we judge of right?". I should prefer to hope that some day wrong would be eliminated.

3. - 1. This poem again contains much social truth but the bitterness alienates sympathy and the purpose is lost. Of course the best way to test the value of this type of poem is to offer it to one of the people to whom it is directly addressed and watch the effect. I am not in a position to do this.

1. - 1. The sentiments expressed in this poem are not important enough for poetry and the words are perhaps too obvious. The poet generalises and the truth is lost. "Poor folk seem happy, they laugh quite a lot" is not true of most poor people and is not poetry. Perhaps the idea behind the poem was true but the words failed to express it.

8. - 1. I don't understand this poem at all. Please explain if you have time.

5. - 3. I don't like this poem. My feeling against it is so strong that I doubt if I am competent to judge it. It seems to me to be the sort of poem written for money by someone who is quite comfortable himself (herself?) for the doubtful benefit of those not so comfortable.

As you will see I did not "like very much" or "like a good deal" any of the poems.

Those I disliked. This was on account of the political bias "leftwards".

5. + 1. Contains some germs of truth and I liked the last verse.

6. 0. Seems to be a little involved.

7. 0. Seems to be a little involved.
12. + 1. Seems to be a little involved.


11. - 3. Is very much too sweeping - while no doubt there have been black sheep in the family of English gentlemen, there has been many more shining lights, but they have not advertised in neon lights!

1. + 1. I have little to say about the others.
2. + 1. Maybe I am not a great lover of poetry - especially of the modern kind. I read quite a lot - of prose.
7. 0.
10. 0.
13. 0.
14. 0.
15. 0.
16. 0.
4. - 2.

SOCIALISTS.


1. 0. Poem No. 1 didn't impress me either way, as I don't think money a very good subject for poetry. Also it has the rhythm of a ditty more than a poem.

2. + 2. I liked the metre of this poem and the contrasts in it stressing that it is the endurance of the more unpleasant things in life, which make us appreciate more the beautiful and lovely things, for how dull we would find life, if it were sunshine and flowers all the way.

3. - 2. This poem I disliked for it's continual reference to death and blood, too gruesome to my mind for poetry, which I usually read for pleasure, but the style of writing I liked quite well.

4. - 2. I found this poem far too sombre, leaving me with a feeling of despair for the children who must be born to this existence. The story told by the poem gave me no pleasure, but once again the way the poem was set out, I liked.

5. + 1. This one did not impress me greatly as far as the writing was concerned, the rhyming was too monotonous.
It sounded to me like a patience Strong poem, the type that is found in weekly magazines; but what it said was very true to life, having a similarity to Poem No. 2; it makes you realise that the good things in life are not achieved the easy way, but by our sacrifices.

6. 0. This poem failed to impress me in any way, I think more so, because it wasn't very clear to me. Also when reading it I couldn't get any poetic rhythm into it.

7. + 1. I like for its promise of a brighter future, although it seems hardly likely to be fulfilled, but it's good to read of these things, they give me a warm feeling. I liked too the balance of this poem.

8. + 2. This poem left me with a calm, restful feeling, the type of poem I would like to read before going to sleep. It is what I call a nice "even" poem, well-planned out.

9. - 2. This poem to my mind is exaggerated, for who is planning, from birth, the death of an innocent baby? That death must come to us all eventually is inevitable, but to say it is being planned is just too much for me. I found this poem far too sad.

10. + 1. I liked the way this poem told of what could be seen if we wanted to see it. Everyone can see and recognise the pleasant and beautiful things, but not everyone wants to see the ugly, unpleasant things, the type of things referred to in the second part of this poem.

11. - 2. I think this poem is very well written, but it has a communistic flavour, which is alien to my nature.

12. + 1. The writing of this poem impressed me most, and with so much light in it, how can it fail to leave you feeling anything but calm, with its twilight, moonlight, and so many different lights, all taken by us for granted and yet it is something which should be so precious to us.

13. + 1. I had to read this poem through several times before it made sense to me, but when it did, I liked it because it tells the story of our everyday life, for how true it is that we work to live from day to day.

14. + 2. I find it difficult to explain why I like this poem, but I think it's because it tells you to forget the uglier things, I didn't find it too easy to understand at first, but I do like very much the style of writing.
15. + 2. This one to me had a similarity to Poem No. 7, a dream, something we all wish could come true, but I do dislike to read, especially in poems, of children who must suffer. I liked the way the poem was written very much.

16. + 3. I liked this poem best of all. To me it seemed so simple and yet so sincere. It's well written, deals with the more simple things which affect us all at some time, laughter, tears, to hear someone say "I love you". The verse I liked mostly was the one starting "There was a road to joy once".


1. + 1. Expresses what is true about money in modern society but the poem itself seems suitable for a Christmas card. "Poor folk seem happy - they laugh quite a lot" - what does the poet mean by "seem"? Is he some middle-classer looking over or is he not just sure. For a certainty nine out of ten "poor folk" will risk the burden of stocks and shares.

2. - 1. Seems smug. It reminds me of Bertrand Russell's attitude towards atom warfare. He states that when one has reached his age one can be sanguine about the possibility of the world and its inhabitants reaching a sudden end. Before I could be impressed by such verse I would need to know that the poet had himself suffered and not a little.

3. + 1. The sentiments are pleasing enough and there does seem some sincerity in it but there isn't enough skill or beauty, though don't ask me exactly what I mean by beauty.

4. + 1. The sympathy for the stunted life of the child of coal is appealing but what does the following convey? "For the yellow smoke taints the summer cairn, Despair grave lines on the dwellers' faces". It may be poetic license but it doesn't remind me of the miners or their children I've seen. Maybe Scottish miners are different.

5. 0. Platitude, platitude - all the way.

6. 0. I'm not indifferent to it. I would like to know what it means. It sounds like a poem, based on a lecture, given by a Theosophist. I admit that the spiritual entities, the divine essence, the eternal verities, etc., very probably do exist but I am not inclined to mysticism.
My intelligence is on the ordinary plane and has difficulty in comprehending "Where is the life we have lost in living". Does this imply a previous existence which may be resumed on condition that we come to know God? I must confess I don't greatly care. These hankerings after affinity with Divine must be for finer natures than mine.

7. + 2. "Women work with men and love is voluntary, love is delightful". I'll probably appear lustful but these two lines conjure up a wonderful way of living. Women and men at ease with each other, no coquettting, no smut, no shame.

8. + 1. The meaning is clear and the last verse touches on one's own experience. It is a bit sentimental and I'm a full blooded Scot.

9. + 1. I've always had sympathy for the feeling of a mother who doesn't want her baby to grow up. One of my favourite songs which I remember from my very early days is "Too Soon". The line about "The Masters are planning the way you shall die" doesn't enter into it—it is to me a beautifully pathetic emotion if irrational.

10. 0. The part on the ordinary level is ordinary. The other part "window of your soul" is something else. I have no experience of such a window and I'm not burning with curiosity to find it.

11. + 2. I like the expression of my own feelings and here I find it. The velvet handed tyranny is the one which I consider most to be feared because it appears to me the one likely to last longest. I only wish the workers would use the same sort of intelligence to remove the tyranny.

12. 0. I fail to see the necessity for blame or censure.

13. 0. The first verse makes little sense. The second recalls that a Paris student wrote recently that the struggle of the French working class to exist at least saves them from Existentialism. The third is old fashioned; an atom bomb is good enough for anybody. If the fourth is poetry, then it is very weak stuff.

14. + 1. I like the first two verses. To linger overlong on our present misfortunes only makes bad worse but to calmly acknowledge them is the act of a man much to be admired. The third verse is lost on me. This raving of "O Beauty, O divine white wonder" is just a collection of words, totally destitute of meaning for me.
15. + 2. I like the sentiments of verse one, confess the reality of verse two and recognize my particular failing in verse three, viz: "Isn't it vain — my feeble cry but lost?" Probably my meaning is quite different from the poet's. I often wonder if my feeble efforts of past and future — my present is suspended — to be a worker for what roughly speaking we may call fair play are worth making. It would be different if I were burned up with zeal for the noble cause of justice, truth, etc., then I could like Shaw exhorts us, use ourselves up for the Life Force. But having regard for such a tame concept as fair play I often wonder why I should bother, and feel tempted to strive for self.

16. + 2. I don't know if "Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements" but I feel it to be true. Also the whole poem accords with my nature. I value the impulsive caress and I could shed tears for the loneliness of man.


1. + 3. A good theme, and easy lilting rhythm. It is not necessary that each want "Just that little bit more". The happy medium of the two extremes should make more happy.

2. + 2. Strange but true how the contraries balance. How can one be weighed without the other — How can evil be judged if evil has not been known.

3. - 1. An echo from the past. It has taken considerable time, but conditions are much improved. Even so, there is room for more improvement.

4. - 2. Wholly disagree. There is beauty in mining places, not necessarily of the mine itself, but it's adjacent area.

5. + 3. "There's always something missing". Yes, it would be weary if everything was at hand — The joy of achievement!

6. - 1. The gale of twenty centuries has surely brought us nearer to a full understanding of God. Witness the realization of nuclear energy. It has always been intended that these mysteries should be solved. The ignorance is in the application.

7. + 2. Is it physical love or spiritual? Either is delightful. I wish that I could see the 'house' of the future. I would wish it to be so.
8. 0. Conflict.

9. 0. Progress must be satisfied, but the child of today has opportunities, so that he does not have to mortgage his future.

10. + 1. It all depends how one looks at life.

11. - 3. What does this explain? Bunkum!

12. - 1. Cannot understand this.

13. 0. What is freedom? Is there such a thing? Can that be freely spoken, even if it be true, if it antagonise the society which we have made for ourselves.

14. 0. This is obscure.

15. + 3. If the cost is counted, then Hell is loosed. The dream can come true if man loved his fellow man.

16. + 2. Simplicity is the keynote. Man, and society make the maze for it's defence. In reality a defence against nothing.


1. - 2. Reads insincere and jingly. I really don't believe that it is true of everyone. What most people want and strive for is security. The world envisaged by this poet is "devil take the hindmost". His people are selfish. He tries to be funny and succeeds only in being factious.

2. 0. Because there is some truth in this poem, it shouldn't be ignored. The poem is rather "pretty". But the point is rather illusive. What is he driving at.

3. + 1. Rather terrible cry at injustice. Although

4. + 1. there is a large element of truth in it, there

11. + 1. is a danger of the theme being overworked.

13. + 2.

16. + 1.

5. 0. Decidedly corny.

6. - 3. Seems entirely pointless. A collection of

8. - 1. words which are clever but pointless.

12. - 1.

14. 0.
7. + 2. Gives a goal to strive for — a happier life. I think poetry should do this.

9. + 3. One hears a generation of mothers murmuring those exquisite first two lines of the third stanza. The poet has caught the inexpressible tenderness of mother-love in his poem. It left me feeling deep sorrow, but is not sentimental. Moving.

10. + 2. A great deal of truth and deep understanding in this poem. It reveals the inherent good in humanity. There are two windows in life.

15. + 3. The outlines are clear and well-defined. I think the opening stanza is quite beautiful. It expresses quite simply the desires and hopes of most working-class folk. Reality is faced in the second stanza. The third and most important stanza sums up the whole situation, telling us that our dreams can come true. We must rise before it is too late. We strive for self, we don't count the cost. The whole is an appeal to our better instincts.

B 21. F. (54) Office Worker. Sec. P.O.S. (Incomplete)

1. + 1. Very poor as a poem. Can't altogether agree with the philosophy of it. It is true that some folk can be happy with very little money, but by and large I would say one stands a far greater chance of being happy if relieved of monetary cares. (May I refer you to Thomas Dekker's "The Happy Heart", written 1570/1641).

2. + 3. I like this. I like the thought, which I feel is fundamentally true, and I like the form. Cannot give it first rating from a poetic standpoint because some words displease my ear, e.g. "proportion", "emphasize", "patent", etc.

3. - 3. Dislike this more each time I read it. It reeks of hatred and self-pite. Very very poor, both as poetry and as propaganda. (Compare with Longfellow's "The Slave's Dream" as a clarion cry on behalf of the down-trodden.)

4. + 3. This moves me to compassion as the previous poem could never do. I like the lines "My fellows' wan children ... that will fall ere their time." Reminds me of D.H. Lawrence.
5. Poor poetically. Ideas sound, if commonplace. One thought has already been expressed—much more effectively—in Poem No. 2, i.e. "All things by contraries their nature show." The other thought in No. 5, that there is always something missing, some new thing we desire, was expressed with such superb simplicity by Browning: "Ah, but a man's reach must exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?", that it seems almost an impertinence to attempt to say it again.

6. -- 1. This has got something. It stirs, though vaguely. I can appreciate the thought that "All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance". But on the whole I dislike the pessimism of this poem. If man's increasing factual knowledge brings him closer to realisation of his ignorance, surely that is a healthy and hopeful development? In any case I do not feel that life is an endless cycle, but a continuous forward-moving process, though we as individuals with our limitations in time and space cannot visualise that process as a whole. We should remind ourselves that Man still has the cradle-marks on his bottom.

7. -- 2. Oh dear, what can I say about this one? The words "Men not fearing the sack" may imply a social order worth striving for—but is it poetry? I am afraid this vision of the future, all love and no hate, ties in with Sunday School conceptions of heaven, playing on a harp, and all like that. I would be bored to extinction.

8. -- 3. These verses evoke an emotional response, though their meaning is blurred. It reminds me of Shelley's "Music when soft voices die..." I particularly like the final phrase..."twisting the frail tendrils of the heart".

9. + 1. I rate this poor as a poem, but the mother-love theme always calls forth a facile response from a woman, and therefore this must be granted some propaganda value.

10. + 1. I think—I believe—I see what this one is aiming at, but it is so very slight.

11. -- 3. This I detest. Whatever its poetic merits may be, if any, and it certainly has a momentum, it rouses antagonism in me, as an English woman living at this particular point in time. I don't care what the faults and shortcomings of our God-damned English gentlemen may be, nor what foul deeds his predecessors perpetrated in the past; I maintain that today the British Upper Classes are well on the way to falling into place in the First Civilization, when it dawns. They have learnt lessons which the top-dogs elsewhere throughout the world, whether
In Communist or Capitalist countries, have yet to learn, God help them.

12. + 3. Yes, I like this. It conjures up visual images, which in my opinion is one of the main functions of poetry, enabling us to see with the "inner eye". I like, too, the humility of it.

13. O. I am afraid this does not mean anything much to me.

14. - 1. I think this has a certain drive and power. It has also some poetic quality, and some phrases worth welding into a better poem. But the central theme "Forget all these" is distasteful to me. There are many channels of escape for those who cannot face the realities of life, and it is true that appreciation of beauty, art for art's sake and so on, is a means of escape for some. But I feel it should not be so. Let love of beauty be a compensation and an incentive, but never an escape.

"O world, as God has made it, all is beauty
And knowing this is love, and love is duty."

15. - 1. Wish-wash. My reaction — a faint dislike.

16. + 1. There is a germ of thought here with which I am in sympathy — the plea for simplicity and for a more instinctive response to life. It is true that the complexities of modern life tend to increase man's loneliness and to stultify the creative urge. But this need not be so, and indeed I prophesy there will be a strong reaction against this tendency in the not distant future. I like the lines "There was a road to joy once...
forgetting to keep the plan." Do not understand the last verse, especially the words "laughter to which I listen."


11. + 3. I like this poem best because of the strong love of liberty which runs through it — and because of the challenge to the ruling class in the last verse. I like the metre of this poem — as you speak the lines the lilt seems to form itself into a song of life.

3. + 3. This poem sums up the injustices of Capitalism, and appears to me to be the perfect answer to those misguided people who complain that the miners, for example, are too well paid, and do not work hard enough.

7. + 3. This is the cry of an idealist, and no matter what cynics may think, it is an ideal worth striving for.
The last verse correctly sums up what the Men of Tomorrow
will think of Man Today.

5. + 3. This poem reminds us that altho' we may abolish
War and Poverty in years to come, we shall never be
completely free of sorrow, and that sorrow helps to mould
our characters and can make us better men and women. Life
would be a dreadful bore if it was roses, roses, all the
way.

2. + 3. The sentiments of this poem are a continuation
of the previous verses.

9. + 2. This poem voices the fears of a young mother,
for the future of her new-born babe. Altho' she is proud
and happy to be a mother she, nonetheless, realizes that
the baby has all the problems that face every member of
the toiling class. The only thing that kept me back from
placing it in the first category is the note of defeatism.
The only way for a better life is by progress through the
efforts of the workers, and they must not allow self-pity
to retard that progress.

13. + 2. If every slave, and I include the wage-slaves
of this country, could be made to understand this poem
the Socialist vote would increase by several millions
at the next election and the Capitalists would cause no
more trouble in this hate-ridden world of ours.

4. + 2. This is a good description of an average mining
village, which still applies, altho' the outlook for
miners' children is not quite so grim, for the simple
reason that the children no longer automatically go to
the pits when they leave school.

15. + 2. The first verse is the dream of every Socialist,
the second verse is the true picture of our world - but
the last verse is the appeal which must eventually be
heard and heeded by every man and woman who has suffered
at the hands of Capitalism.

10. + 1. I would have preferred this poem if it had ended
with a rousing challenge and a warning that the workers
will not tolerate present-day conditions much longer.

14. + 1. I liked this poem a good deal because of its
sentiment - never allow poor conditions to debase you, and
despite life's sorrows always maintain the Dignity of Man!
Of the others there were none which I had any dislike for, nor had I any special fancy for any of them.


1. - 2. This is not poetry. It is just a jingle expressing a platitude.

2. + 1. This is the best one in the 16. The meaning is not however really clear.

3. - 1. Another jingle in the out dated late 19th century style.

4. + 1. Shows a feeling for words and effectively expresses a feeling.

5. 0. There is a flavour of parody about this, and it is banal.

6. - 2. This is just blank, meaning nothing. Very poor as I suppose you have to have a technique to express yourself even in this way.

7. - 1. Propaganda which would be best expressed in prose.

8. - 2. This would not twist the "frail tendrils" of anyone's heart.

9. - 1. This again smacks of plagiarism. As poetry it is not worth considering; as propaganda it might be effective with sentimentalists.

10. + 1. A not too unpleasantly expressed poem.

11. 0. Kiplingesque - or might even be Kipling! I don't know. It is expressive verse.

12. - 1. A parody on Francis Thompson's "The Kingdom of God". It is so obscure that it could mean anything.

13. - 2. As poetry this is negligible. As propaganda it may be effective if it is read by people who do not appreciate poetry.
14. - 2. This ranks with No. 1.

15. + 1. Effective as a cry for action, but poor poetry.

16. + 1. This is that terrible bastard prose - poetry, but I like it for its fairly simple statement of a simple truth.


1. 0. Money: a necessary means of exchange has come to have a quality alien to its purpose of facilitating the flow of commodities necessary to life, and has acquired a mystical quality of good and evil. Montague Norman the banker said the important thing about money is who has it. Money is power and its use depends on the good or evil disposition of the possessor. The average person only wants enough to buy a moderately comfortable living but he finds modern life in civilised industrialised nations increasingly arduous because powerful interests demand such high dividends. Fear of poverty makes money important. I think the poem trite, neither like nor dislike it.

2. + 3. Like this one very much.

3. 0. Is an old acquaintance and is a parody on Rudyard Kipling's poem "If blood be the price of Admiralty, Lord God we have paid it in". Is a poem of revolt, and expresses the deep resentment of the oppressed against slavery. One neither "likes" nor "dislikes" such verses. Feeling is much deeper. If you are an exploiter of slaves you hate such expressions of revolt because they come from the intelligent articulate disturbers of their fellow creatures, the dumb downtrodden and slavish majority. The eternal problem that troubles the ruling or master class is to find efficient, intelligent service together with dumb, unambitious, self-effacing loyalty, inhuman lack of every form of self-assertion or satisfaction of human instincts, higher than that of labouring beasts. The problem is insoluble, for human beings are not yet robots. I appreciate this parody because I am one of the working class and a descendent of Crofter people of Keldon Strath in Sutherlandshire who were burnt out of their homes and crofts like vermin, during the notorious Highland clearances over a century ago. People never forget such outrages. The resentment is not stifled by force.

4. + 3. Another poem of revolt.

5. + 2. I like this poem because it applies to man's life on earth which is always a struggle. But it need never
be a sordid struggle. Man in health and strength enjoys
the struggle against the forces of nature, winds and
drought, the ocean, wild animals, hunger, all can be
strengthening if we are equipped by "stout shoes" all
the necessary aids to ensure victory over natural obstacles.
If man could learn to co-operate with fellow man instead
of hating there could be a better world.

6. + 2. In the Bible of the Christians they are told "God
made man upright but he sought out many inventions". Could
it be better expressed? Another poem of revolt: this time
against the superficiality of modern life. I like this one.

7. + 1. This one reminds me of the poems of Walt Whitman.
Utopian dream of a good time coming. The "Old Book" says
"turning swords into plowshares ... they shall make war
no more". It seems farther off today than ever. But I
like it. One must dream sometimes.

8. + 2. The "mirror of a pool" is rippled by the falling
stone. But the ripples die and there is no perceptible
difference in the pool. This may mean that the word the
look the sign falling on the "guarded mind" even though
they trouble that mind and consciousness have little or
no effect on the heart or mind so "guarded". I like this
one because it warns us against being passive and receptive
instead of thinking weighing and rejecting or admitting
outside influences.

9. 0. Hush thee my baby. A sad poem. Another poem of
revolt but with a difference. Hopeless and weak sentiment.
It helps us to pity the victims of tyrannical, deadly
power. I do not either like or dislike it.

10. + 1. Another poem of revolt. But ineffective if the
soul's vision is not used to practical purpose. I like it.

11. 0. Definitely one of revolt. But the "English
gentleman" knows that the people are as yet too weak,
pathetically stupid and ignorant, about the strength of
their opponents and their own weakness. Neither in Russia
nor Germany is the worker much better than his 'fellow
worker' in England. The people are victims of their own
weakness. They are not "educated" in any real sense of
that word. When they learn to regard all workers as co-
workers then they can say they have done something. Hatred
and revolt is not enough.

12. + 2. A hymn of praise and thanks. I like it. One
must worship something and sweeten the soul with thankful-
ness for the privilege of Life and Light.
13. + 3. This is a fragment from Shelley's poem "The Masque of Anarchy". It is the great poem of revolt and very well known. I admire it very much.

14. + 2. Shelley has done it better than this.

15. + 1. And again this but repeats the theme.

16. + 2. I like this, it expresses the obvious truth that man has made of this "sphere of his influence" something terrifying and "reminiscent of the lunatic asylum" as Professor Toddy justly remarked.


1. - 2. I presume that there is no serious intent in the subject matter. It slightly amused me at the first reading but it has no lasting value for me. I found it hackneyed and the style poor.

2. + 2. Subject is very true. One does appreciate things with reference to their contraries but this must not be taken too far, in many cases it is not sufficient cause to undergo something harmful or distasteful for the appreciation of its reciprocal (i.e. An employer is not justified in underpaying a man 51 weeks in a year because he will appreciate his Christmas bonus all the more.) I like this sort of style with some sentences carrying on from line to line.

3. + 1. I am not very sure of the subject, to which workmen does it refer. I like this a little because of its forceful style then I can put expression into.

4. 0. My knowledge of Mining Districts is limited to a few books (among them "How Green was My Valley") and to one journey by foot and train through the South Welsh coal fields. I think the description unfair with fresh hill on top of every mining valley and their choirs (in Wales). I think there is more beauty in the mining districts than in dense industrial districts. I don't like the style as I can't put any feeling into reading it. Line 3 verse 2. I think it should be "doors of their houses". Line 3, verse 3. I think it should be "Playing in dust and making". At the moment I can't make the metre fit.

5. + 2. The subject is similar to that of No. 2 and my note for that poem applies. The style reminds me of
Kipling. I prefer these short somewhat irregular verses to those of No. 2.

6. 0. The subject appeals to me because I think that much is lost in what is commonly called "progress". Do not like the style as I can't settle into the rhythm.

7. - 1. If this is a subject from the times of the depression, I should not criticize but the subject does not ring true to me. "Women work with men and love is voluntary"? I cannot put any expression into it - there doesn't seem to be any rhythm.

8. + 2. Subject that something brought to our notice excites our emotions or disturbs us but them (I think this is implied) we forget it. The style which I like builds up the true subject on two sound everyday examples.

9. - 1. Presumably an outcome of motherly feeling of protection and/or fear brought about by the writer's own experiences. I don't think it is a true statement of affairs, and the style rather trite.

10. + 1. I am somewhat puzzled by the subject. I can only think that it is the awareness of hardships etc. whilst amid pleasant surroundings. Otherwise the verses could be reversed, i.e. from house I see poverty, disease, unhappiness, etc. from my soul I see patience under trying circumstances, hope, kindliness, etc. I like the simple style.

11. - 2. Am not very sure why, but I do dislike this one. I don't like the exaggerated way in which the subject is treated. There is something familiar where there are three consecutive lines ending "Gentleman".

12. + 1. If there is a subtle meaning hidden in this I have not grasped it. Otherwise the subject is quite likeable. Style: I cannot get into the rhythm of the first 5 lines but after that I like it. My liking increased as I read through it several times. The lines 6, 7, 8 (1st verse) I particularly like.

13. + 1. I am not very keen on the subject or the way in which it is expressed, but it has a certain forcefulness and lends itself to expression.

14. + 1. The subject is not very clear. Is it to a woman or a flower perhaps? At any rate it is something comforting and precious to the writer. I like the subject. The only
words that are obscure in meaning are "Have you for peace". On second thoughts, the style has attractions — a continuity within the verses that I seem to like the more I read it.

15. + 2. The theme seems to be on the futility of war (or pacifism) with which I am sympathetic. I think it is well expressed, a forceful climax being formed towards the end of verse 2 and beginning of verse 3.

16. 0. Subject similar to poem No. 6, but although the subject appeals to me the style is too unfamiliar for me to like (too disconnected).

On the whole I think I like a poem when I can read it with pleasure and feeling. It has been difficult to set out the poems under the various headings — more difficult than to place them in an "order of merit" as you will notice I have transferred Nos. 5 and 15 from the "like very much" to "Like a good deal". This was because on thinking of other poems I like, I was not justified in placing them so high. Several of the other poems have changed places during the past week or so and even now I am not at all sure that I have not ranked them all too high but their relative positions are about right.


1. — 3. I dislike because whilst it is true a few do really kill for money it is neither general and not very funny. Again happiness is a condition of mind not finances. Rotten throughout with reactionary spirit.

2. 0. Has no appeal for me.

3. + 1. I found this a stirring poem but it left out a good deal in conclusion.

4. + 2. Pretty phrases about ugly subject. The mining community however have other ideas, hence the price of coal now when delivered to my house.

5. — 3. Reminds me of the recent "dirge" to Boy Scouts by the Dean of Windsor, condemning the Welfare State. I hate extreme reaction as much as the other extreme.

6. + 1. I like this only because it effectively exposes the failure of all supernatural teachings.

7. + 3. A very good definition in simple terms of Anarchy, in the best sense. Idealistic but a worthy while day to day philosophy.
8. 0. Poetry with no appeal to me.

9. + 1. Its message, still largely true, but becomes less true rapidly as can be recognised by strife at home and abroad.

10. - 3. Horrible! "Oh, death where is thy sting".

11. + 2. I would like better if the final passage was more "conciliatory".

12. - 1. I can't say I like it.

13. + 2. I like it, but with qualification. I prefer the "intellectual" approach rather than the class conscious.

14. - 3. Obscure to me. If forgetfulness or forgiveness is the solution to humanity's problem no wonder they continue to create confusion and pile up. Too bad!

15. + 3. Very good stuff, full of vitality and optimism.

16. - 3. I dislike it. I was going to say on principle;

B 27. F. (31) Storekeeper's Clerk. Sec. P.O.S.

In complete 25/35

1. + 1. This poem expresses what is undoubtedly the outlook of probably the majority today, namely, the apparent primary importance of money. The author recognises, however, that possession of wealth does not necessarily bring increased happiness but, rather, an excess of worry. Considered as poetry this poem seems to me to be too much of a jingle, which is why I like it no more than a little.

2. + 2. I liked this poem a great deal because of the author's insistence that we view things in their true perspective; so that happenings which may seem of great importance when seen in isolation are in reality parts of one integrated whole, a view affording one a saner outlook and hope for the future.

3. - 3. This poem I dislike very much. To me it indicates a mind permanently weighed down with despair with no seeming hope of or for humanity. Whilst appreciating that there is perhaps a degree of truth in many of the statements, I still dislike intensely the manner of stating them.
I like this poem very much because, in spite of the unpleasant nature of its subject matter, the author has conjured up, for me, at any rate, a vivid word-picture of a mining town or village, whilst at the same time expressing a great sympathy for the dwellers of that place and for their children growing up with no knowledge of the beauty which exists outside of their own small world.

Here again, I find myself liking this poem for its expression of the truth that we cannot expect all the good things in life without a certain amount of striving and struggling, but cannot somehow enjoy, as poetry, the rather "popular" manner in which it is written. Perhaps I can explain my meaning by saying it is not a poem I should take the trouble to learn by heart or to make a note of for future reference, although it does state in a simple manner an often forgotten truth.

The writer of this poem has appreciated the immutability of nature, and the fact that all things follow each other in their seasons. Man, ever seeking to expand his knowledge, yet fails to realise those ultimate spiritual values which can only be realised through stillness. I like this poem a good deal because of its expression of these things in no uncertain manner.

I dislike this poem a little because I feel that love should be regarded as the activating force amongst all peoples and not, at any time, a recreation only. (That is, if recreation in this case means relaxation - I find myself rather uncertain about this poem!)

This poem appeals to me very much because of a beauty of expression which seems to me to be of the essence of true poetry, a use of words which emphasises a spiritual truth in an easily understandable picture.

Here again, in this poem, despair, and a failure to see any goodness or beauty in either the present or the future. It is true that men (or some men) seem to be continually planning means of destruction but to believe that this must inevitably be so seems a defeatist attitude to be deplored.

I like this poem for its contrast of the things which are beautiful in nature with those things which, in spite of this beauty, are the common lot of a large section of mankind. I must add, however, that although appreciating the manner in which the poem is written, I do not find myself in agreement with the resignation seemingly implied.
in the last verse. There is, after all, happiness and peace to be found in the world and the windows of the soul do not necessarily open upon the sorrowful things only.

11. - 3. I dislike this poem intensely. Firstly, whilst very much regretting the domination of some men of all nations over those who are less wealthy and consequently have less power, I cannot accept the view that these unscrupulous and grasping men were deliberately placed in dominion over others by God. Rather have they, by an abuse of the powers given to them, usurped these positions for their own private gain. Secondly, I have no faith in civil war, which seems to be implied in the poem, as an answer to the question, or a remedy for the condition of things obtaining.

12. + 3. This poem seems to convey the spiritual conception of the lesser things being but the expressions of the greater and infinite Whole. The thoughts presented, and the phrases used, conjuring up visions of light, make this a memorable poem which I enjoyed exceedingly.

13. - 2. I feel a fairly strong dislike of this poem because, briefly, I cannot conceive of freedom existing for any one who is a slave in soul. The poem typifies for me cynicism bordering on despair.

14. + 2. I like in this poem the realisation that the passing, trivial, and at times hurtful and bitter things, are of no lasting value. If we have but one object worthy of veneration, and if our eyes can behold beauty around us, we can indeed find a peace more enduring than "the whole war's thunder".

15. + 2. This poet also sees a vision of a fairer time, and realising the transience of dreams, makes an appeal for an effort to overcome self-seeking that our visions may become realities. I like the poem for its combination of idealism and realism.

16. + 1. I like this poem in parts. I like its insistence on the value of simple things, ultimate truths expressed in simple statements. We have not, surely, inevitably "established the loneliness of man"? Seemingly, perhaps, but not inevitably, if we could only realise anew the value of simple things and cease our indirect wanderings through the labyrinths of complicated theories.
1. - 2. This was the poem I liked least of the 16. It has nothing to recommend it in subject matter. Indeed it is the kind of series of cliches about money that everyone puts forth continually. As for the poem as poetry, its jingling rhythm only just avoids reducing it to doggerel. It is prosaic in the extreme and really quite commonplace. The rhythm is boringly regular.

2. + 2. Without being aggressively didactic, this poem points out a universal truth and gives some comfort for the fret and weariness of life. The rhythm is admirably suited to the subject matter. Its slow movement adds weight to the tone of quiet philosophical resignation in which the poem is written.

3. - 1. Perhaps I am not in a position to appreciate fully the sentiments expressed in this poem because I have not known such suffering and therefore can feel bitter only on behalf of other people. Also I am a little tired of this constant theme of "when are we going to do something for the workers?". The poem has very little to recommend it artistically. There is once more this boring rhythmic regularity which serves no purpose. The theme of blood spilt - "crimson wool", "forges red", "blood be the price" does not quite come off and fails to gain my sympathy.

4. + 1. This poem is prompted by a warm love of the poet's fellow beings and because of that managed to rise above Grade 4 in my opinion. The writer however is unable to give his feeling adequate expression and has nothing original to say nor does he say it in an original manner. We all know the curse of the mines and the way in which son after son goes "down the pit" as though dedicated to its service.

5. - 2. This poem is moralising and in an uninteresting way. It is saying roughly the same thing as poem 2, but instead of making definite statements it begins, at least, with a serious series of vague thoughts and inanimate statements, e.g. "all we want", "as we go", "something", "some new thing" and so on. It goes on with a series of conversational and commonplace images which fail to raise the verse above the level of very ordinary prose. It has nothing new to say.

6. - 1. In this poem the idea is good and the form adequate - we press on and on in search of knowledge but while increasing the volume of knowledge we fail to learn
the eternal truths. This poem has the virtue of being a universal truth expressed in an unusual way, but I had to put it in Category 5 because of its unwieldy language.

7. + 1. This poem made little impression on me at all. Its verse form does not add, as far as I can see, to its effect and I am not able to share either its idyllic vision of the future or its absolute condemnation of the present.

8. + 3. There is nothing startlingly original about this poem. It makes the simple statement contained in the last verse in its own simple manner. The poem is assertive and therefore impressive. Metaphor, always the most effective method of imagery is used continually — indeed the one simile is the only blemish in the poem. I am afraid I cannot comment on the subject matter because the appeal of this poem is essentially to the senses and not to the mind. But I don't want my poetry to be about slag heaps — I want it to be about people and beauty — that is why this is the only one worthy of Category 1.

9. - 1. For the reasons given above this poem does not appeal to me. I cannot feel in sympathy with this constant cry of oppression. I am not oppressed nor do I know anyone who is oppressed — this is outside my range of experience. If the poem had been well written, however, it would have gained a higher place than Category 5. If this is a lullaby then I can understand its steady rhythm. I cannot appreciate these inappropriate and vague images — how can a baby be called "bright as a star"?

10. + 2. I like this poem for its essential balance and sympathy with my own thought. There is no moralising — just a statement of the way life is.

11. 0. I couldn't work up any enthusiasm for this poem nor could I actively dislike it — I dismiss it as silly — it reminds me of a music hall monologue given at the Unity Theatre by a member of the Young Communists' League.

12. 0. This is a valiant attempt at a hymn of blind adoration which does not come off. It leaves me unimpressed; and even jarred by some of its unfelicitous expressions, e.g. "bat-flight", "glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade", "our gaze is submarine".

13. + 1. Once more this "oppressed workers" theme which arouses no great sympathy in me because I have no experience of it. The form is adequate but use of the archaic word "ye" and expression "'tis" jarr by their unsuitability.
14. + 1. This sonnet seizes on the theme of Keats "Beauty is truth and truth Beauty" and I recognise that whatever happens Beauty is the eternal truth. The subject matter gains this poem its place in Category 3 and the repetition of "Forget all these" in every stanza, but I am unable to understand "the jealous 0" and am sickened by "though they truly hurt".

15. + 1. This poem wishes to teach a lesson and does so effectively stating first what might be, second what is, and third exhorting us to turn the dream into reality by awakening us to the consequences of our own selfishness. This I can appreciate and understand. The expression is direct and comprehensible and its truth universally apparent. The poem gains no higher grading because of some rather commonplace expressions, and near quotations.

16. + 2. Another poem impressive by its simplicity which is also its theme. It is true that man has from the simple life close to his fellows which was given him created in the civilised world an existence for individuals. Consequently I say with T.S. Eliot "one is always alone". The poem is symmetrical in construction and pleasing enough.

1. - 1. This poem needs the words 'some', and 'many' inserting it. I think it rather trite. There is a grain of truth in it, but logically it is all wrong. It reminds me of a motto to stick on the wall for the gullible.

2. + 2. The lines, "It is remembrance etc ... more bright", made a strong appeal to me. It is, I think a philosophical poem, because many questions arise from it. How do we decide what is good, and what is evil. Must we know evil to know good?

3. - 1. This poem seems a bit dated to me. I may be wrong, but to me, it strikes a false note.

4. - 3. Once again this seems a dated poem, and a bit false. I know quite a few mining districts where the surrounding countryside is beautiful, and the people are very happy. As a matter of fact my father is a retired miner, and he says that if he had his time to come over again he would still go down the mine. He has known the bad side of mining but he never fails to wonder at the geological side. If you would care for any information about miners, and mining districts, I could write you a short essay.
5. + 1. I only care for this poem a little because of it's sing, song, rhyme. I like the words 'but see your shoes are strong'.

6. + 3. I like this poem very much, but find it difficult to explain why. I think it is the philosophical content which appeals. What do we know of life? The lines "Endless invention ... not of stillness" made a strong appeal.

8. + 3. There is beauty in this poem. In fact, I love it. I have to say why, and find it difficult, because it is something that responds from within, and logic for once doesn't matter. I can only say I know the meaning.

7. 0.

9. - 3. This seems like communist propaganda. It is a stupid poem. Every man can be his own master if he wishes.

10. + 2. There is all the misery of the world here. Did Christ die in vain? Had we only lived by his teachings how different the world would have been.

11. - 3. Of all the utter bunk. How the poor English gentleman suffers. We cannot keep going back, and harbouring hate. There have been exploiters of many nations. Why always pick on the English? I can think of certain playboys of Europe to whom the welfare of race horses are of more concern than their fellow men.

12. + 3. This is a beautiful poem. The meaning, I think, lies in the words "Our gaze is submarine". It is again a poem that works on the senses. To the materialistic, it would not mean a thing. I like the tranquility behind it.

13. - 2. I know what the poet is getting at, but he expresses it badly. In any case some people do not like freedom, they enjoy being dictated to.

14. + 2. This poem answers the previous one. "But in our souls etc". I like this poem in spite of the fact that it makes me feel that I am like an ostrich burying it's head in the sand.

15. - 2. This is the only poem that makes me feel uncertain of my decision. There is a lot of truth in this poem, but I sense something smug.

16. + 3. This is a good poem. "Man has made his life a twisted tower" is the pivot of the poem. I like the flow of the words, and the echo they leave behind.

1. + 2. Goes with a swing, and shows a definite sense of humour, gives evidence of keen observation, and is good throughout. Lacks sufficient depth to be classed as "very good".

2. + 1. Impresses more by constant reading and maybe worth a higher classification. At first seems a little clumsy in wording.

3. - 2. Repels by its violent tone and harsh insistence. One feels that it is fanatical and exaggerated, even though one may have a sympathy for the reality conveyed. "Crimson wool" and "eaten our babies and wives" seem particularly at fault. The poetry itself is competent and well-arranged, but propaganda spoils its effect.

4. + 2. Is felt and expressed by a true poet and its quietness creates a deeper impression than mere political ranting. The second half of the first verse seems below the quality of the rest of the poem.

5. 0. Seems rather obvious and pedestrian both in idea and expression. Would be a good effort by a talented schoolboy, but uninspiring stuff for a poet.

6. + 1. Rather pretentious in material and execution, but not falling far short of ambition. The repetition of words and phrases is rather effective. The kind of poem one can come back to with pleasure, but to approach at first rather suspiciously.

7. - 1. Conveys a certain poetry of expression and spirit. One can sense the mood of the writer, but it seems curiously unmoving. Perhaps the phrases "women work with men", "love is voluntary", "love is recreation" make one long for a more romantic conception. Without this phrasing, the poem would have been quite effective, viz. last verse.

8. + 1. Rather spoilt by the second verse. Music deserves better treatment, its comparison to a flower doesn't give a true impression. The first and last verses have a true feeling for poetry.

9. - 1. Here again one feels that poetry is being made subservient to propaganda. The simple picture of a baby is made use of for an ulterior purpose. The wording is quite effective, but the emotional effect jars.
10. + 2. The reflection of one who has the poet's vision. Builds up to a climax in the last line. Another example of economy and simplicity achieving genuine effect through its very restraint.

11. - 2. More a political pamphlet than a poem - with its implied call to violence in the last lines. Few people would agree with the portrait of the English gentlemen. It is a one-side argument, and as such not worthy of a technically-accomplished verse.

12. + 3. Is imbued with light - the insight of true mysticism and religion. The whole poem, both in form and content, seems to aspire and inspire. A true feeling for words is joined to an unusual gift of the spirit.

13. - 1. The wording seems rather clumsy and confused. The use of "ye" does not seem justified. One can sense the poet's message but he has not succeeded in putting it over.

14. + 1. Has some style and command of expression. The concluding word of line 2 "0" seems rather a mystery.

15. + 1. The first verse seems rather obvious in wording, but the other two verses have feeling and a strong message conveyed without violence of tone. The last line has an air of mystery - one wonders as to its meaning.

16. + 3. Has considerable imaginative and poetic vision. The form of the poem matches admirably to its content, and gives one considerable pleasure and food for thought.


May I say first that I consider none of the poems are really brilliant except No. 16. The themes are more praiseworthy than the poetic style. Definite political trend in many of them.

1. - 2. This subject is very poor and childish in conception and contains no observation of value but merely a superficial and trite idea. The only line which has any significance is "Lacks that odd something which makes for real pleasure". Vague, nevertheless. I think the style is poor journalism.

2. + 3. This poem is admirable and contains a profound expression of truth of the unity and experience of opposites. I agree completely with the idea of knowledge.
of both sides of experience. The material is first class illustrating complete awareness of life. It has a clever rhyme scheme, and is almost worthy of the minor poets of the Elizabethan era only the subject is more modern in fashion.

3. +1. The more I read this one the less I like it. It has a good framework and a certain solidarity but, despite its "cry of humanity" tends to have a political flavour which I do not like in poetry. I like especially "Theres never a wreck ..... ghastly crew".

4. 0. This poem, tho' politically and economically true is not in the spirit of poetry. It is hardly true to say that the people have no beauty in their lives.

Some of the best brains and artists come from mining areas. But as in the other poems I have graded them as works of art not as political sentiments with which in the main I agree.

5. -1. No comment - unpoetical.

6. +2. This is splendid. One's impression is a sense of Eastern Wisdom in this poem. Very good essence of truth. Lines "Where is the life we have lost in living" is exceptional in poetry - I have not seen that idea expressed in poetry before.

7. -2. Poor poetry - poor sentiment though idealistic at root. Good lines are: "Love is no more an antidote for terror but is recreation,"

8. +2. This would have ranked with number 16 if it were not for the clumsy syntax and construction of verse 2, which is very weak. Imagery in first verse is highly poetical.

9. 0. A satire on totalitarianism; slightly political but not genuine poetry.

10. 0. The ending is unexpected and is what perhaps saves the poem from oblivion. Quite original in treatment.

11. +1. This by far the best of the political poems. Good sense of humour. Second stanza is not genuinely true.

12. +1. For a poem with a religious nature this is very unusual. For its subject it draws on sources of light seldom considered poetical. A highly poetical devotional piece.
13. - 3. Poetically this is poor, if politically true. The second stanza could certainly be taken as a modern definition. But not very great art.

14. + 1. Very good lines are rather spoilt by common expressions and vague sentiments. Good material preaching relative unimportance of material world and integrity of mind.

15. - 2. Poor, but good idea behind it.

16. + 3. This is the best poem in the collection. It is highly reminiscent to me of the style of Archibald MacLeish the modern American poet. It is highly poetical, full of expression and humanity. A mind, tired of the search for truth realises there is no such thing as Absolute Truth. Excellent metre and good rhyme scheme. This is the work of a Master!

B . 32. - F. (23) Secretary. Unit. P.O.S. 99.

1. - 3. "Blessed are the poor" is the theme of this poem - a wrong assumption that poor people are happy, rich people are not. The last two lines do give the realisation that human nature is greedy. Not very well written, problem too generalised.

2. - 1. Fatalistic attitude, almost the same as poem No. 1. Again nothing constructive. But better written; the use of sharp contrasts in the first verse.

3. + 1. This shows an effective realisation of a grievance: the grievance of exploitation. Form effective, especially the repetition of lines.

4. + 3. As in No. 3, this is an effective realisation of a grievance, but much more powerfully expressed. There is real pathos in this poem, the pathos of a man who realises that his life, and the lives of his children, are condemned to be without hope or beauty. It does present facts as they are: no idealising, no generalising. Here is a problem which needs tackling, and the reading of the poem makes one want to do something about it. The best poem in the collection.

5. - 2. The same attitude as 1 and 2. Too much false consolation in the theme "It's a long lane that has no turning", and the poem reads like the platitudes written in childrens' autograph books.
6. + 2. Another very good poem. How man, in his endless search for knowledge, his insatiable thirst to better himself, fails to see the wood for the trees, and finds himself further than ever from his ideal. Well written - use of complicated words suggest the turmoil in man's mind, and the three questions suggest that the poet realises the problem, and by putting it in the form of insistent questions, brings it home to the reader. Repetition of words also conveys this feeling of turmoil, and the one word "stillness", in sharp contrast to the words of motion, immediately brings the problem to the forefront. This is not what I would call a "social" poem — as most of the poems in this collection are — but nevertheless, in its own class, it is good.

7. - 1. Again far too idealistic — a kind of consolation to dupe the ordinary person. The only words which make any impression are the last three "sad, furious, fatal" — describing present-day life.

8. + 1. A good poem, since the thought is well expressed in the form — whatever one may think of the thought. But the suggestion of the indifferences of Nature to man, as opposed to the feeling of man for man, is well expressed in the self-contained images in each verse.

9. + 1. The days when this poem would have been most effective have passed, since conditions of work are now much better. But the problem of the fate of the many lying in the hands of the rich few is still acute, especially with regard to war. Again a fatalistic attitude, no message of hope. Quite liked.

10. - 1. Again conflict of man and nature — nature being indifferent to the fate of man. Suggests in its hopelessness that the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross was in vain. Didn't like very much.

11. + 3. A very good poem, since it achieves what it sets out to do — give the ordinary working people a marching song (always the most effective), pinpoint their grievances, and end on a message of hope. This poem does not take the attitude that what is has been ordained by God, and nothing will change it, the attitude expressed in this 16th century verse:

"God made us high and lowly,
To each his own estate,
The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate."

This poem suggests that the power to change his fate lies within the compass of the worker himself — and if he doesn't do it, no one else will. Apart from its popular
qualities, it does also give a good picture of the achievements of the Industrial Revolution in England.

12. + 2. As a poem, this is very good technically - it describes beautifully man's worship, and the glorification of God, first through Nature, and then through man-made edifices. But the thought is out-dated, since man's blind worship of materialism. Quite liked, because of its poetic qualities.

13. 0. Indifferent. Gets its point by contrast - pointing out what slavery is, and thereby inciting people to struggle for freedom.


15. + 2. Liked a good deal, because this poem has at least some encouragement to give. Man is master of his own fate, and only by realising this can he come anywhere near to realising the Utopia of his dreams.

16. + 1. Liked a little, because it points out that human nature is essentially simple in its demands and desires, but man has forgotten this. It appeals for realisation of this.

Most of the examples deal with social or political grievances or conditions. In general, I prefer those which not only point out the grievance, but offer some solution to the problems. I do not like escapist, or fatalism. Of the four which do not deal with social or political problems, (6, 8, 12, 16) two of these I like, because of their technical perfection (6, 12).


1. - 3. I dislike this poem very much because it is full of trite generalizations. A great many poor people do not seem happy. Some rich people work hard and some of them use their money to give themselves and others real happiness. I suppose one of the greatest examples of this was Dr. Barnado and another Lord Kuffield. There are a great many people who having enough to live on in the way they wish are content with that and do not desire more. In addition the construction of the poem is unsatisfying.

2. + 3. I like this poem very much. First because it gives a reason for the seemingly ugly things of life and shows them to be necessary. Secondly because it gives the reader hope that there is time stretching onwards into
an endless future. Time in which to develop as great an understanding as possible of the universe through the knowledge gained by ignorance, hardship, grief and mistakes. Time in which to help to carry out the things which one longs to see accomplished. Thirdly because of the poetry which is very wonderful and which allows the poet to appeal to the heart and the mind together.

3. + 2. I rank this poem among the ones I like a good deal because in so many lands that cry is being forced out of people as it has been in this country not so long ago. This poem is the kind that needs a hearing for it must surely burn through to the compassion and understanding of all but the most hidebound security-blinded person. I do not put it in the first division because it, of necessity, deals with passing things not the great and lasting things of the universe, and I only place in the first division those that because they deal with the great themes of life hold good for all who can appreciate them of whatever century.

4. - 1. I do not know any mining people and I have never been to a mining district but I refuse to believe that mining people are "Folk with no share in the beauty of life". I am not qualified to comment on this poem but because of the above reason my reaction is of dislike.

5. - 2. I dislike this poem fairly strongly because it states its lesson too blatently without the beauty of either words or structure. But on the other hand people might read it and gain value from its lesson who would never bother to read a greater poem. Perhaps the poet had that aim in mind when he wrote it.

6. - 3. I dislike this poem very strongly because I disagree that "The cycle of Heaven in twenty centuries Brings us further from God and nearer to the Dust." It is true that people are confused by knowledge brought about by "endless invention, endless experiment" differing ideas and differing interpretations of those ideas and that confused in the whirl and clash they cry "All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance", for their unthinking faith has been shaken and they realize their ignorance and they look about them and have to battle with confusion. In that battle through the ages they forge a sword of their own individual ideas and thoughts and hopes and with that sword they cleave their way through the myths and the superstitions and the creeds which have so darkly clouded their vision.
There can be no knowledge without a knowledge of ignorance and for a long time the more knowledge is gained the greater becomes the feeling of ignorance because there is more to be ignorant about. Many will cry out as this poet does but in reality they are at first being forced and then by their own will fighting away from that state of unthinking stagnation which is death towards life and hope and all the qualities which the word God should stand for.

7. O. I neither like nor dislike this poem because, although I understand the feeling behind it, it seems to be written in the wrong form for the subject and simply makes no effect on me.

8. + 3. I like this poem very much. It expresses in beautiful language and with skilful construction the effect upon the mind and heart of some word or thought or sight or sound which breaks through the fog of usual day to day thoughts and troubles and for a moment permits one to see more clearly the beauty and wonder of things. It is as though a man rowing a boat between high river banks came to a breach in the banks and saw the sunlit countryside spread around him for a moment before once more his view was bounded. And even though the view itself may be forgotten the consciousness has been ruffled and the tendrils of the heart twisted with a longing for something beyond the river banks. This poem itself might well for some people breach the banks.

9. - 3. I dislike this poem very strongly indeed. The hopelessness and the terrible unalloyed horror is nauseating. The rhythm chosen rather indicates that it should be sung or crooned to the child which makes it doubly nauseating.

10. + 2. I like this poem a good deal. It emphasises the difference between just looking admiringly out of one window at a pleasant view of the world and knowing what is really going on and has gone on through other windows in all places at all times. The reason why I do not place the poem among those I like very much is because through the window of his soul the man should surely see more than suffering. A man who had compassion on the sufferings of creatures and mankind would surely know beauty and wonder as well. He would not see only the surface beauty as the man who looks out of the window of his house but he would see a greater beauty through his greater experience and understanding of the beastly things that go on and the sorrow brought about by them.
11. + 2. I place this poem in division 2 because looking at the "English gentleman" that the poet refers to from, say, an African's point of view I can only agree with it and appreciate the skill of the poet. Although I know that not all English gentlemen are like the tradition-ridden ones to which the poet refers I have met some like that and they always make me boil with exactly the same fury.

12. + 3. I like this poem very much. The poet is humble but humble with dignity and he offers his thankfulness with a fitting beauty of word and structure.

13. + 1. I like this poem a little. It has no profound thought or memorable beauty but the theme could surely not leave any one unmoved.

14. + 3. I have been familiar with this poem since I was about twelve years old and have always liked it very much. The man who wrote it must have known the "cruel now" but he had the courage not to be broken by things that hurt "Even to the soul" and he kept the faith in beauty that many men so quickly forget amid the battering of life. He clung to the conviction that the things he found so terrible were not the lasting things and he had the strength to realize the valuable things of life.

15. + 2. I like this poem a good deal. The man who wrote it had dreams while knowing the cruelty of his time and what is more he had the hope that his dreams might one day come true.

16. - 3. I dislike this poem very much because I do not agree with the bitterness and hopelessness of it. I do not think that "man has made his life a twisted tower, where indirectly he wanders proudly and vainly, or cowers afraid." Individuals may have done so and have done so at certain stages in development since Man began to think but it can not be said of Man as a whole. It is degrading. I also object very strongly to the phrase "We shall die." because I hold that there is no such thing as death in the sense of leaving the world for good either to inhabit a gilded heaven or in the sense of everything ending completely.

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1. - 2. This poem struck me as being pointless and puerile. I derived from it no new impression or information about life, merely irritation at the generalisations and assumptions so inartistically presented.
2. + 1. This one seemed charmingly written and sensible. I found myself in harmony with its imaginatively expressed theme.

3. - 3. This melodramatic outburst annoys me intensely, as it represents so much misdirected energy. The writer should have steered clear of poetry. There are surely other ways to express his discontent more constructively. I don't like the unrealistic "we" and "you" in black and white. He ignores the grey. Unstimulating and unoriginal.

4. - 2. I didn't like anything about this poem. Why does he assume beauty is only found externally? I know some people prefer slums to countryside. The miners are now well paid, why don't they emigrate or encourage the children to work for a scholarship in another profession. This apathetic approach is not convincing enough. Not good craftsmanship poetically.

5. - 1. I had to muster all my patience to get through this cliche-ridden piece, which seems to be on the same literary level as some dance songs, although I agree with its main theme. Oh for just one fresh phrase!

6. + 3. I appreciated the profundity of this poem and am in full harmony with its sentiments. I approve of the sensitive yet forceful way in which it is written. Made me reflect, and I am grateful to have read it. There is nothing about it which annoys me; it is not campaigning for a cause; it is exciting.

7. 0. This poem means nothing to me, as it is not clear. I don't understand the references to love, which are not qualified. Not stimulating enough to make me wonder what the writer means, or care about it much.

8. + 2. I enjoyed the imagery of this delicately expressed poem, and endorse the theme. Very pleasant.

9. - 2. This poem is full of hackneyed phrases and is drearily pessimistic. The child could join the merchant navy when old enough, widen his horizon and not accept his mother's spineless outlook. He could work constructively for socialism. Dislike "thee" and "'tis", technically, also "Masters".

10. 0. Abortive attempt to be clever. A silly poem with no spark of originality, but well meant.

11. - 1. A not very rousing poem. In spite of all the hate and threats it is not pithy and offers no solution.
The writer, like No. 3, doesn't see any gray. A poor literary effort with nothing to commend it. Insult to any intelligent worker.

12. + 2. Aesthetically satisfying. I like the theme. The last line of each stanza jars, though, as it seems rather syrupy and superfluous. Evocative phrases.

13. - 3. Yet another unsubtle worker-rousing poem, stereotyped and ineffective. I was irritated by "'Tis", and thought "ye" out of place. Still no practical suggestions to better the situation or to throw out the "tyrants". I dislike all this ranting and raving to no purpose. No artistic merit either. Waste of time and paper.

14. + 2. Enjoyed this poem, especially the middle stanza, up to a point, but cannot fully condone the uncompromising escapist attitude in lines 1 and 10. What does line 3 mean? The general idea is good but the literary value of this poem is not high in my opinion.

15. + 1. I liked this because the last line seems so true. The theme has my sympathy but the poetry is weak and uninspiring.

16. + 3. This poem pleased me as I agree with the underlying philosophy. It seems sensible, clear, unaffected. I am glad I read it, as there have not been many other poems which have enriched me in any way. It is not trying to "sell" anything.


14. + 3. A dignity of form, and a rhythm that one could speak and people would listen to. A sure rise and fall of mood. (Contrast is of value in Poetry.)

6. + 3. The appeal of this is only lessened to me, because of the use of the longer line. Had this been in blank verse, I would have placed it first, because it is more direct than 14.

16. + 3. This style of writing is very fashionable at present, but in this case, not enough is said to hold it.

8. + 2. A beautifully formed little poem, but too many images, e.g. 'music often', 'flowers in space', 'caves unseen', 'deaf walls'.
2. + 2. This is written in contemplative measure and yet the sense is of an active kind. Readable but not speakable.

9. + 1. I like the matter of this, but am put off by the attempt at Parody.

15. + 1. I take it this IS the complete poem? It seems to me like three verses from a longer poem. The last verse is very confused.

7. + 1. I think the matter very good, but the form does not seem right. To shorten the second line may be alright, but it must for balance match the fourth, which line is two syllables shorter, so rhythm is gone.

12. + 1. The poems seems like Gerard Manley Hopkins watered down or imitated. I'd like to place it higher but 'Cur gaze is submarine' puts me off.

10. + 1. I know I ought to like this, but I don't.

4. + 1. There must be glory in a poem, but this is too grumpy! It is alright as a factual document.

5. 0. Has the same effect on me as a lot of words on a Christmas card.

13. - 1. So many hard sounding words make me uncomfortable, yet there is not enough matter to stir to indignation.

3. - 1. I think the poet has failed to say what he felt.

1. - 1. No form either of writing or of content.

11. - 2. The master of this kind of Poem was of course Kipling. It is a personal prejudice, but I cannot bear it. This piling of adjective on adjective and repetition. And soon, oh soon. It will do very well for the Sheffield Communist Youth Festival.


2. + 1. Like the poetic illustration of the theme of contrasts. Don't like "petals" that "burn".

3. + 1. Like it for its strength of feeling - but not as poetry. Prefer this sort of stuff in prose. Little imagery except "crimson wool" - in itself crude.

4. + 2. Like first line especially - general sense of despair borne up by the verse.

5. - 1. Don't like matter - find the general effect of 19th century "self-help" attitudinising rather sickly.

6. + 1. Like the theme and the way it is put into words that emphasize its remote and God-like inflexibility of futile change.

7. + 1. A sympathy for the theme.

8. + 2. I like the words and images that suggest transience of thought and love without battering one's mind with commonplace words. Don't like "a flower in space"; "static" - reminds me of war-time water tanks; "stone" which "echoes".


10. - 1. As above.

11. + 1. I like the note of indignation, strongly phrased. Perhaps more readable than a prose diatribe, but to me not poetic.

12. - 1. On re-reading please put this into category 3 instead of 5. It carries atmosphere of peace, rest and poetic imagination. I like "our gaze is submarine" but not "glowworm...." line - too alliterative.

13. + 1. I like the idea. Unimpressed by the verse.

14. 0. Made little impression on me.

15. + 2. I like the idea and think the verse puts it across. Like "death goes riding by".

16. + 2. Like this quite a lot, especially first line and its consequent short clauses which seem to tremble with their sense.
My general feeling (which may explain the superficiality of my remarks) is that although the matter of these poems is appealing to my beliefs the manner, as a whole, is second-rate. Little poetic sense, imagery, depth of experience. I except No. 16 which pleases me quite a lot, and No. 4 — otherwise I find the poems unpoetic, mere rhyming and versifying which is disappointing.


1. - 3. The style is spallingly simple and smacks very much of the music-hall-comic finishing on a serious note. Its content is so cliche-ridden, its infuriating. Typical of Patience Strong in that picture-daily.

2. + 2. The rhyme is essentially simple, the words well-chosen and it has a solemn fluidity. I'm not so sure I understand its full meaning, but its general beauty conveys a quiet moralising on life.

3. 0. It is FOLKSY and jags along like a semi-serious jingle. I agree with its basic theme but dislike its expression.

4. + 2. The creation of mood and the simplicity of the atmosphere carries with it a conviction that strengthens my belief in what is said. With the poet, I feel, first come the articulations of beautiful words to which the theme was subjected.

5. - 3. Same as number 1. A cheaply constructed rhapsodising on life with a capital L. The sort of thing hung in a flowered frame over a multitude of English middle-class homes.

6. - 1. The poet takes too long to say so little. He is wordy, verbose and confusing, and repetitious. It is stuffy and allegorical, and full of a semi-religious symbolism.

7. 0. Its content is simple and essentially truthful but its presentation seems to be disciplined and vigorous while shouting out the fact that "life's hard". Style must be banal and starchy.

8. + 2. A quiet evocation of nature and sound moving to the normal conclusion that memory can be twinged by conscience. I like the style more than the content.
9. - 2. Ella Wheeler Wilcox gone Marxian? It toddles along in the guise of a nursery rhyme and has spikes under the blanket; the spikes are blunt though and ineptly used.

10. - 1. No real feelings about it except that it is reminiscent of an adult Sunday School mind. The method of approach is futile.

11. - 2. Sounds like the Trade Union Laureate. The simple message of the first two parts I agree with; the third I deny any fanaticism of this sort in any Englishmen. The jolly schoolboy roll of the doggerel irritates me intensely.

12. - 3. Something to do with light. I'm too cynical to even tolerate this catholic mumbling; I don't pretend to understand what the poet's getting at. To me it's like Whitman-plus-W.H. Davies with the religious bug.

13. - 1. Straightforward propaganda verse, simply put, simply rhymed and very obvious.

14. 0. Don't like the style or the content, but have no violent feelings about either.

15. 0. Same as number 14, but dislike it a little more because of its religious tang.

16. + 3. Lovely, and it has poetic realism that reaches out from the uncomplicated longing of its content. I am not so sure I understand it completely but feel the poet might have meant it for individual interpretation by each who reads it. There is a simple and beautiful fatalism about it which I like very much.

COMMUNISTS.


(Incomplete 35)

1. + 1. My criticism is that this poem fails because it mixes comedy and tragedy. To be short of money in a Capitalist Society is no joke. I vividly remember when my father was unemployed having to go to a pawnshop in order to get money.

2. + 1. I prefer the first verse of this poem to the second. The construction is better.
3. + 2. I like the spirit of this poem but would prefer a final verse striking a positive note.

4. + 1. Mining towns and villages are not always devoid of beauty. You generally find an emphasis on sparkling windows, white curtains and gardens with bright flowers. Miners and their wives generally make a gallant attempt to counteract the ugliness.

5. 0. This poem seems to defend the existence of evils which man can remove. As such I do not like it.

6. - 1. As an agnostic I do not care for the sentiments expressed in this poem.

7. + 2. Although I like the content of this poem, some of the words seem a little awkward.

8. 0. This poem lacks clarity of purpose and therefore it has no effect upon me.

9. + 1. I like the words of this poem but not the purpose which appears to be defeatist.

10. - 2. I dislike this because it is ineffective. It reminds me of the poem referring to one prisoner looking out of his cell and seeing stars whilst another one looked out and saw mud. In my opinion poetry should have a definite purpose with a view to rousing men to take action in order to make the world a better place.

11. + 3. I like this very much since it is a call to action. The words are clear.

12. 0. I do not like this poem very much because of its mystical character.

13. + 1. I like this poem but it would be improved with a positive call at the end. It seems to be based on one of Shelley's poems - is it "The Masque of Anarchy?"

14. - 1. I dislike this poem as it is escapist.

15. + 3. I like this poem because it does call upon Man to act.

16. - 2. This strikes me as "defeatist" hence my recorded dislike.
7. + 3. I like this poem. Devoid of gloom and despair, I think it comes within the range of future possibility. The study of Social History suggests this.

11. + 3. Appreciate the awareness of the worker of his own importance and place in modern society.

3. + 2. Like this. Shows the revolt against the 'cap in hand' attitude replaced by self-respect and appreciation of collective effort of workers.

4. 0. Unnecessary gloom.

10. D. Meaning obscure to me - morbid.

12. 0. “ “ “ “

13. 0. “ “ “ “

15. 0. Seems somewhat involved. Do not understand last line.


1. - 2. Seems just plain daft!


6. - 2. Neurosis!

8. - 2. Leaves me quite unmoved.

16. - 2. Dislike this gloom. Feel it is unfounded.

9. - 3. Dislike because of defeatist attitude to problem which is just a myth.

1. + 2. I read this out to my husband and we both were very hilarious about it. It has a rollicking swing that is very attractive. However it is not strictly true; it condescends to the poor. It is flippant, e.g. "Kill for
it. Isn't it funny?" and contradictory "Poor folk seem happy ...." and yet "Everyone wants just that little bit more".

2. + 3. On first reading I placed this in "2" but on third reading altered it to 1. It reminds me of a poem that I remember being very affected by when adolescent (some 20 years ago - I can't remember, however, the details of the poem). I like its rhythm and I thoroughly endorse its sentiments.

3. + 2. I approve of its sentiments and like the way it is written. I cannot place it in category 1 as it just doesn't arouse my feelings enough.

4. 0. No comment.

5. - 2. Too much like the "Patience Strong" type of poem. Petty bourgeois trite and trivial rubbish masquerading as wisdom.

6. - 3. Dislike contents and form. It's nostalgic rhetoric is often employed by the "muzzy" type of monotheist.

7. - 2. I don't think this is poetry, but cannot place it in "7" as I agree with some of the sentiments.

8. 0. Incomprehensible but apparently not reactionary.

9. + 3. This was the only poem that immediately affected my emotions. I cannot reread it without my eyes misting over, probably because my first baby is as yet only 11 weeks old and the phrase "bright as a star" seems exactly to describe her. The thought of her suffering through atom war is terrible.


11. + 2. I like this considerably; its sentiments I thoroughly endorse, and of course, alliteration is always fascinating.

12. - 3. The sentiments expressed here make me want to be sick.

13. 0. No comment.

14. - 2. Nearly incomprehensible, but I don't like this sort of poetry (whatever its sentiments) with its vocatives and pedantry.
15. + 1. I agree with the sentiments partially but it does not arouse me at all.

16. - 3. This seems to me to be a cry from those who regard the increasing complexity of modern industrial civilisation as undesirable, instead of realising that "Freedom is the recognition of necessity".


1. - 2. This poem seems to me trite and rather purile.

2. + 3. This expresses to me a view of life I do not hold. In spite of this I think it wonderfully well written.

3. + 2. Good, but a little crude.

4. + 3. I like this poem, but I don't think it out of the ordinary.

5. + 1. This is rather trite.

6. + 2. I like this, but I find it a little obscure. (See note below).

7. + 1. I like the idea expressed in this, but not the way it is written.

8. + 2. Moving, but I find it lacking in realism. Still, I find myself liking it more at each reading.

9. + 2. Very moving. I like this a good deal.

10. + 1. This I find a bit obscure, and not well written.

11. + 2. Good, but I don't like the anti-religious suggestion. That apart, the message is a good one.

12. + 1. No realism, but well written.

13. + 2. A good message well expressed.

14. + 3. Escapist, but I like it very much.

15. + 2. Very good but not quite up to the same standard as No. 13.

16. + 1. A bit obscure, but I like it quite a lot.
N.B. The question which arises in my mind is whether the message or the form of the poem is most important.

My own favourite poets are Keats, Swinburne, Arnold and Coleridge. Among moderns, I dislike the T.S. Eliot type of poem very much.

If the 'message' in the political sense is most important I consider that No. 9 is the best poem, by far, of that type.

1. 0. Trite, somewhat frivolous.
2. + 1. Oversimplification of the accepted. Seventh line particularly weak.
3. + 3. Earthy, robust style. Sound sentiment.
4. + 1. Imagery good. Expression not so good.
5. 0. Neither style nor sentiment appeal to me.
6. - 3. I dislike the cynicism expressed in this poem.
7. + 2. Content good. Style difficult.
8. + 2. Delightful imagery.
10. - 3. Don't know what the writer is aiming at.
11. + 3. Rousing, revolutionary appeal. Unfortunately far too "Gentlemanly".
12. - 2. Too dazzled by the "Light" to appreciate the poetic value.
13. + 3. Clear, direct and simple.
15. + 3. Sturdy, militant call to action.
1. + 3. Bright and amusing. I liked this very much, and oh so true.

3. + 3. Of good working class flavour, strong and moving. I like strength in a poem.

5. + 3. A good philosophy for living, didn't care for the first 3 verses, but the 4th pulled them up.

10. + 2. A good poem, true and well put in a 'frightfully' English way. Amusingly sarcastic.

15. + 3. A simple poem, with a message.

11. + 2. A good poem, true and well put in a 'frightfully' English way. Amusingly sarcastic.

13. + 2. Explaining different ways of slavery. I especially liked the last verse. It is something to think about, we all are to a certain extent what people make us, but a little more strength of will, would do us all good.

9. + 1. Nicely put, typical of a mother's thoughts.

16. + 1. The theme is quite good, but I do not care for the way it is written. I found it rather hard to understand.

2. + 1. The first verse is understandable, but the second puzzles me. I wonder what the writer is getting at.

7. + 1. This poem seems just a dream, which will not fly to us. There seems nothing progressive in it.

12. + 1. This poem is like an ornament. Pretty in its praise of light.

4. 0. A defeatist poem which I do not like to think is true.

8. 0. This does not say anything to me. The poem is written alright, but why not choose a subject.

10. - 1. I don't understand it.

14. - 1. This poem just does not say anything worth while.

6. - 2. I don't like it or understand it.
1. I like this poem because it has a good rhythm, an effect heightened by the rhyming couplets. It does not deal seriously with its subject; it makes me smile and think "How true", at first glance, though a longer perusal shows that it is not so true.

2. I like this poem a great deal because it makes me feel quiet and solemn. The words have a lovely and majestic sound, and I feel that the poem means something. What it says is true, and may give the answer to some of the unhappy things that are happening around us today.

3. This poem is alive and goes with a swing. I admit it only deals with the past, but when the writer realises as clearly as this one what has happened, it is a sign that he does not intend to allow it to continue, and there is, therefore, the hope and maybe the threat in this poem that times are changing, and the fight is beginning for a fuller, freer life.

4. I dislike this poem because it is without hope. Maybe it is true, I hope not, but the poem, by just accepting these things dully, is of no use in remedying them. It offers no way out, nothing to do to alter this state of affairs, just acceptance. It is somehow written in a different spirit from poem 3. Though in that poem there was no talk of the future either, there was a feeling running through the poem that something would be done, and soon.

5. This poem reminds me of the little homilies often given to the poorer people to try to prevent them grumbling about their conditions. It has nothing new to say and does not express it's time worn message in any new way. Therefore it did not affect me much.

6. I dislike this poem very much because it is so pompous, many long words saying nothing. It has not a definite rhythm, and it gives me the impression that whoever wrote it was someone who thought he was very intelligent, and who thought that there was no point in living. He starts, says a lot, and ends where he started, having moved neither backward nor forward and wasted a lot of breath in the process.

7. This poem did not affect me at all, beyond leaving me slightly puzzled, but over what I cannot say. I prefer poems that have a rhythm, or rhyme or both. It seems stilted and visionary, and does not think how these things will be obtained, or that we, the present generation, will have them.
8. + 2. I like the sound of this poem, the pictures it conjures up, leading one's mind from simple everyday things to more abstract thoughts. The words are descriptive and he puts an unusual dress on two everyday incidents, making them seem something special by his choice of words.

9. + 1. There is something pathetic in this lullaby, the hopeless despair of a mother, but it is all so gentle that though I do not like it greatly, I cannot dislike it either. The even meter and sentiment appeal to me, though the hopelessness doesn't.

10. 0. I have no ideas or feelings about this poem at all.

11. + 2. The sarcasm of this poem appeals to me, and I like the sound of the repetition of words. It, also, prophesies better things for the future, and threatens the idle who live off the work of others. "If others can do it, so can we" is the message it brings.

12. - 1. This poem is in praise of light. I have never thought of light in this sense, and I do not think it should be worshipped, it is not a living thing to appreciate praise. The poem is jerky, in my opinion, and uneven too. Therefore I do not like it very much.

13. 0. This is another poem that points out what is wrong and does nothing about it.

14. + 3. I like this poem best because it offers a retreat. Even if we cannot alter the ways of the world, we can cut ourselves off from the misery and wickedness around us, keep to our own ideals though we cannot persuade others to follow them as well. It reminds me of what things are really worth while, and if we keep our eyes on them, we need not be sucked down into the lesser worries and cares which trouble the world.

15. 0. This is a poem of past and future, but somehow it does not stir me, and does not affect me at all—why I don't know.

16. - 1. This poem annoys me. I can't quite understand what it is all about, or what the point of it all is. I disagree with what it says, about man complicating a life which was once simple. It is a peculiar poem and I do not like it very much.

I have not read any of these poems before.

1. + 2. I liked the poem because it was true to life though "frivolous".

2. 0. I neither liked nor disliked this poem, probably because I do not quite get the idea the poet is trying to convey.

3. + 1. Another poem I liked because it 'rang true' and shows that life is lost for the 'well being' of the "Upper Class".

4. - 1. I disliked this poem because the idea the poet is trying to convey is untrue, i.e. "Beauty never visits mining places". There is much beauty in mining towns, if not in the roads, buildings, etc., it is in the people of these places - their true friendship and sincere desire for peace - surely this is real beauty. From reading the poem one gets the impression that the "mining" people are almost unhappy and there is no attraction there!

5. + 3. I liked this poem very much, also because of its reality - almost advise.

6. 0. I neither liked nor disliked this poem - again because I do not understand it.

7. + 2. I liked this poem a great deal. In the third and fourth line of the first and second verse show the true love and friendship that could be had between peoples.

8. + 2. I liked this poem a good deal probably because I have experienced the "Ruffling and troubled consciousness".

9. + 3. Again liked very much because of its reality.

10. + 2. I liked this poem because "my friend" could have been me!

11. + 2. I liked this poem also - especially the last verse, because it inspires one to go forward.

12. 0. Another poem I do not understand therefore I cannot say whether I like or dislike it.

13. + 1. Liked very much because of its reality.

14. 0. Neither liked nor disliked, not fully understood.

15. + 3. Liked very much because it inspires one and portrays the thoughts of many people today.
16. + 1. I liked this a little because of its "part truth". Again I know certain parts to be true through my own experience.


2. + 2. First verse has very fine, though over-emphasised construction. Second verse rather waffly and comparatively lacks firmness. First verse makes an effect because it contrasts things outside us. Failure to understand qualitative difference between these non-personal contrasts, and events and actions, has led to the lameness of the second verse.

3. + 2. A good fighting poem; but like so much poetry progressive in theme, insufficient tightness of construction and too narrative.

4. + 2. Good content - same as for "3". But insufficient attention paid to metre. Neither 3 nor 4 have any lasting value.

5. - 2. Cannot agree that it is better for people to be deprived of good things of life. They keep on trying - but for what? Poor verse, inclined to doggerel.

6. 0. I feel a certain sympathy with this, though it shows a man in despair not basically with himself (for such despair could be remedied by understanding merely through reading the poem) but with others. Well constructed, though not till one has thoroughly absorbed it does one appreciate this.

7. + 3. The "modern poetry" tendency which thinks it sufficient to make enthusiastic and heartfelt statements. But also a good poem, largely through the ability to say vital, real and joyful things with clarity and economy.


9. + 2. Same as for 3 and 4. Rather negative for a lullaby - in fact no woman would ever sing this to her baby - a woman who felt like this would sing of the way forward.
10. + 3. Though I liked this poem a good deal, compelling honesty as it does, I would disagree with the contrast between what is seen by the eye and by the soul.

11. 0. Militant, but hardly poetry. Conception that mass appeal must dictate a lowering of cultural standard.

12. - 2. Emotionally woolly. There does not seem to be any real meaning to it. A limited though straining vocabulary shows in fact a limited ability to relate light to the western doors at evening, stagnant pools, etc.

13. + 2. Real strength of this lies in last verse - conception of what slavery does to people.

14. 0. Cannot understand his idea of Beauty, as he does not see it in anything about him. To a limited extent justifiable if he were not deliberately intoxicating himself with the idea of beauty, as the kind of feeling he carries is found when there is a person identified with the concept of beauty.

15. - 1. He seems to think that what is needed is an awakening of mass moral conscience - this is not a practical view. Rather poor poetry, reads rather like second-hand feelings.

16. + 1. A very real cry of the mental torture of intellectuals, but it is rather difficult to understand what he really means by his simple action and simple statement. Well constructed and directed. Should like to appreciate it more, but feel that perhaps I understand it in rather a superficial way.


1. 0. A sort of 'boy scout' approach to the class divisions, but at least doesn't praise individual gain.

2. + 2. Mainly because well written and sounds good, content a bit metaphysical a la Donne but not obnoxious.

3. + 2. Content good, in the ballad tradition.

4. - 2. Completely false note - no kick!

5. - 2. An amplification of the old 'virtue of poverty' theme - number 2 poem does the contraries theme so much better.

6. - 3. Obscurantist but not obscure.
7. + 2. Hopeful for future.
8. - 1. Artificial and a bit 'precious'.
9. + 1. Against the masters, but fatalistic.
10. - 3. What a hell of window of his soul!
11. + 2. Good class outlook and I don't like said English gentlemen.
12. - 3. "Light invisible" ultra violet or infra red?
13. + 3. Know it as Shelley - an old favourite.
15. + 1. Good meaning if sentimental.


1. - 2. I dislike this poem. It is cheap doggerel. It does not bring out the significant points about money - merely superficially comments on some of the effects of money.

2. + 2. I agree with the message of this poem, i.e. the significance of contradictions and contrast. I don't understand it all, especially the last 3 lines.

3. + 2. This poem has a good rhythm and forcefulness and conveys, I think, the hatred it intends to convey. The line in verse 5 "for that was our doom, you know" is weak compared with the rest. In verse 6, line 2, surely does not scan. I find this irritating.

4. 0. I dislike the repetition of "fellows", "faces" and children and consider the analogies with flowers and weeds out of place. The subject seems worthy of stronger description.

5. - 2. The lesson in this poem could be used by reactionaries to make the workers accept the hardness of their lives. I dislike the form and the mixture of conversational "don't" with high-falutin "distant pinnacle of dreams".

6. - 3. To me this is utter nonsense.

7. - 1. The idea in this poem is reasonable but it is expressed very crudely and without much poetry.
8. 0. No strong feelings about this poem. The theme seems rather trite.

9. + 1. The message here is clear and true but a little defeatist.

10. - 2. I do not understand the second half.

11. + 3. This expresses clearly the class structure of society and shows confidence in the future. I like the form with the final verse showing determination to change the order of things.

12. - 2. Why such a passive admiration of light? Some things I don't understand, e.g., "Batflight".

13. + 1. Does not answer the question posed "What is freedom". The poem seems incomplete although the statements on slavery are true enough.

14. - 2. Disappointing - after saying "These are not lasting things" the writer retreats into contemplation of the soul and passive admiration of beauty instead of expressing confidence in the future.

15. 0. Weak ending (last 2 lines).

16. - 1. I do not understand this poem clearly. Was there a "Road to joy once" any simpler than now? It is the conscious control of the future that had to be the 'Road to Joy'.

WHOSE POLITICAL OPINION OR AFFILIATION REMAINED UNKNOWN


1. 0. The poem flows easily but the subject matter is rather hackneyed.

2. + 2. The contrast in the first verse is good but the second does not seem to have much in common with the first and is rather difficult to understand.

3. - 1. The point of the poem is very obscure.

4. - 3. If the intent is to make the reader picture a scene of gloom, it does so with success. Let's hope conditions have improved since this was inspired.

5. + 2. The contrasts again are very good and quite a good poem on the whole.
6. + 1. Subject matter of a frustrated nature on the whole a good poem.

7. 0. Idea not conveyed to reader very clearly, a rather ambitious poem.

8. + 3. Wonderfully descriptive, a delightful poem.

9. - 1. Rather mournful for a lullaby, a supposedly modern touch.

10. + 1. An original poem again with a gloomy touch.

11. - 3. Being an English subject I feel it better to pass no comment on this poem.

12. 0. This poem fails to express a rather ambitious subject.

13. - 1. Not a very happy poem and not very good.


15. - 2. Continues in the same gloomily rather obscure manner. I only hope that life is not as gloomy as these poems suggest.
CONSERVATIVES.


1. + 1. Very light verse; not much to it, but the point is all too true. I liked it because of the showing up of human weakness.

2. - 1. I disliked this a little, because although it had a good point, it seemed to me as though the author was trying to be 'arty' for art's sake. By this, I mean long words were used frequently when short ones would have sufficed. A good writer, whether he be a poet or a novelist, need not rely on lengthy phrasing to be appreciated.

3. 0. This I was indifferent to. This poem reads too much like the work of a young revolutionary with nothing fresh to say. If it was supposed to be food for thought, it left me still hungry.

4. - 1. Too dismal, and not quite true, for this day and age. As for the children born for the mines, nobody has to be something just because his father was, in this enlightened (?) age. As I said, morbid for morbid's sake.

5. + 2. I liked this one. Poems like this should be brought to view more than they are. It (the poem) is moralising, refreshing and worth while.

6. + 1. My sentiments exactly! Although inclined to be 'arty', it is on the principle of Khayam who had a good bit of sane philosophy. In this age of mad science, it is worth reading.

7. 0. This failed to grip my emotions either way. Sounds more like wishful thinking than anything else.

8. 0. A bit obscure, saying nothing. Like a "John Bull" short story; one reads it expectantly, then comes to the end feeling slightly deflated and indifferent.

9. + 2. This I like! It appeals to the cynic in me, of which I fear there is a great deal. It unveils the inevitability of things in man's hands. How lucky are babes in their ignorance.
10. + 1. The author has a point here. No lengthy art
piece, just a sensible concise piece of fatalism.

11. - 2. This fairly reeks of Communism. The one poem
of the group I definitely turn my nose up at. I am well
aware of the vices of Capitalism and Boss versus Little
Man. But there are faults with every human institution -
because it is human! The fool who wrote this, I suggest,
should go over to the land of the patient Russian peasant
and die in the ecstasy of a fool's paradise. (Who DID
write it, anyway?)

12. + 1. After No. 11, this comes as a piece of clean,
fresh, air. More like a hymn than a verse, it is
nonetheless thoughtful, fine and sane.

13. 0. Not too clearly put. I found nothing of any
emotional impact in this one. It left me indifferent.
Besides, it is a mixture of ancient and modern wordage.
'tis and ye' opposed to 'their and your'.

14. + 2. A very soothing and sensible piece. I liked its
message very much. If only more people felt this way and
read verse like this. An impressive tribute, to the
mastery of Immortal over Mortal.

15. + 3. The best of the group. Reproduce this on
posters a mile square and send them to the four corners
It's refreshing to know there are some still who feel
that way.

16. + 1. I liked the simplicity this poem suggests. It
reminds one of the verse in Khayyam about 'One thing is
certain, the rest is lies. The Flower that once has blown
forever dies'. There is also a slight trace of cynicism
about the second and third verses. Quite good.


1. + 3. I like this poem because it is so very true to
life and strikes home in the right places. Rich folk are
bored because they can get anything they want, but hard
earned riches are an achievement, something acquired in
life. Poor hard working folk who try to save, or win a
little competition, so that they can buy a little more than
the bare necessities, just have to make the most of what
they've got. Perhaps it is fate, some call it luck, but
whatever it is, its nice to have, but its not worth
risking ones life for: life is so short and sweet after all.
2. + 1. I like this poem a little; I had to read it several times before it struck home. The first verse is quite plain and clear but the second verse is harder to understand.

3. - 1. This poem is laid out well in verse but is rather obscure.

4. + 3. This is lovely verse and very well said. The mines and mining districts are awful places, but coal is one of life's necessities, even though they spoil the colour of our country-side.

5. + 3. This is lovely verse and so nicely said, also its so very true to life and when you see people who suffer or all in life, one always hopes that the sun will shine for them and we must all persevere.

6. - 2. This poem appears to be complicated.

7. 0. I cant say whether I like or dislike this poem, its quite clear, but not very attractive.

8. + 2. Very nice, it shows peacefullness and disturbed peace: how lovely is peace, until it is disturbed.

9. + 3. Very well written verse, so true, to see a lovely baby, then to see it grow up, to the horrors of war and the adverse things in life.

10. + 2. Lovely verse and well written, one sees the lovely things in life but the horrors that come from the soul, oh!

11. + 1. A good poem, but rather harsh, but our God-damned English Gentlemen should find out what we really are.

12. + 3. This is really lovely verse and so nicely written. What would be life without light; thank God for the light.

13. + 1. Fair poetry, rather clipped, but expresses a lot, for freedom is a thing of the past, our lives are not our own today; life is going back, as in verse two of this poem.

14. + 2. Very cleverly written verse, it means a lot, for it you give man power, he becomes a God in his own mind, but becomes hated by those under him.

15. + 3. This is lovely verse and written so very well and with so much meaning; its so nice to be content, see little children happy but so awful to see them stricken.
in fear; man must persevere to be masters of their fate before all is lost.

16. - 3. I do not like this one; seems rather ghastly, gives me a lonely, death like feeling.


5. + 3. Simply and clearly expressed and perfectly true.

8. + 3. I like this poem, and its comparison of Music and a stone as expressing a kindly nature and a harsh one.

10. + 3. To my mind this poem brings out superficial thinking to deeper thought.

14. + 3. In a way similar to 10.

15. + 3. An appeal to reason and selflessness. I like this poem and the preceding ones and the style in which they are written. They all appeal to one's better nature.

1. + 2. To my mind mediocre in style but expressing a truth.

2. + 1. Not quite clear, but I think the sentiments are the right ones.

6. 0.

7. 0. Rather vague, so no comment.

12. 0.

3. - 3. I don't dislike these poems in the style they are written, but I definitely dislike the theme of each one, as they convey to my mind the Hymn of Hate and the class war.

11. - 3. I like this poem, and its comparison of Music and a stone as expressing a kindly nature and a harsh one.

15. + 3. An appeal to reason and selflessness. I like this poem and the preceding ones and the style in which they are written. They all appeal to one's better nature.

1. + 2. For its complete truth.

2. + 3. For its contrasts in wording which reveals what we are inclined to ignore.
3. + 1. Bitterness is the theme, but it has a large measure of truth.

4. + 3. It arouses a feeling of pity.

5. + 3. After reading, the thought "How very true" comes to mind.

6. 0. Just does not make any appeal.

7. + 1. Expresses a state of things we would all like to see.

8. + 2. The words are soothing, like a favourite piece of music.

9. - 1. It brings war and its misery to close.

10. + 2. Its wording makes a purely sentimental appeal.


12. + 3. Makes me see that "Light is Life" and the way to travel.

13. 0. It seems as if the poet does not make the most life as it comes.

14. 0. Reminds me of somebody chasing a "will o' the wisp".

15. + 1. Utopia - desirable (desirable) but impossible.

16. + 2. I admire its philosophy.


1. - 1. I do not consider this to be poetry at all - I should call it doggerel. It makes generalisations which are not true. Poor folk do not all seem happy, often they are miserable. Nor are rich folk always "weighed down by cares". Some do appear unhappy it is true, but others lead a full, satisfying life.

2. + 1. This, in form and language, is, to my way of thinking, much more like poetry than No. 1. There is also some truth in it, though I find the phrase "both were servants of our destiny" a little obscure. I'm not sure that I agree we have a 'destiny' in the sense that our futures are fore-ordained.
3. - 2. I dislike this because of the strong feeling of class hatred it expresses. It seems a gross exaggeration nowadays, at least in this country.

4. - 1. I don't agree with the thoughts expressed here. Beauty can be found everywhere, if one has eyes to see it, though it may not take the same form always. I rarely see white faced children now, and surely even those in mining areas are not necessarily "born for the mines".

5. + 1. Again I should rate this as doggerel rather than poetry. However, the ideas expressed are sound and I like the line "Do not look for easy paths but see your shoes are strong".

6. + 1. More pleasing in its form than many of the lines and expresses a certain amount of truth.

7. 0. Misses being poetry and does not paint a particularly inspiring view of the future.

8. + 1. Reads pleasantly, but I find the 2nd verse rather obscure.


10. + 1. Presents vividly the contrast between beauties of nature and misery of mankind.


12. 0. The form of this does not particularly please me.

13. - 1. Why ask "What is freedom?" - then go on to describe what the writer believes to be slavery? Doggerel again, smacking of propaganda which I dislike under cover of "poetry".

14. + 1. I dislike some of the phrases, such as verse 1 line 3, but rather like the idea of the permanence of Beauty.

15. + 1. A better attempt than many of the others and seems sincere.

16. 0. Some of the lines are good, but I have no idea what the writer means by 'simple action by simple statement'.
15. +3. The best in my judgment is 15 it is short, to the point, and gives rise to hope for the future as people without vision perish (perish) it is the Star to light us on our way. We are all dreamers more or less but we want our dreams to be attainable to some degree. It is the substance of this poem that helps us in the day to day battle for something better, inspiration something above the tawdry plane of life we are compelled to live in. Short the soap that washes away the dirt and grime both in our bodies and our minds. a Great work, a battle cry Subtle yet hopeful.

13. +3. Next is 13. I have Shelley's works it is taken from the Masque of Anachy I mentioned it in my previous letter good poetry. To the point not ambiguous a jolt to bring us to our task, the rhythm [rhythm] too is good.

9. +3. The poetry in 9 is good the words well chosen but it is defeatist life must be lived we cannot find a backwater where it is smug and pleasant and let the world go by we must be up and doing and that is not embodied in the lines.

3. +2. 3 and 7 good. Shall I say 3 the price 7 the reward. The workers beyond any argument have earned a better life verses 2 and 5 very appropriate of poem 3. The last verse in 7 is very true what we do today can only brand us as mad men in the eyes of the future generation.

4. +2. No comment.

5. +1. Of Poem 5 the words are good but the meaning again fatalistic no urge a common idea peddled to the workers that we should tire of the good things. Do we have to tire of the bad ones? We dont get easy paths neither do we expect them but when we get to the end of the road we shall know what to do about it. Still good poetry.

6. 0. Let me say at the onset I do not understand 2. 0. these they are beyond me. 6 for instance is 8. 0. a blank I must confess I have read it more than 10. 0. 6 times but it is still Greek to me. Of these 12. 0. I wish to say it needs a poetic education to elucidate the meaning of the words I plead.
guilty to that shortcoming. I can appreciate the beauty of
the words but their meaning in all forms leaves me cold.
Take 12 grand phrasing here more than a hint of something
supernatural a clashing of ideas a desire to catch hold
of something not solid, beautiful but shall we say
something we are not sure about like we are the other
things. We can try and make a God in our image because
how could it be the same as that which helped a class
throughout the ages to plunder and kill in His Name.
Our God must be different. How few of us could rule our
lives with the eternal question 'What would Jesus do'.
It would be as well to say enough here.

16. O. No comment.
11. + 1. No comment.
14. + 1. No comment.

1. - 1. I frankly don't understand 1 but I ought really
not to condemn something I do not understand but the
words are not good to me it certainly fails to ring the
bell with me.


1. - 2. The first two lines truthful but are we not
troubled more without it? Rather be troubled with than
without. Second verse a well written excuse for pity for
the rich according to its message we should feel sorry
for them. Living amongst the poor their happiness was
little and crude, little intelligent happiness existed.
Third verse true and fairly written but doesn't outweigh
that second verse. Bad theme written fairly.

2. - 1. Writing and theme fairly good but the sufferance
attitude is there. I don't agree with the contrasts in
lines 5, 6, 7, 8. We know beauty with knowing uglyness
and right without the experience of wrong and stillness
without turmoil. On finding a cure for an illness the
cure is often useless except as a cure therefore no
progress has been really made merely a balance of evil
and good. Fairly well written good pointless theme shows
thought.

3. + 2. Beauty of this one is its truth of statements -
its message is very good. However it seems to lack some-
thing (or perhaps it is my lack of understanding?) that
might have made it top of the list. Well written fact.
4. First line verse one and three and four verse two I disagree with. Is it because they have no wish to see beauty or no intelligence? Last two verses make it really good, well written bringing home a point of truth that I really like. Good writing, gives truths.

5. This is the real sufferance attitude that I have a biased hate against. The feeling lives too much today in the working classes especially amongst so-called Christians. Second verse is a point for progress male to look unattainable. By considering impossibilities we create the possible. After third verse why he should wear shoes at all is beyond me in fact why go? Not to (too) well written, theme dead.

6. First six lines good writing and point. The rest I must admit leaves me confused although I understand one or two of the lines. What exactly is the authors point and what would he suggest we do about it? I like the style but the point?

7. Not to (too) well written but a point is made, especially last two lines. Good theme.

8. Nice, I like the theme or at least what I made of it. Not to (too) well written, theme was thoughtful.

9. Really good although like number three seems to lack somewhere (or I do). Lines three verse one, three and four verse two and all verse three really good. Verse three I should imagine is the plea of most mothers now. Well written good theme.

10. Fair layout. Fair theme but a distasteful last line. Thousands have suffered in vain for principles right or wrong. Not too good.

11. Emphases in certain parts are quite good, reminds me of D. H. Lawrence "How beastly the Bourgeois is". Good theme confident and well laid.

12. To what point? Author ought to come down to earth. Not to (too) well written theme — lightheaded.

13. Really good especially second and fourth verse. Well and simply written really good theme.

14. Again the sufferance theme we must be people in our own right not in our souls. Not to well written, bad theme.
15. + 3. The author sums up the present simply and quickly and classes the main things of the good future with the main horrors of the present. Also confident and the last two lines are genuine in theme. Well written, theme excellent.

16. + 3. This is very good especially his simple statements and man has made his life a twisted tower. I must again admit I am a bit lost in the whole theme but like it in its points. I really liked this piece as I like some of Eliots - liking but not understanding.

E.C.S. 57.

| 1. | + 2. |
| 2. | + 2. |
| 3. | + 1. |
| 4. | 0. |
| 5. | + 2. |
| 6. | + 3. |
| 7. | 0. |
| 8. | + 2. |
| 9. | - 1. |
| 10. | + 1. |
| 11. | + 2. |
| 12. | 0. |
| 14. | 0. |
| 15. | + 2. |
| 16. | 0. |


| 4. | + 3. |
| 7. | + 3. |
| 3. | + 3. |
| 1. | 0. |
| 14. | 0. |
| 5. | - 3. |
| 2. | + 1. |
| 6. | + 1. |
| 8. | + 2. |
| 9. | + 2. |
| 10. | - 2. |
| 11. | - 1. |
| 12. | + 3. |
| 13. | + 2. |
| 15. | + 1. |
| 16. | - 1. |
1. + 2. The swingy rhythm of this poem and the method of expression give it a grim humour that makes a well-worn theme attractive. I like the simple treatment and the air of ridicule.

2. - 1. A simpler treatment of the rather obvious philosophy would have been more pleasing. I dislike the apparently "contrived" arrangement of grammar in the sentences. The rhythm is pedantic, but these two lines appeal:
   
   "It is remembrance of the winter snow
   That makes the summer petals burn more bright."  
   I would prefer "perspective" to the doubtful "proportion" in the last verse.

3. + 1. This style is reminiscent of Kipling's "Ballad of East and West". The bitterness expressed adds to its dramatic nature, and the form and rhythm are suited to recitation or monologue.

4. + 1. I like the powers of description the poet uses to paint his dismal scene: the yellow smoke, dusty weeds, running rife, the gaunt folk, slag heaps and headstocks all heighten the pitiable state of the children "born for the mines". Specially effective is the line:
   
   "Round-eyed children cheated of life's graces",
   but I dislike the comparison implied in "Sweet human flowers", after the pitiable description a comparison with the dusty weeds would have been more appropriate.

5. + 2. Since filling in the form I find that the obvious philosophy and sing-songy way this is put over irritates me. I would now rate the poem as a "dislike a little" one for the above reasons. I cannot see why it appealed to me in the first place.

6. + 3. What pleases me most about this poem is the depth of thought it implies. Brief phrases as: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge" raise volumes of thought. (Great contrast with poems like 1 and 5) The grand rhetorical manner, with well-balanced phrasing and effective repetition (repetition), is ideal treatment for the despairing element contained in the thought.

7. - 2. The distinction between this type of verse and prose is very slight indeed. I have the feeling that the content would have been better expressed in prose.
8. + 3. This poetic association is simply but beautifully expressed. I find great enjoyment in this, connecting of ideas or images rather than in merely descriptive verse. Admirable is the phrase "twisting the frail tendrils of the heart". This reminds me of Shelley somehow. I like the "deaf walls" asserting "their permanence".

9. + 2. I like this lullaby. The bitterness of a mother is portrayed with dramatic simplicity. Yet though the verse is appealing it hardly rises to poetry except in those beautiful lines:

"But buds break to blossom as brief moments fly
And Masters are planning the way you shall die".

10. 0. The dramatic dialogue form is slightly pleasing, but the verse is too much like a child's rhyme to impress.

11. + 2. The poem is attractive because of the spirit behind it, the hatred implied by the repetition of types of adjectives, and because of its good introduction and effective end. The poem has a completeness and the dramatic power of bitterness.

12. + 3. I am agnostic and therefore it is not the religious fervour of the poem that generates my appreciation, but purely the masterly way in which this is expressed. In one who has no religion it inspires a mood of meditative wonder on the lights of the world, particularly those mentioned in the last verse, "small lights of those who meditate at midnight". The awful ejaculations are emotional climax of the verses, and contrast with previous serenity.

13. 0. The theme is so well-worn by poets that only a really striking treatment appeals.

14. + 2. The poem has an appealing unity, and its philosophy is suitably poetic in spirit. I like it because there have been times when in the depth of despair something approximating "the devine white wonder" has given me courage.

15. + 1. A dramatic message helped by vivid images as "Hell is loosed and death goes riding by". Brief and in word pictures to the point.

16. + 2. What attracts me about this poem is the simplicity with which it deals with the simple. Poems of this type strive so often, or seem to, for obscurity, and indeed the first two lines of the last verse are a trifle obscure. The last verse mars the whole effect to my mind,
but the previous part of the poem is very effective.
I like the belief in "simple statements" and "simple
actions", it is a pity that man has spoilt it by his
"twisted towers", and his obscure philosophies.

1. 0. 2. +1. 3. -1. 4. +2.
5. +1. 6. -2. 7. -2. 8. +3.
9. +1. 10. +1. 11. -1. 12. 0.
15. 0. 14. -1. 15. 0. 16. +3.

1. -1. This "poem", although harmless enough, reminded
me of the sort of monologue with which third rate music-
hall comedians round-off their act. True, perhaps, but
not poetry.

2. 0. The sentiments expressed are trite but seemingly
sincere.

3. -3. Almost a pastiche on Kipling at his worst, the
ideas expressed are dated in the extreme and at times the
style is so melodramatic as to be amusing. Not poetry.

4. -2. I do not agree with the ideas expressed —
Beauty takes many forms. Again the ideas are dated, the
exposition lacks style and the poetry value negligible.

5. 0. I usually expect to find this type of verse on
old calendars. The theme has been said sooften and so
much better.

6. -3. Why?

7. +1. This is the funniest thing I have read for years.

8. +2. The only example of poetry as such, in the whole
collection — an idea expressed in a manner suited to it.
Most of the themes presented in these poems would sound
not out of place on a Communist Party Platform.

9. -2. This propaganda is beginning to annoy me,
someone ought to tell the poet that Art and Politics do
not mix.

10. -2. Pointless to say the least.
11. - 3. The only redeeming feature of this political tirade is the metre, which is strongly akin to Noel Coward's song of the thirties. The ideas are from that decade too.

12. - 1. The hint of poetry in this piece has been almost smothered by the pretentious obscurity of the style.


15. - 2. I wrote stuff like this when I was in the Third Form, and even then I thought it was bad.

16. - 1. This piece has an idea but it is expressed extremely clumsily.

General Comment.

If I have been harsh on this collection, it is because this mixing of Politics and Art angers me. If this is, as I strongly suspect, a not very subtle attempt to spread the Communist doctrine, all I can say is that it might have been more successful had you engaged a better poet — correction — I should have said "had you engaged a poet".

SOCIALISTS.

    Uni. F.O.S. 122.

A note on 4 and 9.

In the classification (5) Dislike a little, I put some vital poems, that is, poems which have direction and value. The reason for their being classified thus is because of the strictly 'unpleasant' feeling-tone they create, the frustration, and the knowledge of one's miserable failure to change this foul set-up. In fact they tell me too much about myself. This is true of poems Nos. 4, 9. In terms of value and forcefulness they should go in the (1) Like very much, but in terms of the terrible imagery they put on one — I find them difficult to bear. I am sorry, that I may be being too sincere for your purposes, but perhaps you see the problem. It is the verb "like" that troubles me. If this was overlooked, then the

(1) Like very much

would read 16, 4, 9, 11.

Perhaps the choice is up to you.
1. - 2. This seems too glib, trivial. Leads to pessimism in the last few lines. One feels it is cynical, despairing. True it involves perception of a fault, but is too stupid to look for any way out. Furthermore, it is opposed to my belief that mankind is easily satisfied, even more so in a fair society.

2. + 1. This seems philosophical, and somewhat dialectical, until there comes talk of present blessings. Destiny slightly of mystics, which is perhaps not the authors intention.

3. + 2. This is very fine in its rousing forcefulness, and, in view of the foul propaganda it has to combat, a valuable piece. It might not bear poetic scrutiny.

4. - 1. See final sheet of whole package. Too powerful and damming. A magnificent comment But cruel. If I read it seven times it would be at the head of the list.

5. - 1. Trashy. Like advice to children, among whose ranks I believe I no longer am. Same fault as with 1.

6. + 1. I dislike the 'God' aspect, and the pessimism. It glorifies some simple concepts - Word - death - Life. (I have now (later) comprehended and identified this as T.S. Eliot, from "The Rock". I don't like it any better)

7. + 2. This is stirring poetry, as trickery, thoroughly honest and simple. It has good content.

8. + 2. This is rather formless, and one can read a great deal into it. One can identify oneself with the poet. It is more poetical than most of the others. Fine.

9. - 1. See end of whole package. As with Poem 4. It is too crushing and true. It makes one clench the fists. It hits oneself so hard.

10. + 2. Apart from the religious crack in the last line this is very fine, and represents the simple dichotomy that one recognises so well.

11. + 3. This is fine satire, damming one and all. Powerful, vital, it speaks in its opposition propaganda terms. It paints a really militant picture, which is good for morale.

12. - 2. This is remote, mystical. It may be clever, but we have not time for cleverness of such a remote sort. Again it is formless, but Inivvisble Lights make me read unfavourable things into it.
13. + 2. This is fine and simple and honest. It springs from the same culture as I do, and is that which I have been conditioned to be sympathetic to.

14. - 1. This has escaped from the field. It is individualistic, selfish and flat.

15. + 2. This shares some of the properties of 4 and 9, but is on the dream plane. It is easy to be sympathetic to. Its comparison makes one think one way.

16. + 3. This is at the philosophical level, perhaps my admiration for this one represents a "going out of the field". But it gives an opportunity to delay our reaction, in which to think. At a therapeutic level it allows clear and enjoyable thinking.


1. + 1. The things I like about this poem are offset by the writers assumption that poor folk seem happy and prosperous folk unhappy. I should think that one's normal disposition, if influenced at all by prosperity is made happier by the advent of creature comforts.

2. + 3. I like this for its common truth.

3. + 3. I used to like this propaganda poem style about 30 years ago, but I am of the opinion that they now belong to the past. The approach today must be less violent and appeal to the intelligence more.

4. + 1. Remarks on No. 3 apply to this also.

5. + 1. Rather depressing, but still, very true.

6. 0. I can appreciate that this is good poetry, at least I think so, but I feel I do not get the real depth of it.

7. 0. No comment.

8. + 1. Although not a judge of poetry, I like the style of this.

9. + 3. I like both style and content.

10. 0. No comment.

11. - 1. I only dislike a little because I think the violent approach makes an antagonist rather than a convert.
12. 0. No comment.

13. + 3. I like this one, although I had to read it a few times before I fully understood it.

14. 0. Can't understand it.

15. + 3. Like this very much, both style and content.

16. + 3. Like this, for the simple style and content.


P.O.S, 64.

1. - 2. The content (ideas expressed) in all these four poems are naive, of doubtful veracity and ethically repugnant. The form is mundane.

2. - 1. Here the ideas expressed are a little more worthwhile but they are aesthetically poor.

4. 0. No. 4 - an interesting idea - shun industrialism and the surrounding countryside - but difficult to deal with and the poet has fallen into sentimentality.

8. 0. A "nice" little poem.

14. 0. Undistinguished content - poor form.

3. + 2. Of its kind - a good song (cf. traditional 19th century working newspaper).

12. + 2. At last recognizable as poetry - beautiful sounds and images, but worship etc. out of place.

6. + 2. Good content - fashionable!

10. + 2. A slight poem - but not uninteresting.

15. + 2. Again quite a good idea - but not really well written.

2. + 2. Both form and content good average.

16. + 3. In the best modern philosophic tradition - but lacking in emotional force.
1. 0. It is partly true.

2. - 1. A philosophy which justifies evils and leads us nowhere. Dislike it a little.

3. + 3. I like it very much because it expresses genuine protest. The rhythm of the poem helps a lot in conveying the sentiments.

4. + 3. Poet's own feelings are here under a restraint which gives a realistic touch to the whole picture.

5. - 3. I simply dislike it as it misleads. An intelligent person will always resent to be consoled like that.

6. - 1. I can only sympathise with the poet but cannot share his views. Its expression is classical and cannot move ordinary people.

7. + 2. It is simple but seems to be devoid of feeling. I can however appreciate what it portrays.

8. 0. An innocent and simple poem but devoid of any purpose.

9. + 2. The poem is rather pessimistic and does not give any solution. It however exposes those who exploit the people and lead us to war.

10. 0. This too is pessimistic. The second half of the poem seems to have more sincerity than the first one. I don't quite appreciate what is said about our natural life.

11. + 2. A nice poem. It is a good combination of feeling and vision. The sarcasm of its tone has added to the beauty of the poem. I like it a good deal.

12. - 2. It is not written for common people. One has to cultivate taste for such poems!

13. + 2. Although it conveys pessimism the expression of the poem is good and the poet seems to be sincere in his sentiments. I like it a good deal.

14. - 2. I dislike it because it tells that we should forget our sufferings and it is escapism.

15. + 1. I like it a little. It is quite inspiring.

1. + 3. I liked this poem although not altogether agreeing with the sentiments expressed. The last verse is very true but seems to conflict with the previous verse.

2. + 3. I liked this because it so aptly describes the law of contrasts.

3. + 3. This, I liked best of all. I think it puts plainly the workers lot through the ages.

4. + 3. This also I think is true of many parts of this country between the wars, but not so much now. I liked it as a true description of the derelict areas.

5. + 3. Very good this one as its sentiments of struggle and strive and strain go to make sturdiness and independence.

6. + 3. I like this and agree that in the main we have grown away from religion. I think the answer is that 2,000 years is a long time without the evidence of a miracle or visitation. If this were to happen in present times it would revitalise religion.

7. + 2. A dream beyond comprehension.

8. + 2. This one I like, although I don't quite understand it, it seems incomplete.

9. + 3. Very good, but all parents hope their children will rise from the ruck.

10. + 2. This plainly puts our desire and what we are doomed to see.

11. - 1. I dislike this as I think it paints a too black a picture of the English upper classes.

12. 0. This one I think is a trifle obscure.

13. + 1. Nice poem but only telling me what I know already.

14. + 1. It is hard to forget when each day is a struggle for existence.

15. + 3. I like this one, a call to lovers of peace to exert themselves for the good of mankind.

16. + 2. It is true the farther we have come along the road the more we have forgotten the simple things of life.
C 27. M. (49) Postman. Elem. P.O.S. (Incomplete)

1. + 3. 2. 0. 3. + 3. 4. - 1.
5. + 2. 6. - 2. 8. + 2. 8. - 1.


1. - 2. It is mean and misleading. It is in fact consciously written to confuse the common folk.
2. + 1. I like it a little because it has a little truth in it.
3. + 3. I like it very much. It is a good poem indeed both in form and content. It is sincere, forceful and inspiring.
4. + 3. Although rather sad, it is perfectly true. It evokes sympathy for those who work hard but have 'no share in the beauty of life'.
5. - 3. I dislike it very much. It is even worse than one. It gives a philosophy which favours the condition in which we find ourselves today.
6. - 1. It is mystical in content and highbrow in form. May be liked by a more refined caste.
7. + 1. I like what it visualizes but there is nothing inspiring. I think it is because it has no feeling. The poet is more an onlooker than one who genuinely and actively desires for a better future.
8. + 1. It is a nice little poem. I can enjoy the imagery and innocence of the poem but it does not inspire me.
9. + 1. I like it as a parody. But the theme of the poem is more serious. It expresses anti-war sentiments and therefore demands a more serious tone.
10. 0. Indifferent. The outlook is religious.
11. + 2. It is a militant poem and I like a good deal.
12. 0. Indifferent. It is a hymn. May be liked by faithful Christians.
13. + 1. What the poem conveys is quite clear and certainly true but it is not very well expressed. I like the first verse because there is something new about it. The remaining verses are not very good because what is said in them is stale and obvious.

14. - 1. Dislike it. It is involved and escapist.

15. + 2. I like it a good deal. It has a message but it is not as forceful and sincere as 3, 4 and 11.

16. O. Neither like nor dislike. I don't think life is as simple as that.


1. - 1. Although the sentiments expressed in this poem are doubtless true, the glib manner of the poem, (possibly due to the wrong metre) as composed leaves me with a feeling of antipathy towards it. I feel that the poet was writing at a time when his own pockets were well replenished with the "thilthy lucre".

2. O. This effort is fairly well expressed, of the matter in it I am not so keen. This philosophy of suffering the evils about us because we would not recognise the good if they were not here, is prone to being used to advocate the "status quo", and I am mistrustful of it.

3. + 1. The sentiment in this poem are at least sincere though the form of it is a bit rough. One has the impression of a revolutionary mind awakening but which has not asked itself who this "you" is about which it is so angry.

4. + 2. This poem I did like. It possess a sad and sincere quality and it is noteworthy that the poet has created beauty from such things as railway lines, slag heaps etc. The man who wrote it had obviously worked and suffered in a mining community, not because he actually says so in the poem but because it can be felt when reading it.

5. - 3. I dislike this poem for its false philosophy, I dislike it for its nursery rhyme metre. It is not that I do not realise that life is not a piece of cake but to be told in such an infantile way is in my opinion bed poetry. What about "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ..." or Burns' "Man was Made to Mourn" these are adult.
6. - 1. This strikes me as one of these poems full of high sounding words and august phrases which on analysis reveals emptiness. Is it that the poet is telling me that it is futile to learn and study as I will merely end as dust? Or am I too dumb?

7. + 1. This poem just misses the mark. The thought behind it is good but the execution of it lets it drop. Such words as "sack" line 2, are unpoetic. I suggest "men not fearing war".

8. + 3. I think this is a lovely piece of poetry. The words are obviously chosen with a sense of their aptness and lyrical value. The fact that the poem expresses is so true but so intimately expressed that it is dissolved of the commonplace. There is little more I can say about this piece since my appreciation of it is mostly of an aesthetic and mental picture nature that I can't analyse.

9. + 1. Where this poem falls down is that one is given the impression that it is a lullaby yet it contains many spine chilling and blood curdling lines. If one is writing an anti-war poem - let it be an anti-war poem; and if one is writing a lullaby, make it a lullaby. I don't know anyone class conscious enough to sing their baby to sleep with this effort.

10. 0. I fear I don't quite understand the meaning of this piece but neither do I dislike it. It sounds nice.

11. + 2. The meaning in this poem is not in doubt and the feeling of repressed resentment and anger comes over very well. I feel that some of the words are slightly inappropriate or ill chosen.

12. - 1. I dislike this poem because it is a prayer in worship of light. It is not a reasonable mind behind it; it is a mind blinded by light as it could have been blinded by Jehova, Buddha, females or totem poles. I suggest as a comparison the part in "Ulysis" by James Joyce where it is in the form of question and answer and where Mr. Bloom is filling his kettle. "What did Mr. Bloom admire in water?" etc. The latter I consider is more matter of fact and real.

13. 0. The pitter patter of this rhyme annoyed me though I dare say the sentiment expressed is true and sincere.

14. + 1. I am not sure that I understand all that is meant in this poem but what little I feel from it has quite a punch.
15. 0. Here again as in previous poems the message is clear and manifest but is let down by lack of choosing words that mean what is said and yet sound powerful into the bargain. The metre too is badly chosen. The last line stanza is out of metre.

16. + 2. I think there is beauty in this poem - certainly a mind behind it. That the mind is healthy - I am in doubt; but certainly it is appealing. Reminiscent of the philosophy of D.H. Lawrence or am I wrong?

C 30. M. (19) Student (Father: Railway Signals Engineer) 

1. + 1. Liked a little, more for its truth than poetic merits. To me appears a little obvious, but such generalisations made in the poem are very broad and must have many exceptions.

2. + 1. Liked a little. Again for soundness, although better expressed than 1.

3. + 2. Liked a good deal, more for expression than contents. I have a note here that my first reaction to it was that it suggested the "Black Country". I don't know quite why.

4. + 2. Liked a good deal both for contents and expression. In visiting and living (for a short time only - 3 months) in this type of community I was very much shocked for the children and also very sorry. My experience of mining areas is not wide, however, and I can't believe conditions to be bad uniformly or not to being righted. This phenomenon of town and country bred children and people is one which is always being called to mind. That town and country will always be is apparent, but - having some experience of both (more so of the town) I could not settle to live my working life in any large industrial town. On the broad distinction of town and country man I have often pondered on and, in as much as am able to read a statement, suggest the difference is fundamentally one of environment and that serenity and wideness of ability if not experience is the great asset of the country man. It is obviously a highly inter-related problem.

5. 0. Indifferent. Contents very true, and yet has a moralising note that clashes with the idea of the poem (its contents).

6. - 1. Dislike a little. Perhaps for its fatalism - pessimism - although one must admit it contains much of truth. Not very clear about it.
7. - 2. Dislike fairly strongly. Too idealistic and with a suggestion of "carping". The remedy is in the present.

8. + 2. Like a good deal. For its recognition of the living minuit. Particularly the second verse. Transient pleasure, which can be recalled readily.

9. + 1. Like a little. Perhaps sentimental, but is of children and innocence (innocence). I confess a great liking for children.

10. + 2. Like a good deal. Not clear why; but suggests to me one of those rare, untroubled people. Also a Christian in the broad sense of the word - which to me means a "good" man. Also something of the wisdom of patience and the approach to life of the Chinese - pacifism.

11. - 1. Dislike a little. Certainly as it seems rather unfair. The idea of revolution is one which is greatly over-rated as a solution to problems. Style rather amusing.

12. - 2. Feel fairly strong dislike. Must admit to not being able to follow very well. Impression of being fanciful - making too much of the thing?

13. 0. Indifferent. Admit that many people are victims of their circumstance. But surely any person of any worth has the strength to break away!

14. - 1. Dislike a little. Not clear at all. "And I . . . have you for peace". This naturally suggests man-wife relationship. If so the restrictive note is annoying. It is wrong. But could apply to many other things. Suggestion of introvertism or, better still, seclusion is present and I don't agree with this. I can not define my feelings to this at all well, but also has a narrowness about it.

15. + 1. Like a little. For suggestion of struggle for ideal. Particularly recognise the last line as real, as a problem many tend to overlook. There are some things all can achieve with patience and tolerance. These are often lost in ambition and they are necessary to make the complete man. They are things which total greatly - Generosity - Humour - Sympathy - Manner - Spontaneity.

16. + 1. Like a little. Belief in the simple vision, lack of method. One recognises and admits these contents, at least in part, - but it is only half the battle. Well expressed.
1. I disliked this because it appears to me not to be poetry at all, but rather a music-hall ballad. The jocular vein does not go well with the conclusion the "poet" arrives at.

2. I liked this because some attempt is made to present and resolve a problem and because of the quiet resignation expressed in the last six lines. There is too an attempt at varying rhythms within the lines, and at fitting the subject to the sonnet form.

3. This, though a trifle above Poem 1 if not by idea, by sincerity, I disliked, for it illustrates how the ballad form falls into mere jingle if exercised to convey a theme in the least intellectual. I dislike it also as I dislike all hatred and intolerance, especially when expressed in an easily memorable form and therefore highly suited to propaganda.

4. Though in common with most of the poems in this selection, this too presents a pessimistic picture of society, yet there is an attempt to restrain reactions from going beyond the visual to the emotive — and this attempt I liked.

5. I liked this as it poses a question but leaves the reader to answer or to echo the question for himself. There is no attempt to force upon the reader a ready-made conclusion.

6. This I disliked because it is the form of the facile, banal and usually maudlin Kiplingesque ballad which is so popular with the comedians who wish to show the "heights" to which they can rise. It could perfectly well be set to music and would probably make a fortune as a popular song.

7. This which has no apparent verse form, but reads like a translation (from the Russian?) I dislike because of its formlessness but most of all because of the insidious but impracticable philosophy implied. It smacks a little of politicians' electoral promises — while the attitude to love — here as an escape — there as recreation — points to a shallow and socially dangerous outlook on sexual relations.

8. This is the only poem which does not treat wholly material themes — the emotions are the only "theme" and though the images seen at times a little muddled, yet there is an attempt to infuse freshness and variety into the verse.
9. - 2. This poem I disliked as it adds to the crimes (to my mind) of propaganda and pessimism the even more nauseating one of sentimentality. A Communist Ella Wheeler Wilcox! Little to my mind could be worse.

10. - 1. This I disliked for it too presents an indoctrinal view and moreover allies this to a naive triteness in form and subject matter. Simplicity and triteness are not synonyms in dealing with poetry — and this is trite in its artless antithesis of first half to last — an antithesis which is on the surface illogical and unrelated for the second half — apart from the "mystical" last line purports to show the same picture as the first half but makes no attempt to justify its changed attitude. Moreover as it stands the only reason presented for this change that can be deduced from the poem is that things are dark because "Jesus is hanging on the Cross" — which I know is the opposite conclusion to the one the poet wishes the reader to draw.

11. - 3. This just appals all my instincts — mood, matter and manner are alike abominable. Possibly the only virtue in it is the purely stylistic one of alliteration — and even that is abused for the sake of rhetorical effect.

12. 0. This moves me neither way — it has some merits as regards style, but its subject matter is indifferent to me so I have ranked it under the negative reaction heading.

13. - 1. This I dislike for its subject matter, for reasons apparent in my comments upon previous poems — but I rank it highest in the group heading, for it has a sincerity (which I do not share) and even presents an implied positive philosophy — master thyself and be master of thyself.

14. + 1. This I like a little for purely stylistic reasons, and possibly because it seeks an antidote to material suffering in neither Religion nor Revolt — the Scylla and Charibdis of modern times it seems — but in Beauty.

15. - 1. This I dislike for its near-sentimentality and for its subject-matter.

16. + 1. This I like because it attempts to solve a material (or spiritual according to interpretation) problem by a similar answer — moreover there is even an acceptance which I like — for the very reason that I dislike elsewhere maudlin outbursts of tears and wailing.
1. + 3. I like this poem because it has rhythm and it rhymes simply at the end of each line. It's very simple to understand - the type of words that we use in every day speech, and we associate ourselves with what is said.

2. + 2. This poem seems familiar. Again there is the simple English and regular rhyming in the first verse. I do not like the second verse at all. The meaning is good enough but the method of writing is confusing.

3. + 1. I like this poem a little because the four line verses and simple rhyming are ear catching but the meaning is rather too vague except to someone politically conscious.

4. - 3. I dislike this poem because it isn't true. The poem is alright as poetry but I cannot believe that mining districts are like that. As a child who has lived in a mining district, my son has not a white face, nor had I. The first line "Beauty never visits mining places" is so untrue, I have seen the indescribable beauty of the pit fires flaming at the breaking of the day. Beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder.

5. + 2. I like this because it's simple and it says what we know to be true, that nothing worth having comes easily.

6. 0. Blank verse has no appeal particularly when it is nothing about everyday things. There seems to be no meaning in this poem - it's far above my head.

7. - 3. I dislike this poem perhaps because to me as to most women "love is my whole existence" and for it be suggested that it must become merely recreation - something light and unlasting - is revolting. Besides that there seems to be no metre to the poem although that is a minor detail.

8. + 1. This poem seems very simple with no great depths of meaning.

9. - 1. I rather dislike this because despite the fact that I am an ardent Socialist, I feel that this poem is unfair to the "Masters". After all our children become what we want them to be, only the children of people who are too idle to make the effort become the underpaid tools of the masters. (I speak of the present day not the last century.)

10. + 1. I like this poem because it is simple to understand and yet so very true.
11. 0. The rhythm in this poem is very catchy but it contains so much hate. Surely it is better to love and to preach love than hate.

12. 0. I cannot understand this poem - the meaning is rather obscure and the rhythm is non existent.

13. + 2. I like this because its simple to understand and catchy.

14. + 3. I like this because it says in lovely words and rhyme what I said about a previous poem - that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and that nothing can take it away.

15. + 3. I like this one the very best of all because it states so clearly what happen to me as an individual. I dream of a world where all men are brothers, I preach love, peace and tolerance and then awake to discover that my fellow workers don't want peace, aren't prepared to acknowledge someone with different birthplace as a brother, and want war because its a change from the humdrum of daily life.

16. + 2. I like this poem for what it says, but I do not like the way that it says. I think it might be quite a nice poem with the first and last verse and the two middle ones omitted.


1. + 1. Which I like a little, I feel has rather a hackneyed theme, but without agreeing or disagreeing, I grant the author that he makes his point pleasantly. Actually I find poor folk no happier than rich, only more philosophic in outlook.

2. 0. I feel neutral about. I get the point about contrasts, and the fundamental basis of all measurement. There is also a suggestion about fatalism, although the word servants is used and not masters. The composition seems to me to show traces of travail, as if it was only wrung out after a great struggle.

3. + 3. Is easy to read, and written in a full blooded and knowledgeable tone. It's too easy for us in this country to feel that such sentiments do not apply, and regard it as a "period piece", it would be interesting to move it around and apply it to various other countries. This poem I like very much for it's easy style, which balances it's very serious sentiment.
4. + 1. I like a little, like No. 3, its context is a serious record of an industrial evil, but the heavy hand makes for morbid reflection. In my opinion the author feels he has done enough by giving his report, and is content to weep over it. The word never in the first line I object to, beauty is complicated and many sided, and I for one, would not like to finalise on the point of it's total absence from even our worst industrial scars.

5. + 3. This I put first on the list, because humanity is apt to forget it all too soon. I love the first line in the last verse: "Don't look for easy paths — but see that your shoes are strong". I feel the author knows Life and accept the challenge with a smile.

6. - 3. I feel a fairly strong dislike for. It cries "Where is the life we have lost in living?" What a plaintive wail! If the author wants peace of mind, let him embrace his God, not lie and moan because he's got himself twisted up in abstract emotions. In my opinion emotion is fundamentally a physical impulse. We laugh with pleasure, sweat with fear etc. Why torture ourselves, or others, by refusing to accept ourselves as living human beings with at least a responsibility toward our fellows, even if we deny the ultimate future of the world's destiny.

7. + 2. I like a good deal, the poet's dream of the future. The first line of the last verse is indeed a wonderful ideal for Utopian government. However I do feel in this case the poetical value relies on what is said, and not how it's said.

8. + 1. I like a little, the main attraction to me is it's composition, the point is well put, reminding us that we might also be deaf walls, how easy it is to fence ourselves in from other peoples needs. I think my use of the word 'needs', is qualified by the phrase 'troubled consciousness'.

9. + 3. I like this poem, because perhaps we try too often to run away from its implications, and because I believe the author is a woman, who is looking at the world's past. Yet even in this I feel she feels no final loss of Rope. Why this is so I can't say, and the flowing style makes me like it.

10. + 3. This is well written, and pointedly shows perception, I agree with the context about the contrast, and feel that the last line imbues the whole poem with concrete hope.

11. + 3. I like this poem because of its easy wording, simple well oiled action, the direct appeal to stimulate emotion without disguise. The theme is simple and straightforward, and was evidently written for those who agree with the author.
12. - 3. This poem I dislike very much. Paganism shows itself in almost all religion but the impression I got from this seems to bring idolatry up to an unprecedented level. Any god with divinity would not be a god, if he endowed us all with senses and only wanted maudlin praises sung to him. Praise to the Creator is active, we must do our praise not think it. How small minded must be the author; for although he loftily considers the glowworm, and worships our spires and stained glass windows, how does he fill the church, or even try. What could he do to help the glow worm, when he lifts not a finger to give to the needy around him. All humanity, rich or poor, needs help; give that help and you're praising your creator. A fig for all the authors carven wood and polished stone!

13. - 1. I hardly know whether I feel negative about this poem or if I dislike it a little. It seems quite well written, yet do we have to be explained what slavery is? And somehow it gives me the impression of a rather superior person telling our spires and stained glass windows, how does he fill the church, or even try. What could he do to help the glow worm, when he lifts not a finger to give to the needy around him. All humanity, rich or poor, needs help; give that help and you're praising your creator. A fig for all the authors carven wood and polished stone!

14. 0. Here is a philosophy which accepts the dictation, the evil, 'the wreck of the world' and rises above it all by dismissing it. I can forget all these. However the way it's written is not unpleasant.

15. + 2. I like because I feel that the poet in an easy style, has pointed out his theme, and then called man to "rise; be master of his fate". This sort of poem I feel is more worth while because it is objective. But for the third line in the last verse "Is it in vain....." I should have liked it better.

16. + 1. I like this a little, the first verse I am with the poet, but in the next two I feel there should be a simpler form of words, after all he cries for simple statement. I think perhaps if the poet practiced what he preached he would not feel quite so lonely. "The loneliness of man" is surely something the individual makes himself, as much as he takes it from other people. However, I like the artistry with which the poet states his case.


7. + 3. I like No. 7 because I believe that some day we shall get to the place, in our dealings with man "Where deceit will not be needed".

15. + 3. No. 15 to me is me talking. If only I had the courage to shout it from the house tops.
8. + 3. I liked because of the last stanza. I am very conscious of the truth in this poem. I can recall many phrases said to me many years ago and sometimes they still hurt.

   In the first three I was impressed by what was said more than how it was said.

16. + 2. Attracted me because of verse 3. "There was a road to joy once, but ingeniously" I like that line very much. "We constructed a maze", how like life.

1. + 2. Has a gay lilt to it and is easy to remember. Like R. Service's poems or some of those we read on walls in queer places.

4. + 2. Has a stillness about it that reminds one of the quiet that takes place right after an accident.

10. + 1. Has a queer quality about it. I think it is the first two lines of each verse "tell me what you see my friend" that makes it attractive. After the first two lines the interest seems to wan.

9. + 1. Is an emotional lullaby but I like the theme.

2. - 2. I can't quite understand what the poet is trying to say. Surely he is not telling us that pain and suffering are good for us and necessary.


5. - 3. Pure "Ella Wheeler Wilcox". God's in his heaven and all's well. "Trying for what". (No goal in sight.) (Rubbish.)

3. + 1. No comment.

6. - 1. No comment.

11. + 1. No comment.

13. + 2. No comment.

14. - 1. No comment.


1. + 1. "Political cynicism wrapped up in doggerel".

2. + 2. Excellent little philosophical discourse emphasising man's control over his destiny and that the nature
of things is revealed only by the clash of opposites
(mutually opposing forces or things). Also good style.

3. 0. Cheap doggerel of political nature showing the
class conscious feeling, the air of martyrdom (and
possibly self pity!) of a section of the working class.

4. + 1. A fairly well written poem dwelling on the utter
despair of life encountered presumably by a miner in the
years pre-war.

5. - 2. School song nonsense not poetry. We all know we
have to work hard to get anything done. It is not an adult
theme.

6. + 1. A criticism of the whole of 20th century
industrial life based as it is on scientific knowledge.
The writer insists on the conflict of modern knowledge and
religion. Perhaps he is right. Not typical of modern
thought. Definitely good of its kind even if one does not
agree with the argument.

7. - 2. Naive idealism in which the world revolves on
abstract conceptions like love, deceit, sadness. Dislike
form of poem.

8. + 2. Good poetry depicting the vastness of experience
of the mind and how consciousness of past experiences is
invoked by concrete things or happenings - "a word-a sign"
etc.

9. - 1. Political cynicism of the worst kind - showing
that a working class child has no means whatsoever to
prevent its own destruction at the hands of a malevolent
ruling class and offering no means to overcome this
situation. Again a throwback from the 30's. Surely some
better poetry came out then!!

10. 0. Not very good poetry. Presumably on religious
theme.

11. 0. A call for the overthrow of the God damned
English Gentlemen. Revolutionary!


13. 0. There is some doubt over the meaning of the last
verse. I read it as you are really a slave if you have no
control of your feelings.

15. + 1. 15 and 7 are philosophical idealism - a vague yearning for a better life without understanding the material needs which must come first.

16. 0. No comment.

C 33. F. (50) Wife of a Joiner. Sec. P.C.S. (Incomplete 33)

1. + 2. I like it's human touch.

2. + 3. This poem goes with a good swing.

3. + 2. No doubt about the human touch here also, but a bit clumsy in places.

4. + 1. Ideas good but rhythm jerky.

5. + 1. The 3rd stanza should be embedded in poem No. 2. otherwise quite good.

6. 0. "Nearness to death no nearer to God?" - well, not my sentiments. It may be poetry but to me a collection of ideas.

7. - 2. To me this is not poetry - ideas good.

8. 0. Looks like something written impulsively - could be improved.

9. + 3. Again the human touch permeates this little poem. Again I feel it could be improved.

10. + 3. On further reflection I like this poem very much. You will notice I took it from 3 to 1 and place it highest. These simple lines awe one.

11. + 1. This is like an orgy of deep wrong and hatred. Could also be improved.

12. - 1. Again I feel this could be improved - but how?

13. - 1. Not symmetrical.

14. + 1. I feel more could be done here also - still quite good.

15. + 1. This is also pleasing and human.

16. 0. Very much truth here.

None of these poems have ever come my way that I remember and I thank you for the pleasure of reading them. No. 12 is in my opinion pedantic - too much "light" here.
C 44. M. (26) Student. (Father: Domestic Servant).

1. - 1. It is not poetry but doggerel. No objection to ideas in poem.
2. + 2. Both theme and presentation good.
3. + 2. I like the rollicking metre of poem, the honesty of it, and in parts the theme.
4. + 1. Theme again OK, but poem seems pretentiousness, and style of poem not suit its content.
5. - 1. Neither like metre, nor poem. Idea ruined in execution.
6. + 1. I like the theme more than the actual wording and metre of the poem which again is not good.
7. 0. The poem makes no impact on me in anyway.
8. + 3. I liked the poem most of those here. It deals with a small but important theme, a personal one known to all, and it presents it well.
9. - 1. Dislike poem - metre and theme. Theme especially bad, no idea of responsibility - "they" are the wicked ones, and baby is pure in the poem.
10. 0. Poem makes no impact on me.
11. 0. By No. 11 the monotony of theme of many of poems will possibly annoy readers who are not Radicals in the sociological approach to man's problems. Reiteration of one point with no emphasis on the other side, drives home the truths of the other side more completely. The poem's metre however is enjoyable and this keeps it out of the 'dislike' class.
12. 0. Poem stilted in style and so makes little impression.
13. - 1. Poem again spoiled by one sidedness of argument in it.
14. - 2. Having read poem once I have no wish to reread it, It neither makes its theme clear, and as a poetry it is bad.
15. + 2. No comment.
16. + 3. No comment.
1. - 2. This poem fails to impress me because of its lack of originality, both of thought and expression. The line, 'That odd Something that makes for real pleasure,' calls for some development; we want to know what that odd Something is.

2. - 2. This sonnet suffers from the rapid series of illustrations which is introduced in the octet. This opens with a proposition; then follow six examples which are hurled at the reader without introduction and then dropped. The effect is like a bombardment from a pea-shooter.

3. - 1. This poem, which, I think, represents fairly one side of the labour-capital antagonism, I have placed in the 'dislike' category on account of three blemishes. The first stanza contains a play (doubtless unintended) on 'dollar' and 'marks'. There is a naive absurdity in the third stanza, where the miners are said to be 'buried' while their mine is 'blown skyward'. Finally, there appears to be some confusion in the even stanzas, which convey the impression that the workers have sold property to the capitalists but have themselves paid the price of it.

4. - 3. I have graded this poem so low because it is one great falsehood. There is beauty everywhere, even in mining places, for those who have eyes to see it. Children 'playing in the dust' can teach the poet something better than an angry pity.

5. + 1. This is the poet in his plain, straightforward mood. The thought is not original, nor is it developed very well; but it is no doubt true, and the diction is suited to the mood.

6. + 1. The mind of man, with all nature, is essentially rhythmical, and an expression of the fact will usually meet with approval, as it does with me in this case. I cannot agree with the conclusion of the poem, although the antepenultimate line seems a very apt expression of our times, and I particularly like the suddenly hypermetrical fifth line, the rhythm of which emphasises the meaning. It is perhaps trivial to observe that Orion has only one dog with him in the heavens.

7. 0. I do not understand this poem - which many critics would suppose to be sufficient to condemn it. I believe, however, that the poet should have the benefit of the doubt.
8. + 2. You will observe that I like this poem best of all: the main reason is that it alone has a clearly defined form. It is also a description — albeit an imperfect one — of a poetic experience. The poem is restrained, and restraint is usually a refreshing quality in a poet.

9. — 1. In this work the poet has, I feel, stopped short without working out the rest of the story. It pictures a false view which makes me feel impatient. In a modern nativity play, The Christmas Child, which was broadcast a few years ago, D. C. Bridson said just what this poem says, but he found the solution.

10. + 1. Of the thought of this poem I can only say, 'Too true'. The expression is uninspired.

11. 0. I do not like the thought of this poem because I think it is untrue. The poet's point of view is weakened by the fact that the agricultural workers of England have always been under some landlord or other, and were not 'freemen' in every sense; by the fact that the Russian worker has apparently still not broken his Lord of War; and by the fact that the patient Russian peasant had little to do with the smashing of the Czar and has in fact only changed one despot for another. However, the poem sounds sincere, and this is a redeeming feature.

12. + 1. I think this poem is genuine expression of its writer's feelings. It is, in truth, little more than a catalogue, but it is an illustrated one. The first line is an echo of Francis Thompson.

13. — 1. I do not like any piece of writing which begins with a statement of one problem and goes on to answer a different one.

14. — 2. There seems to be something esoteric about this poem — a damning circumstance as far as I am concerned.

15. 0. Neither of these poems arouses any feeling of approval or disapproval in me. No. 15 because it is insipid, No. 16 because I do not know what the writer is trying to convey.

General — I have never come across any of these poems before. They seem to me to be the work of a young writer who has not lived long enough to appreciate the more beautiful side of our existence, and has in consequence arrived at a position whence his view of life is a most unenviable one. Unless, of course, the whole series of poems is in effect a hoax — and certainly most of them lack depth of feeling.
1. + 1. Truthful in every way.

2. + 1. The hope in this is arrived at after rather good contrasting, but it somehow distorts reality.

3. + 3. Very well said and leaves one in no doubt.

4. + 2. Well put and true, but slightly upsetting.

5. + 1. Faith and hope and determination but not good poetry.

6. - 1. Shows lack of understanding in the world to-day.

7. 0. Not to my mind set out well. The idea is there but that's about all.

8. 0. Complicated in the sense of not knowing really what poet is driving at.

9. + 3. From a Lancastrian's viewpoint, and on behalf of the working class - quite good.

10. + 2. The contrast and theme good.

11. + 2. It is a very good militant working class poem.

12. - 1. Mystical. Doesn't talk of real life.

13. + 1. Explanatory to a point. Leaves one in the air.

14. - 2. Too much "forgetting" of something that shouldn't be.

15. + 3. Revolutionary, full of sympathy and vision.

16. 0. Makes you read it again, but still leaves you wondering about "what" and "why"?


1. - 3. Trite theme, poorest of jingle, I beg your pardon, if I dismiss it as nothing.

2. + 1. As a sonnet is competently constructed, but its rule-of-thumb measure of obvious contrasting elements conveys a naive interpretation of our life-the world—history. Of course each statement does contain its measure
of truth but nothing profound. What matters about contrasts is that we do not simply accept them as complementary aspects of each other but that we analyse both—decide and act. The weeds must be forcibly removed from the earth, the earth fed and the flower planted and tenderly watched.

3. Pity that the poet allows his consciousness to complain rather than accuse. Good God! (to quote his own oath) the crimes he lists are terrible enough to envoke flaming anger. As for the introduction of modern idiom into verse it is necessary. Nothing is so descriptive of our way of life as the ring of steel, the cough of an automobile, the tang of exhaust gas. These things become poetic when they are put in a form which in itself is representative of our way of life. The poet here is successful in this respect.

4. Here is invoked by the poets subtle references to beauty's and nature's abandonment, anger against those who are responsible for it. The poem brings tears to the heart and an immediate hatred of those who have been exploiting us.

5. Trite nonsense. It appears that the writer's (I will not say poet's) mind has absorbed all the cliches of our language, lumped them all together in order to tell us we must continue being ants.

6. You know I grow most impatient and angry with people who obviously have had privilege of education and scholarships who embrace subjectivity to the degree that they would etherealise it into poetry. The historical significance of the idea of God—the historical reality of Christ and his teachings are far too important to reject out of hand—indeed, when the battle for social objectivity is won, and our heaven achieved through scientific action then, the business of human relationships will profit well from study of Jesus' life and his great love of people. To get back to our poem, the kind of mind which, because of its emotional drying-up sees decadence in all human activity save the worship of god is pretty hopeless. Give me the poet and I will show him things that will fill him with hope and inspiration, pride in his kind—then perhaps he will begin to justify his gifts.

7. It is good to project the mind to that which one strives to achieve. All the great poets like Whitman, Shelley, Blake, Yeats have done so. But the poet of No. 7 is not as successful as these poets.

8. Don't care much for this poem.
9. +1. I like this poem a little but I feel that the poet could give us something more positive.

10. +1. Again, like poem 6 though its form is more simple and infinitely more beautiful because of it, the poet despairs too deeply. If one focuses ones attention upon the negative aspect of life then of course one finds plenty to despair about, a negative state. We may weep without losing the will to fight.

11. +3. I think this is best of all the leftist poems. It is positive, simple, sincere and forceful.

12. 0. I like some of its word pictures, but one can use them to better purpose I feel.

13. +2. This says simply and well what it sets out to do as such can be read and agreed upon. Shelley's "Masque of Anarchy" does more, it inspires hatred and anger.

14. -2. The writer's inner beauty brings him to Kings and Queens a somewhat mundane "white wonder". It is easy, provided one resides in Hampstead's garden and never has need to journey forth through the slum area of London, to partake of Beethoven, Keats and Rodin, and twist the lips in contempt as the base common and popular pastimes of less fortunate people - or deign to even notice - perhaps, that erstwhile cultured minds are capable of thinking up the most diabolical atrocities, to preserve their own interests.

You know, in my particular factory there are many thousands of mechanics working day and night - you talk with them and perhaps you will become depressed at their ideas (or lack of ideas), some you will dislike, some will amaze you with their knowledge, but they all have something in common, they are basically honest - they all do a fair week's work and don't let up until the shift whistle goes - the wide world rests upon the collective labour of millions like these - we put something into the world - this aspect of human nature is by far the wider aspect - and damn the cynics who say otherwise.

15. +2. I like this poem because it conveys a message. It shows what is the trouble with this world and sounds one positive note "O man rise".

16. -1. It is just superficial. Truth is not as simple as that.
All sixteen poems are unfamiliar to me. I will take them one by one.

1. 0. This poem has no effect on me whatsoever. It appears trite because of the handling of the subject matter. The theme is simple but I do not feel sympathetic towards it on reading the poem.

2. - 2. I don't like this poem - the theme appears complicated. The ending tends to annoy me.

3. + 3. I like this poem very much because of the theme as well as the way in which it is expressed. The poem is forthright and it gets its point over without reaching out to melodramatic.

4. + 2. I quite like this poem because of its simplicity and its genuine sympathetic feeling. It promotes one to thought and makes one think that it was written sometime ago. One tends to think that the mood of the poem is completely pessimistic.

5. - 3. This poem just annoys me! - full of platitude. Obviously some form of platitude is used to a certain degree in poetry, but it is usually treated in a refreshing way. Again the last line annoys me. It is embarrassingly so in the last verse.

6. 0. I can't make up my mind about this poem. It does not make any 'contact' like some poems do. In this poem (as in a few of the 16) I think the words would have been better written in prose instead of poetry.

7. + 3. I liked this poem for its contents but not for its presentation. I liked its optimism and simplicity.

8. + 1. I liked this poem a little. The theme was built up gradually between the verses and the illustrations used were good.

9. + 2. The thought behind this poem is clear and sincere. I liked the way that the lines appeared in a sing-song fashion.

10. + 3. I liked this poem because it appeared pleasing in interpretation and presentation.

11. + 3. This poem appeals to me very much. Its theme is serious and I think it is very effective in its expression.
12. - 2. This poem isn't at all clear to me; perhaps that's one of the reasons why I dislike it so much. It seems to touch a note of falseness. The metre is jerky and does not produce a pleasing sound.

13. + 2. This poem reminds me of some of Blake's works. I liked the simple rhythm and I thought that the theme was well handled.

14. 0. It was the metre which attracted me to this poem at first and then the theme gradually became unearthed. It had no effect on me mainly because in parts it appeared trifling.

15. + 2. This poem seems to have an element of common sense in it, intermingled with fantasy. The combination is pleasing. The metre is well suited to the subject matter.

16. + 1. I liked the formation of this poem. It appeared logical and yet in some ways trifling.


I am afraid I have read nearly all of them many more than six times. I have never read much poetry and I had a good deal of difficulty in grasping the meaning. After about six times reading I seemed to get fascinated and then read again and again in order to get at the essence of the meaning. It was no use trying to stick to the rule I just couldn't have written anything worth while without reading again and again.

1. + 1. I liked No. 1 straight away because of its lilt and also because it has a philosophical outlook in that money does not always bring happiness and people can be happy with very little. Perhaps because I am a socialist I felt a certain amount of poetic justice in that rich people are often bored and worried. I quibbled at first at the word funny in that particular line, finding it a bit shocking. I knew of course that it had to rhyme with money, and on thinking it over I decided that "funny" is used instead of the phrase "not what one would have expected".

2. + 1. No. 2 I find tedious and long drawn out. I like the idea that contraries help one to appreciate things and really make the beauty. Light without shadow would be a horror. I don't know what the second line means. The third and fourth lines will do. I disagree with the fifth and sixth. The first spring flowers certainly bring to one the promise of summer and a feeling of pleasure at the
passing of winter, but the beauty of summer flowers is so satisfying that everything else is excluded. The necessary contrast lying in the background, especially if that is green. Then snow has a beauty all its own which even summer flowers can only rival but not subdue. The last six lines seem to me dull and heavy for the things they try to express.

3. + 3. I have put No. 3 in the line like very much because it fulfills a duty that is owed to the workers of expressing what they have given or rather of what has been extracted from them, but it fills one with terrible sadness and there is not one line of hope or release.

4. + 2. No. 4 has been put on the second line because it too fulfills a sort of duty but I like the generality of No. 3 and I don't like picking out the miners. I don't think it is true to say "Beauty never visits mining places" I don't mean that slag heaps are not ugly, but there are other forms of beauty besides flowers, comradeship for instance and I understand that English miners have a great pride in their work and many of them would not change it.

5. + 1. I like No. 5 because both the lilt and the meaning of the words seem to give one a lift on life's way.

6. - 1. I am dealing with No. 6 later.

7. + 3. No. 7 gives a lovely picture of the future but the last word "fatal" gave me a terrific jerk. I have spent a good deal of time meditating on it. I think it is presumptuous on the part of anyone today to make a statement like that of future generations. It obviously does not mean fatal in the sense of death so it must mean predetermined or inevitable. What they will think will depend on what they have been able to find out and we can't know what that will be.

8. + 2. On reading No. 8 again to make my comments I am wondering whether I ought not to have put it in the line like very much. I like it but I can hardly explain why. It gives a picture of life as it comes and goes. Experience, excitement and then rest. Things agitate and then time heals and covers it all up and we are like the pond with the stone, something has been added to us but outwardly we are serene. The last verse is an encouragement to be friendly and helpful.

9. + 2. No comment.

10. + 1. I like the idea of the two windows, but I don't like the utter contrast. After all from the window of the
soul one sees more than just the misery. I take Jesus as the symbol of all the people who have died in the struggle to free humanity. If one has taken only a very small part in that struggle one realizes that there is more joy in it than suffering and I am sure that if Jesus really ever lived his work with the disciples gave him deep satisfaction, and these are the things we learn through the window of the soul.

11. + 3. I showed this poem to a friend who goes to church regularly and would never say a word against the English gentleman. She read the last two lines aloud to me with a huge chuckle, which shows that deep in the heart of the most antirevolutionary worker there burns a little light waiting for "The Day".

12. - 3. I cannot do anything with this. The praise of different lights is alright but invisible light to me is just rubbish.

13. + 3. This is the only one with which I was familiar and of course it is wonderfully expressive of the workers' life even of today of an enormous number. What with overtime and the manipulation of the mind by press and radio.

14. - 1. I don't seem to understand this. Although I have read it many more times then six, trying to get the essence but I get nothing worth while out of it.

15. + 2. This is better. A true cry from the heart and a cry ever more urgent as Humanity slips down to what?

16. + 1. I like the suggestion of simple things being good. I would like the first verse better, I would love it in fact if the words ultimately and only were left out. They seem to me to have spoiled the simplicity of the verse by turning a simple statement into a controversy. I'm not quite sure about the 1st. part of the second verse. The gift, unless it means the gift of labour, not for money, but because it is needed and the exchange, perhaps appreciation and others doing their part in the same spirit. The third verse? Yes. It takes one back to the old simple time, centuries ago before the age of sophistication and pride. The last verse? I don't know. Perhaps in the working class there isn't that deathly corridor because we haven't lost touch with simple things.

6. - 1. I have left No. 6 till last because it seems to me the most involved. This poem brings to me the same sort of feeling that I get when I try to fathom in imagination the depths of time and space. I don't mean time on this earth or even of the universe, but all eternity before time was. Why hasn't perfection arrived
and stayed put? Then I console myself with the ideas in poem two that contraries are necessary. Then if there is infinity of time and space there is also infinity of variation. And then is there god? Is this a little bit of god which has chosen to be "me" at this particular time? Will this little bit retain its separateness when this me has passed away? And so I play with the idea of reincarnation, especially in times of psychological stress, as when a dear friend has died. Then, when the crisis is more or less over I come back to the materialist conception and say "There is no proof". It is just a flight of imagination which I do not dismiss as rubbish because it may serve a useful purpose, rest and recuperation of the mind and a prevention of narrowness.

So that is all I have to say. I hope you will find it worth while.


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1. -2. I did not like this poem; it is cynical and badly written. It is a reflection of the competition of capitalists and their sole concern — profits. But it is wrong to say all people feel that way about money.

2. +2. I liked this one for the beautiful way it is written. But it's a little abstract.

3. +2. I liked this one a great deal for the vivid way in which it paints a picture of the exploitation of the working class, emphasising the fact that all capitalist wealth is paid for in workers' misery.

4. +3. This, I thought, was one of the best. Although not showing a way out, it captures the whole atmosphere of any mining village (under capitalism) in a way which I found very moving.

5. +2. Although abstract, it is optimistic. The style is quite brisk.

6. -3. Terrible. We are meant to be awed by the "profound" phrases.
7. +1. I liked this one a little. But there will be a lot more to think about in the future than love. And the last two lines I thought obscure.

8. +1. Nicely written, but having not very much to do with real life.

9. -1. It shows a desire to escape from unpleasant realities instead of facing them.

10. -2. I don't like religious poems; and do not like this one. The poet seems to think rather little of his fellow men.

11. +3. I liked this best of all. It is a call to action by a poet who has a clear picture of why his people are poor and how they can achieve independence. Inspiring.

12. -3. I dislike this a great deal. It sounds like a hymn.

13. +3. I like this a lot. By describing slavery he is answering his own question - "What is freedom?" Freedom is the absence of the conditions he describes.

14. -3. The style of this poem is good, but the sentiments expressed are the opposite. These are things we must not forget.

15. +2. I liked this for the way it reveals the fact that dreams can come true. "O man rise; be master of your fate!".

16. -3. This one is very obscure in meaning. This poet is another pessimist.


5. +2. I find that I like No. 5 because of the thought expressed. There is no dogmatism. People with this outlook on life would be fine to know. In style, however it goes a little flat at times, e.g. "A distant pinnacle of dreams .......". No. 7 is a pleasant pipe dream, to my mind. It is well portrayed. I doubt that those "houses of the future" will not be built for a long long while. I like No. 16 more for the way it is written than for the thought expressed. The thought is, I find, difficult to grasp, but I enjoy the sad melancholy.

6. +1. No. 6 is difficult to grasp and makes rather heavy reading. The two lines beginning: "All our knowledge ...." I find applicable when one
considers politics. No. 1 expresses an oft repeated thought. I don't believe its true, but its a handy rule if one can recognise the many exceptions. No. 14 makes more heavy reading but I like the first two verses; the third falls flat. Not very practical.

8. 0. No. 10 I can't judge because I don't understand it. The same applies to No. 8. No. 2 doesn't say very much and takes a long time to say it.

13. - 1. It seems to me that all through history there has always been someone shouting for men to arise and be masters of their fate, and the exhortations are put over in terms that the average man can't understand. Here it is again in No. 15. No. 13 offers a definition of slavery and I'm not impressed, it is too vague.

3. - 2. I put 3, 9 and 4 together because to my mind they all paint the same picture of the workers slaving away for the lazy etc. etc. ruling classes. This is narrow minded hatred. Perhaps the picture has some truth in it but the colours used are too contrasting. No. 12 is I think a lot of nonsense.

11. - 3. Is I think the opposite of No. 5. I wouldn't like to meet the gent that wrote it. He would be unpleasant company. To say that (more or less) the English gentlemen were the evil driving force behind the industrial revolution is like saying a piece of driftwood makes the tide flow. I've had the opportunity to observe a few "shipyard gentlemen". To a man they all worked up from the bottom, and now work harder than most people under them, and I believe it is not for gain but for the good of the industry of which they are a key part. Perhaps the English gentlemen's faults were all the author wished to observe.


1. 0. Somewhat childish.

2. + 2. Philosophically interesting.

3. + 2. A rousing ballad.

4. - 1. Tripe. Perhaps written by a well-meaning "intellectual".

5. + 1. Expresses a truth.

6. 0. Seems rather in the clouds.

8. + 2. I like the choice of words – and the acknowledgement of unconscious processes.

9. + 2. Seem to remember reading something after the same style by C. D. Lewis, which I liked at the time as it expressed a change in my attitude towards the existing social order.

10. - 1. Pointless.

11. + 2. Combines a fine swing with an amusing sentiment.

12. 0. The wrong track.

13. 0. Propaganda piece.


15. - 1. A bit unreal.

16. + 1. Wistful sanity.

COMMUNISTS.


2. - 2. Despite Paradoxes it breathes fatalism.

3. + 1. This poem is solid but lacks hopefulness.

4. - 1. I dislike this one a little because it tends to morbidity, pessimism and as one who has lived in Durham coalfields I fancy it is not a true picture.

5. + 2. I like the philosophy of struggle and wanting some better life in this poem.


7. + 2. The theme I like a great deal, but am a little doubtful of future men, who love well, clear minded and undeceitful, looking back on our age as sad and fatal.

8. 0. Has an unfinished ring about it. Permeates a nothingness.
9. - 1. Again a sense of helplessness.

10. - 1. How a person who could see such beauty in the world 1st verse, can have a soul so tormented with hopelessness beats me.

11. + 1. I like the tone and sentiments expressed.


13. + 1. I like the feeling expressed here.

14. - 1. Seems to me, escapism.

15. +2. Has movement and pleas for action.

16. - 1. Fatalistic pessimism.


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1. + 1. The main considerations to be taken into account in judging these poems are, What is said. How clearly it is said. The poet's feelings and conclusions as shown by the text of his work. The subject matter of this poem is:- Money and its reactions on men. There is no doubt that the poet states his subject very clearly and states several facts which are true almost to the extent of being truisms. For example:- "It's certainly true that we can't do without it...." Also, however, he states some highly controversial and even dubious points. For example:-

"Poor folk seem happy - they laugh quite a lot -
Making the most of the little they've got.
But rich folk look bored....."

In answer to this, I say that poverty is a relative term. While those workers earning a fairly high wage (although, of course, they are still poor compared to the very rich) may seem and be happy, the very poor, such as the Indian, Persian, Egyptian, etc. peasants do not seem nearly so happy. Certainly their happiness, such as it is, owes nothing to their poverty. Further, if rich folk are so bored then what truth is there in the last two lines of the poem. Perhaps they find some strange pleasure in boredom? Prosperous folk may be weighed down by the cares involved in obtaining a little more wealth but they certainly have not those cares which haunt the poor - the essentials of food, drink and home.

Certainly men steal, kill and risk their lives for money, but I don't see anything funny in that.
Concluding my criticism, the poet does well to show obvious discontent with present conditions but he fails in making game of them and in evading the true cause of them—those same rich persons whom he pities in their "boredom".

2. - 1. I liked poem "one" for the evils it exposed while I criticised it for its complacency over them. Poem "two" can be briefly said to contain the faults of its predecessor while not containing its good points. It begins by stating several obvious truths, ending with the line "That makes the summer petals burn more bright", and then boldly asserts the analogy that, "Were there no wrong, how should we judge of right". The fact is that we judge right and wrong, not against each other but against a third factor: Those things which serve man's interests and existence, and those which do not.

Had no wrong ever been committed, we should still be able, by use of that third factor, to judge those courses of action which may be termed "right".

His next line, "Or stillness without stress and tempest know", is a rather less dangerous statement. If by stress and tempest he refers to natural or weather conditions, he states only another of his opening truisms. He may mean the stress and tempest necessary to change our social order to lessen them. Here, he would be making a useful constructive suggestions. In view of the previous line, however, he leads me to believe that he refers to those evils indigenous to our present social order. The next verse convinces me of my above assertion. In short, he seeks to resign us to, and excuse, the wrongs, stress and tempest as things necessary and desirable to help us to recognise those gracious gifts of stillness between the storms. No thought of seeking to effect a change in this state of subservience, impotency and helplessness!

3. + 3. This poem, although the finest of the selection, in my mind, calls for probably less comment than the others. The first quality in it which attracts me is its clarity—essential in a poem to be read by any except those whose time is to be entirely devoted to its study. The second attraction is its fire and spirit. Without delivering a call for action in just so many words, it inspires more than any direct call could have done. Thirdly, I like it for the wide field of human life and struggle which it covers. In six verses, no less than fourteen damning charges are written in the records of the accused. The charges are strengthened by the firm, fiery though not abusive language and by the width of their collective scope. Nothing further need be said of this work until the accused
speak their further defiance, if they dare, or plead their miserable guilt. Those are the only answers open to them.

4. + 3. This poem stands apart from the other fifteen and because of this it is a very valuable member of that collection which I like very much. Its theme and subject, the misery and poverty of a mining district, is stated with perfect clarity and simplicity. It stands by itself in that the theme is stated in the form of a quiet, almost humble, petition to its readers. No strong accusations are delivered; no demand for rectification of wrongs is expressed in so many words, yet no decent reader could picture the sights which the poet presents without a feeling of indignation and a resolution to demand that justice be done. This poem is not for those who already recognise the evils portrayed. They need poem "three" to stir them to action. No, this poem is for those who are ignorant of those evils or are led to believe that the author of poem "three" is one of those dangerous "Bolshies", "Anarchists", "Careerists" etc: who "see only worst in life" and seek to exploit conditions for their own ends.

The poem has added value in its portrayal of the reflections of the bad conditions on even wild and plant life. This is of particular value when the poem is presented to those escapists who seek to hide themselves from human life by standing with their backs to the pit-head, looking into the blue sky or the "mountain beauty" of the slag heap.

5. + 2. The first thought that comes to mind as I read this poem is "It is the work of an equivocator". Such criticism, however, is rather harsh. It is certainly true that we don't get all we want in life. Under certain conditions, it is true that it is better so for the reason the poet offers.

Our present rulers, however, often seek to assure us that it is better so under our present conditions. Truly, we should "strive, strain and struggle"; but only to progress to that day when each SHALL have his needs, not simply to live as best we can under conditions of continual needs. In the above two sentences are the two voices of the equivocator. If the poet wrote his work to be read in countries of progressive peoples with progressives for leaders, then he has provided a message of inspiration and perseverance. Since, however, his work may also be read in the strongholds of reaction, he has failed in laying his work open to the equivocator as well as the voice of progress and truth. A further verse could have shut the
reactionary out and thus saved many people much work in combatting those who would resign us to, and console us in, our present social order.

6. Except for its "Oriental" beginning, which always attracts me, I cannot find anything pleasant or constructive in this work. The poet spends his time lamenting every fundamental aspect of progress without even one good word for even one aspect. There are, of course, several ways in which we may be said to have deviated from what he calls God. But he fails, or prefers not, to see that all the progress he mentions has: 1. Created, instead of small groups of 50, 150, 200 or nearly 500 million peoples peacefully grouped under their 4 banners and with such attitudes to each other as to make such evils sections among them as there be, hesitate before embarking on the worst outlet for their evil. True, when war does break out, it is always far worse than anything before. At the same time, however, so does the determination to preserve peace increase until it must inevitably become too strong to permit further war; 2. Given us the means whereby to combat those same seven plagues, and many more, which he doubtless believes his God sent on us in some savage punishment. I could name many more things to which he blinds himself. In view of these things, I fail to see what "Life we have lost in living", what "Wisdom we have lost in knowledge" etc. If his God inspired his poem, then I fail to see what better is his God than the Dust he fears.

7. My criticism of this work may be briefly stated as: Simple, delightful but hardly complete in itself. There is little one can say about the contents of the poem: They are simply a number of clear, inspiring, prophetic statements. The title of the poem might well be "A People's Democracy" or "Communism". The theme cannot fail to be attractive but would hardly be convincing. The poem would be of great value as an epilogue to a play, lecture of longer poem. The play etc would, of course, seek to convince its audience of the feasibility of the picture portrayed in the epilogue. The last word, "Fatal", might perhaps cause more pondering and surprise among many of its readers than any other single word or expression in the three verses.

8. In this work, the poet seems to have taken an enormous amount of trouble to cloak his theme in a sheet of mystery and obscurity. The first two verses are merely philosophical similes to emphasize the third verse which holds the theme. In saying that a mere word, look or sign can make an impression in the minds and hearts of people, I believe that the poet is warning all those who advocate a particular faith or creed that every word and act they say or do is being watched by the people and may do good or harm.
their faith or creed. This is indeed so and thus the poem could be of great value to, amongst others, the leaders of the progressive peoples. Unfortunately, the poet emphasises that the ripples of the stone and the sounds of the music die and are forgotten. Following this, he fails to show that this certainly does not apply to the words, looks and signs. Had two better similes been chosen for the first two verses, this poem would be of real value instead of giving rise to complacency over its message.

9. + 2. This poem presented me with a problem. I was in doubt as to whether I liked it very much or simply a good deal. The theme, the social order under which our masters are able to direct our lives and work to suit only their own purposes, is expressed in the form of a lament. While this lament is so expressed as to arouse indignation from all democrats who read it, it is a pity that the poet can think of little better than to mourn for what he regards as an inevitable future. Surely something more stirring, perhaps an extra verse to such purpose, might play at least a small part to bringing about a better future for the child. At the same time, however, one cannot help feeling with the poet the sorrow for many babies yet whose Masters will plan the way they shall die. The poem is certainly valuable for its plain, easy to follow language and style.

10. + 3. I like poem ten because it is simple and because it makes its appeal attractive to the religious sections of democracy. These sections are very large numerically and are therefore of the greatest importance. It is unfortunate that they are often very inamicable toward their materialist brothers. When progress and democracy are at stake, it is important that both sections should co-operate to further their efforts. The superior of the two, and their future relations, can, and will, be decided only when both have made their full contribution to peace and democracy.

The simplicity of the poem and its beautiful first verse make it especially valuable as a work for the younger peoples. Since most of these, in England, are brought up to hold a great respect for Jesus, its approach to the present social order in most of the world is of far more use than a tirade (even though a just one) against those who claim to be Christians but still do their utmost to preserve prevailing conditions. Anyone who reads it and then investigates its allegations can see for himself (or herself) that indeed all that Jesus stood for is hanging dead upon a cross just as much as did Jesus himself.

For people who are already vaguely aware of its message, it is of little use since it is too general in its form. This has, in fact, made it very difficult to analyse without a philosophical and political treatise on its theme.
11. Poem "eleven", in my estimation, takes a very close second place to poem "three". Before saying anymore, I should mention that I have seen it before although I do not know the author. None of the other poems, except for poem "three", equals this one for going straight to the point and driving it home really hard. Between its heavy sarcasm, such as the references to the Czar and the Prussian Barons as God-sent and our own rulers as Gentlemen, the poet makes half a verse full of straight accusations against the "Gentlemen". The accusations need no discussion to clarify or investigate them; they are only too clear and well proved. No tears are shed over the wake of the "Gentlemen"' paths; no consolation is offered for their wake of destruction, only a call to follow the Russian peasant and (east) German worker into showing our "Gentlemen" "What we are".

12. This work is entirely different from the others and consequently cannot be compared with them. For this reason, I have not tried to rank it above or below the other work which accompanies it in the third class.

It may be taken as a hymn to any invisible power or deity. I, however, prefer to read it as a praise purely to "Light". If I worshipped anything other than Man and his abilities, I should worship Light and Heat, the two fundamental necessities of life. Naturally, I should not consider voicing any appeals to two things which have no control over themselves except where that control is exercised by Man. The poem has a beautiful style and states many indisputable facts, e.g. That, with its companion heat - light is the source of all natural and Man-made colours and lights. The fact that we see not whence it comes, however, is very disputable. Further, there is little point in worshipping or glorifying it as if it condescends to be around just as a favour to us. Surely, if it were not available, we should not be here to worship it so --- ! The last statement may be applied in respect to any other deity reputed to have "graciously" created us. Concluding this criticism, I can say that while I like the style and beauty of its writing, I cannot rate such a collection of pointless and obvious facts very highly.

13. There is a clear call to revolt, although it is indirectly expressed. The call lies in the question which begins the poem. The poet asks the question and then discusses those things which constitute slavery, the reverse of freedom. In recognising those things one realises that they must go before freedom can be established and one therefore speaks the poem's call to revolt oneself. The poem states its facts in clear short statements, essential for a poem of this type. In Britain, of course, capitalism
has made many retreats and pulled down many blinds to cover up the force of this poem but its statements still apply just as much and are still very obvious in many other countries—your own, for example.

14. - 1. But for one fact, I should dislike this poem a great deal. In inviting us to "Forget all these," the poet has to mention what "these" are. After reading the whole poem, I feel quite sure that it is only inadvertently that he uses very suitable language in describing "these" in verse one. Certainly he is right in saying that they are not lasting things but I am certain that he does not contemplate their end in line with my own thoughts on them. Perhaps it might help if he reminded the "Barren fool in power" that "Men are no gods." I wonder if he would dare to tell those who tread the dirtiest of the city dirt—the Malay or Indian etc. peasants—that in their souls they can be queens and kings. He would further do better if he were not so sure that his idol of divine beauty cannot be upset by wars' thunder or the world's wreck. I have always held the view that Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It is, however, a very strange form of beauty which cannot be destroyed by war and strife with the destruction and wreck that accompanies them.

15. + 3. This poem surprised me by expressing two social themes. It may be viewed as being two poems. The first is a constructive escapist work as opposed to being simply escapist like number 14. In the first verse, the poet gives a general view of the world promised to us under the social orders of Socialism and Communism. In the last line of this verse, he warns of dreaming and only dreaming of such a world.

The second poem, comprising the first and second verses, is a revolutionary account of the world today. After a general review of our present world, he urges us to arise and forge into material form the dream of tomorrow. As I remarked about a previous poem, this poem is too general in its form to be of much value by itself. I referred to poem 7 as a very good epilogue to a longer, more detailed work. This poem would be very suitable as a prologue. I particularly like the last line, an appeal for co-operative rather than disunited effort.

16. + 2. While this poem speaks a number of important and elementary truths, including particularly its first line, it lacks any strength in its voice; it lacks the strength to break through the maze it speaks of; it gives no indication of the weakest, or the foundation, stones in the walls of that maze. I feel that this poem, which tries to tackle our social problems, cannot be really successful without being written along a social theme. Philosophy
is part of life; not an alternative to it. A particularly valuable statement is:

Really we long to give one gift, and only hope for a single exchange.

If we review our present social order in the light of this statement it does not take long to find those sections of the community responsible for building the maze. I disagree with the poet for saying that the plan was lost:

There was never a collective plan. To borrow a theme from poem 15, the builders of the maze strove for self but did not count the cost. I cannot feel the pity for which the poet calls in the last verse since the answer to his call lies in the deductions which he himself could easily make from the above-quoted line from his own poem.


I had not seen any of the poems before they were sent to me by you. It would appear that many are extracts from longer poems, but in my preferences and comments I have naturally dealt only with the part set out by you. I will comment in numerical order.

1. - 2. Extremely childish with a smug attitude of poverty being a blessing, which I find extremely annoying.

2. + 2. Reads beautifully. I like the method of contrasting things to show that nothing stands in isolation.

3. + 3. Rousing. I felt I must find someone to read it to at once. Has a power that excited me immensely.

4. + 1. Moved me to a dull anger. I felt I should shout at the author "But it can be altered". It is this lack of hope that caused me to put it fairly low down, although I liked the quiet rhythm.

5. + 2. This again has a childish tone, but the call to an upward, forward struggle made me have a friendly feeling to it. I think it is a poem which depends, more than most on the viewpoint from which you read it.

6. - 3. Playing with words to produce a seemingly "clever" poem. The sort of thing that delights "Bohemian" types. To me meaningless and the product of a hopelessly confused and frustrated mind.

7. + 2. I liked its unusual composition. It has a full roundness when spoken, and the picture it paints so simply is, like love, "delightful". 
8. 0. Disturbing. I felt almost scared after reading it. And yet could find very little to cause such a feeling. Couldn't decide whether I liked it or not. Seemed rather obscure. Yet felt a real meaning was there.

9. +1. Bitter. Again the acceptance of fate made me move this lower down the list than the bitter irony in it deserved otherwise. Made me angry.

10. +3. Beautifully simple. Typified for me the feelings that the imperialists would have if they answered such questions about Korea, Malaya, India and other capital dominated countries. For them beautiful, but at what cost to the poor people of the colonial world.

11. +3. Inspiring. I like the way it is wrote, the easy rhyme. The actual content puts the whole thing in a nutshell. Here is the system we have to change, and here is the proof and hope that it will be altered, by us. No call to some far away "justice", but down to earth we will end the "Gentlemen" so poignantly described. I am going to copy this one down before sending it back to you.

12. -3. What a contrast to No. 11. Obscure rubbish, made obscure because to face facts is frightening to the type of people who read and write it. One gets lost in words and finds nothing at the end of it.

13. +3. The tone is rather "difficult" for me. Because I am totally unused to reading poetry. But I like it and feel I want to learn how to read it to get the best from its devastating description of the concealed slavery which is "wage earning".

14. -2. I dislike the idea of turning inward away from the world. I have no sympathy with the forgetting of world war in some mystical ecstasy [ecstasy]. I find the long involved sentences, full of clauses, difficult.

15. +3. Easy to read. Its message, complete in three parts; aim, conditions and the way to alter the second to the first, is wonderfully clear.

16. -3. I liked the smooth way it read, but oh! the pointlessness of the content! Nice to read, but when one tries to understand what one is reading finds that it means there is no meaning. We didn't construct the "maze", but we will find the way out, the "road to joy", is clear, and is pointed out in No. 11, I can't forget that one.
My knowledge of poetry is very scant, but what I do know and feel has I hope been applied rationally.

3. + 3. I like poem 3 very much because what it has said is absolutely true. The rhyming is easy.

1. + 3. I like poem 1 next for the same reasons except the last line, which gives the impression that the majority want "a little bit more" just to have it and not because they need. The latter being the truth.

7. + 3. I like poem 7 because it gives a glimpse of future life after the workers have won the day. The rhyming is nil but the rhythm even.

15. + 3. I like very much poem 15, because here again a glimpse of the future is given us but only to be reminded that it is the future and the struggle still goes on.

16. + 3. I like poem 16 because it is simple, truthful and applicable to the present day.

9. + 3. Poem 9 is clearly a parody on a poem that I have heard from my brothers and sisters. I do not know the name or the author but the first line is something like O hush thee my baby thy squire (or sire) was a knight, Thy dam was a lady etc. I like it because it is awfully true and reminiscent of the way in which my father worked and died to bring 13 children up and how he must have thought exactly what this poem says.

I like nearly all these poems for the same reason, for their truth and simplicity of statement, but I have tried to put them in order of preference.


4. + 2. I like poem 4 because it shows what the greed for money and disregard for the producers of this wealth has done to the countryside in which the miners live (and not only the miners).

11. + 2. Poem 11 shows that what is possible in one country is possible in another and that the same fate awaits all the exploiters irregardless of nationality.

12. 0. I neither like nor dislike poem 12.
6. 0. Because I do not understand what it is trying to say if it says anything; and the same applies to poem 6.
2. - 1. Poem 2 is underlying in its meaning although I cannot appreciate its meaning I do not like it.

14. - 3. Poems 14, and 5 I dislike very much because they would have us believe that the gains the workers have made are no good unless the struggle to get them is fierce and that it should be so. It tries to make amends in the last line of poem 5. Poem 14 I don't know.

8. + 1. No comment.

10. + 1. No comment.


1. - 3. The literary technique is nil. A set of lines of measured metre and each one rhyming with a previous line, does not make such effort a poem. The content is also out dated and further more too childish to rank anything but on a low scale, with anyone of either intellectual or progressive views.

2. + 3. There is a definite improvement in this poem, in the literary sense, and yet there seems to have been no attempt at measured metre. The sentiment is quite sage.

3. + 2. Much better, both materially and literally Here for the first time is the introduction of emotion and it is my opinion a good effort.


5. - 3. A waste of time from every angle.

6. - 1. This poem appears pointless. Eighteen lines of confusion, no attempt at order and too much repetition.

7. + 3. Literally - a waste of time, but the content is fine sentiment and delightful to read.

8. 0. In the literal sense this could be quite good. Were it not for the confusion, it could be ranked a poem.

9. - 3. Quite familiar yet the content of this is directly opposite to the original poem. Again noteworthy defeatism.

10. 0. Literally, passable, sentiment good.
11. + 2. Rather too much repetition [repetition] tending to spoil an otherwise good literal effort. View point excellent.

12. 0. Wasted effort both literally and materially. Too confused to arouse any emotional like or dislike.

13. 0. Rather good literal effort. But material is weakened by defeatist climax.

14. 0. This is good literally and quite good as an elocution [eloation] test. That apart I would suggest the escapist and defeatist expression too well emphasised in the first two verses. The last verse is lost - not comprehensive.

15. + 2. Literally - fair. View point very good, but it could be better if more stress were laid on its revolutionary content.

16. 0. Another good literal effort, plus good elocution [eloation] test, but I think this too is defeatist.

C 6. - M. (30) Invalid - Unemployed. (Father: Semi-skilled Labourer) Elec. 08. 123.

1. - 3. Capitalistic ideas fully displayed. Befooling the poor as usual. Has in it all the elements I dislike; the highlighting of the monetary "system" etc.

2. - 3. This is simple to understand which is good and holds much truth, also good. But again it is from a bourguoisie outlook - saying in other words, suffer all ills, stresses etc they are blessings in disguise. Poor are to be content?

3. + 3. This is more to my taste. Good fighting song for freedom. I seem to have read it before. Every line strikes home - good bullets for the cause. A song to keep in the hearts, (of militant workers).

4. + 2. The horrors of mining are told quite well in this nice little poem. Another side to the usual mining story of death; no less true. Living in a mining district I see the truth in it.

5. - 2. This poem tells us to struggle on but does not give us a goal. There is sunshine for some, not for others. Some get all they desire, others grow apathetic having been so long in need of ordinary requirements.
6. - 3. Obscure as most religious poems are meant to be. Knowledge should be ever increasing. Shews "Bach to Methusaleh" points the way. Full knowledge of the Bible brings total ignorance of all other things.

7. + 3. Modernistic yet having the essence of good poetry. Poetry for the living. Obscure but I can see through to the light that is showing.

8. 0. Lovely, useless poetry. Gives no message. No lead

9. + 3. A lesson for the ignorant, and the young. Certainly one to cause some thinking.

10. + 2. This too is simple, but compelling. A sadness assails me.

11. + 3. In the old style. Driving the truth home. Gives me the fighting spirit. A rejuvenation.

12. - 3. I feel only utter dislike and abhorrence.

13. + 3. Once more revealing the truth. Keeps up ones pecker. Truly helpful.


15. + 3. A good fighting poem. Making one think, as all good poems should.

16. 0. No comment.

C.7. F. (22) Student. (Father: Miner) Uni. P.O.S. 125.

1. 0. The thought in the poem seems shallow — "For a life that's all leisure lacks that odd something that makes for real pleasure". We have no indication of what the poet thinks the something is. The versification is jerky and there seems to be phrases put in merely for the sake of rhyme or metre: makes for pleasure. Isn't it funny? Then is it true? "Poor folk seem happy" — an accepted idea with little foundation. Yet the poem still has a freshness which appeals to me, and the use of colloquial language — lot and got etc. livens it up.

2. + 1. I like this poem mainly because of the expression and because it holds out some hope. The first stanza is especially appealing — I like "day is made more vivid" and "summer petals burn more bright". The thought, inasmuch as it implies resignation to evils, is, I think, harmful.
But as the poet uses "find the cure" it might be said to suggest that human beings can have some control over events. I do not like however, with the use of the word 'destiny' the suggestion of predestination.

3. I like this because it has the liveliness and purpose of a battle-song. I like the restrained bitterness and lack of sentimentality of its plea for justice. The form, with refrains, is song-like. The thought of blood is suggested all the way through by "crimson wool", "forges red" and so on. I like it's strength and life.

4. I like this because of the thought which is true—the lines show the acute observation of someone who has not only visited mining villages but has lived there and can feel with their inhabitants. The poem expresses well this thought, though I think drowses (to express drooping?) and dimb (which I do not understand) mar the expression. 'Round-eyed' I like especially to describe the rickety children.

5. I couldn't care less! Common place sentiment, and style loose.


7. This poem strikes me as rather cheap. The sentiment is, on the whole, I suppose acceptable, but I don't like how it's expressed, e.g. Love is no more..... recreation. Style loose and seemingly careless.

8. I cannot see the parallel between the first two stanzas and the last; the sentiment seems trivial, I do not like the comparison to 'flower in space' from music.

9. Sentiment all right: expression quite refreshing in many ways, tho' it palls after the first few readings.

10. Sunday-school sentiment: expression common place.


12. There seems to be no point. Expression: all right, but I don't like the repetition.

13. I know it as Shelley's. I like its understanding of the way society works. Expression good.

15. + 2. Sentiment: all right, tho' I'm not sure what he means in the last two lines. Expression, rather cheap.

16. - 3. Because of the sentiment it seems to me a sophisticated attempt at naivete. Expression all right.

I found that often my 1st impressions were completely altered at the 2nd or 3rd readings especially if I were feeling differently. On the whole the ones I liked for the thought were badly expressed. I found I became less tolerant as I ploughed thru' them.


1. - 1. While I see a certain amount of truth in this poem, it savours too much of the "poor but happy" creed of the rich to the poor.

2. + 1. A poetic study of contrasts, but accepts too easily the need of evil and burdens as "necessary stimuli".

3. + 3. Appeals to me as a Communist, because of its forthright review and condemnation of the oppression of the people by the "Law". Its style is simple but vivid, in todays bloody struggles we have realistic confirmation of its reference to the blood and pain of capitalism.

4. + 1. While this poem paints the picture of a drab mining town, it eliminates beauty entirely, I believe that spark is never extinguished. The style I think is very descriptive and has an appeal by simplicity of choice of words.

5. + 2. As a statement of facts, I believe true and illustrates the varying goals that inspire us to keep on trying and seeking. I think, the words used although often used in poems, do impress successfully the process of life which we must face boldly and determinedly.

6. - 2. This I believe is a wail, against the futility of life. It is I believe from the Rubayit of Omar Khayam. I do appreciate the style, and although I feel the negative content, it is a picturesque and colourful expression of Pessimism.

7. + 3. This portrays the future worth working for, which is developing before our eyes. The style I feel lacks rhythm, and the content loses by it.

8. + 3. The content appeals to me, it pinpoints one of those moments that momentarily breaks through routine.
thoughts. Re the form, I think here again the analogies used are very descriptive.

9. + 2. As a description of this war torn world and a mother's feeling for her child, it is good, but offers no hope for the future child to grow into a man. Its style is sufficiently vivid to appeal to the working people.

10. + 1. As a study of the beauty of the external world and the contrast of the agony of mankind it has some value. But fails to reveal the positive elements in mankind. The style I think strikes a personal note that brings the reader close to the author.

11. + 3. I like this, a statement of facts, to Indian and British workers, and its style with its short sharp lines and boldness in use of phrases, such as "god damned English gentlemen", strikes a note that appeals to any worker calling a spade a spade, and the boss a b....

12. - 2. To too much humbleness and mysticism and humbug, that spoils any beauty in the words.

13. + 2. As an exposure of "freedom" and the lack of it, in a few short lines it sums up the facets of "freedom". I don't think the words used are sufficiently "current" to have a broad appeal, e.g. loom and plough, sword and spade. I think they've become a little hackneyed.

14. - 2. To me suggests the outpourings of embittered human beings, blinding themselves to everything but a doubtful ideal inside, Art for art's sake! I think the words used, and the rhythm fit the theme fairly well.

15. + 2. To me this presents the picture of a better world, no idle dream, no evasion of the present, and a call to do something. I think the style is simple but suitably descriptive, with an easy rhythm.

16. + 1. The plea for simplicity is important, but not a pining for simplicity which seeks to evade the complexity of our modern world. I think this poem does illustrate definite facts, but simplifies important points out of existence. I think the style and wording do arouse the imagination.


7. + 3. The directness and simplicity with which love, hate and deceit are dealt with seem to constitute a
resonant clarion call in an age of hypocrisy and cant. It is as though a lantern had suddenly lighted my way along a dark road.

9. + 3. The main characteristic to me is its poignancy. It deals with a callousness in such a delicate and beautiful manner that I cannot but be fascinated by its dialogue. When I read the end I feel as a child would when it has had a wonderful experience and wants it to go on and on.

3. + 2. It shows a militancy of spirit which seems to harmonize with the demands which have been, and are being made, to undo all the evil in which we live. I feel that while even this feeling exists there is hope for mankind in its struggles against greed and avarice.

10. + 2. The characteristic which most impresses me is the revelation of truth. That others can not only see beyond the superficialities but also lay the facts so bare, is decidedly encouraging to me.

15. + 2. My emotions are aroused by the first two verses but the third one falls to reach its climax. In all, my feelings are similar to those experienced when reading poem 10.

1. + 1. I feel disappointed with it. Although attacking greed it is content merely to make light-hearted sallies about it. Its weakest point, I think, is that it is devoid of any "message" whatsoever. I confess that I chose it not for what it says but how it says it.

2. + 1. If I did not feel rather uneasy about this poem I would like it a good deal. Two things stand out when I read this poem. The first is the notion that we can make evil, as well as good, serve us. But second, and in a stronger way still, the notion that evil is necessary gives the poem a reactionary tendency.

4. + 1. Any liking for this is born, I think, of sympathy. Otherwise, there is a distinct defeatist attitude observable in the lines.

11. + 1. I admire the militancy of this poem, but at the same time feel that it is born from spontaneous spite as much as from anything else. For instance, the word "soon" in the last verse may have no relation to the actual situation. The poet may mean well but tends to be carried away by the overflow of his (or her) own emotions.

13. + 1. Apart from the modernistic interpretation of slavery which incidentally is quite good, this poem fails to kindle my feelings.
14. + 1. I like the poem for any genuine spiritual happiness which it may be pointing out. On the other hand I sense a tendency towards the advocacy of "burying one's head in the sand" or of refusing to take part in clearing the world of evil.

12. 0. These poems leave me with a feeling of confusion because they fail to make their messages in the least bit clear.

5. - 1. This typifies the reactionary who is lamely trying to justify the fact that some people must carry other people's burdens through life.

16. - 1. Its exposure of the hypocrisy and obscurities with which mankind has surrounded itself are quite good. But its inability to find a "way out" suggests weakness, and the poet is altogether too dogmatic about "the inevitability of the loneliness of man".

6. - 2. I feel that this poet has nothing really important to say and hence is (consciously or unconsciously) trying to conceal the fact with flowery language. Whether there is any "message" or not, its reception will be known to too few for it to be of significance.


11. + 3. Sums up the conception of what an English Gentleman is. The artful pious exterior, camouflage [camouflage] in phrases and then the basic realities contained in exploitations at home and abroad. It also seems to indicate the way the wool is placed in front of the workers eyes by the suave artful deception. That once this duel [dual] role of our 'betters' is exposed and they are revealed in all their ugly nakedness i.e. as exploiters. The same fate awaits them as did the Russian Nobility etc.

15. + 3. Indicates the perspective of the future world of socialism. At the same time does not ignore present problems i.e. danger of war. Sounds a call to action.

7. + 3. Same reasons as 15. However seems near. 'Men not fearing sack' shades of 1930 here. The conception equality of races. Love brought to full fruition. Lofty aims strike a chord of response.

9. + 3. I can visualise the working class mother over the cradle seeing the whole gamut of the pattern of life which seemed to be destined for her baby and the hopeless gesture of despair entailed in 'stay as you are'.

1. + 3. Simplicity. Easy to understand. Lyrical tone comes easy to say. Money is the root of all evil is implied. Yet is only one aspect of a wider evil. I like it for it conveys a lot in so many words.


3. + 2. Appeals by reason of direct appeal and for reasons of direct socialist approach.

4. + 2. Attention is drawn to the contrasts in society. This is a beautiful poem only marred by not showing the way out. The references to the beauty in nature and the ugliness of the typical mining village are real.

10. + 2. Like. Phraseology and easy to tongue sentences. Describes obviously a soul in torment at injustice.

14. + 1. Obscure in parts lacks responsiveness from reader.

2. + 1. Needs more study. Having read several times becomes more profound. Lovely sentences yet states a problem without indication of solution.

5. + 1. Two sets of ideas struck me. Faint trace of pessimism. On the other hand there seemed to be a call to gird on the armour.

12. 0. Not quite clear.

8. 0. Ivory Tower stuff. Like the lyrical tones. Peaceful after a day swinging a hammer.


16. - 2. Dislike for its fatalism. Makes too much play with the sacred word love and simple human emotions which exist for the appreciation of all the noble aims and not for some shallow death.

0 11. M. (21) Student. (Father: Motor Driver) Uni. R.O.S. 130

1. 0. Form and content (in so far as they are existent) are just one stock response. Not worth consideration as art.
2. 0. Ditto.

3. + 1. Skillfull parody and some real feeling. But hardly more than useful propaganda; it doesn’t tell you a lot.


5. 0. Again a stock response. Not worth considering.


7. 0. Doesn’t say anything.

8. + 2. I think I like this the best. The poet has not a lot to say but it’s unpretentious and he uses words more than any of the rest do—including Eliot. None of the rest seem to have any feeling for words.

9. 0. Doesn’t say anything and hence one can’t say a deal about it. ‘Sentimental’—to use a dangerous word—in its attitudes.

10. - 1. I don’t really know what this poem says. “So what?” is my only reaction.

11. + 1. Moves with vigour. The reiteration of execrating epithets in the last verse gives perhaps a sense of rather impotent rage, but on the whole the verse moves strongly. Quite good rhymed propaganda. Not poetry.

12. + 1. Effective haunting evocation of various moods of light and darkness. (Eliot — The Rock.)

13. 0. I have a suspicion that this is Shelley—but it might just as easily have been said in prose.


15. - 1. Worthy and pious.


Sorry to have been so hard on all these poems. But I can’t honestly say anything else. I sympathise intensely with the intentions of most of the ‘progressive’ ones—but good intentions don’t produce good art.
   Elem. P.O.S. 150.

4. + 3. Its objective realism. The culmination of the effects of capitalism destroying personality and all initiative [initiative].

15. + 3. Its simplicity, its message.

13. + 3. Its revolutionary content, likened to the satire of Shelley.

11. + 2. This poem is familiar. Seen in print. Its stinging satire and denunciation of the ruling-class.

9. + 2. Beautiful in its simplicity, factual and touching.

3. + 2. Nice construction, inspiring, urging to fight on and conquer.

14. + 1. Its message content, rhythmic sequence and construction.

2. + 1. A mixture of nature and fatalism but quite nice.

1. + 1. Realistic, logical and piercing.

5. + 1. Objective, an urge to further efforts, an antidote to despair.

7. + 1. Constructionally satisfactory, nice message, satirical.

12. + 1. This poem has a Byronic flavour, likened to the poet Byron.

16. + 1. A nice delicate poem, reasonable with its message.

6. 0. Commendable, poetic construction.


1. - 3. An untruthful and insincere jingle propaganda of an insidious type, because it could be excused as cynical humour. It defends the exploitation of man by man excuses that and assumes that each one of us is inhibited by the same horrible sentiments.

2. - 2. Pessimistic cant. "Let's be thankful for what we have, we cannot improve our lot!"
3. + 2. Obviously a worker - male - ex-serviceman? - determined, clear thinker - well read - verse, but sounds like a copy of, is it, Kipling's "Song of the English". Still it says a lot, quite effectively.


5. + 1. Nostalgic but at least a bit hopeful at the end - stronger than 4 anyway.

6. - 3. I dislike this very much, it is 'confused'; chaotic - merely a stringing together of meaningless phrases in a bad imitation of the modern style by someone I should distrust very much.

7. 0. Someone trying to say something.

8. - 2. 6 again only less so - only appears clever.

9. + 2. One clear idea and says it clearly in easy rhyme within the poet's limitations - very sincere and I like the thought motivating it.

10. + 3. An unusual little poem. 2 clear thoughts successfully welded into an idea. Unpretentiously worded but effective. It deals with man and his relation to the physical world - and what he has made of it. It seems very sincere to me. It seems to be the only effort which could be classed as "poetry". I would not class it as religious or mystical as the last line here seems to embrace the idea of the martyrdom of Mankind in the mass.

11. + 1. Logical and determined - simple easy verse putting across very effectively a genuine conviction - the repetition of the term "gentleman" gives strength to the effort, but the final effect is to fall back on the desirability of being swayed by another's convictions. Historically the gist remains true of course.

12. - 2. Oh dear, another 6, 8, 14. Why don't these budding lyric poets read Arthur O'Shamghessy. "We are the music makers and we are the builders of dreams wandering by lane sea breakers".

13. + 2. Good - no man can be free that still exploits another - Not bad verse at all.

14. - 3. Confused but ambitious. No thank you!!

15. + 2. An honest effort that just missed coherent and finally tries to rise from the Slough of Leespond.
1. There is an element of truth here and a lot to be said for simplicity. Unfortunately things want to be simple—
even "simple" things!


1. - 2. Just look at it. Something to think about, a
sober examination of a piece of ethics: an important bit
of thinking... and look at its treatment!! A racy carefree
style, as if the whole lot was inconsequential. For the
writer it probably is! The offensive gallopy style is here
in all its triviality. I have this down as "fairly strong
dislike" because I dislike it more than "a little". Besides
the technical brazenness I am quite out of sympathy with,
and even hostile to what it has to say: namely:-
First part: "We are never content". So why try!
Second part: "you poor people don't know how lucky you are,
really, as compared with those poor folk with riches". So
take care to preserve this situation and do not hinder the
unfortunate.
Third part: "its just human nature" - and unchangeable!
A myth of course, but strives to convince the reader that
everyone else and himself are a bad lot. Note that the
riskers of life, the thieves and killers are in reality a
minute number in which, here, the poet tries to crowd us all.
All these statements of the poem tend to assuage the
indignation, to dissuade the will to resist, to change, and
to blunt the senses of a stirring people. They are subtle
darts in the battle of ideas.

2. + 3. Though the second verse carries in it another "dart"
as in the second part above, I like this piece best, for it
teaches a lesson. It teaches an aspect of movement, of
comparison and relativity. Sheds a new light on how to look
at things in appraisal. It also has a metre a quiet
pensive metre, in keeping with its intent, introducing a
subtler rhyme and lilt, to "oil" us round the corners of
expression and not jolt us. The choice of words I spoke of
in the first part of my notes - the colder words - are here
in profusion: "burn more bright"; "stillness without stress";
"Times eye" - neatly turned phrases conveying exact
emotional colouring.

3. + 2. This poem tries more to do what I think is required—but I feel, does it badly. Technically rigid, it is a poor
vehicle for the idea, losing its passion in its jolting form.
Here is evidence that, until the technique is learned, the
poetry produced by the working class is going to clatter along
in this primitive style and thereby going to detract from the
most laudable themes. In this form the theme rages
impotently, to the reader, and at the same time, clutches at
the rails of the 'tumbril' in which it is transported.
Poetry has license to exaggerate I know and it seems to me
that this poem uses that license to the utmost. So much so
that, to the modern reader, the villiany of olden times can
be dismissed and a quieter not so offensive capitalism
accepted, because this poem paints a butchering capitalism
and ignores the subtler means of getting the same results
that prevail today. In the quiet of a terror already passed
this poem means less to today's reader and is set aside as
being no more than a rather bloody complaint. The job is
only half done.

4. +2. A nice descriptive poem; good colouring and
facts. Though of a simple metre, the chant loses definitiness
in the words used, which nearly undo the metre altogether,
and so it reads a little like prose with a faint music in it.

5. -2. Viciously, I note how the most perfect poetry is
often the cloak for ideas we abhor. Here is poetry doing a
job - a job of philosophy and politics. It is not
exceptional poetry - I visualise Herb Morrison sitting down
and dashing it off for the delegates at the Labour Party
Conference!! "Be content, don't strive to change, Good
things are really bad ...." All the Spurious ideas are
here, and no craftsman poet to disguise them well. There
is no finesse; it is just a chatter in rhyme and metre.

6. -2. Is quite perfect, but once again the thrust. A
poem of confusion, mysticism. Questions and riddles but no
answers!! A rivetter friend of whom I asked an opinion said
one brief sentence, "A lot of bloody nonsense". It is a
poem for agony lovers: a poem of despair, and by its
excellence of writing well able to sow the mysteriousness
which is the theme.

7. +3. I like the ideas in it. They are clear. It reads
well and though I can find no rhyme I find it is bouyant,
bouyant as wood on water. Riding along, straight coherent
little phrases, speaking firm and matter of fact, as if the
content was already accomplished or the writer so certain
as to hold it inevitable. A good strong confidence abounds
in these lines. There is a little jolt in putting 'houses',
'work' and 'the sack' into poetry, for they are symbolic of
the less poetic life, the scenes of harshness and un-beautiful
things, and that wholly because of our real experience.
It is un-usage that jolts us, not that these aspects of life
have no place in poetry and they will find there [their?]
place one day. The crispness of this poem and its wording
are indispensables to the finality required
to fix the unalterable achievement of the future; its theme
speaks about.
8. 0. Two pretty ideas couched in fine words to catch
the meaning, I think, of the word "pang"; searching it out
and trying to let us see it in the light of human contact.
Very nicely done, with a great deal work done to recruit
exactly the right words. More an experiment, I would say,
to prepare for greater things but having, itself, no offering.

9. + 1. A lullaby, but if I were a babe I'd like to be
asleep before it developed as far as the fourth line. It
carries a great leadening, a crushing, which offers no gleam
of hope and leaves us with the tinge of hopelessness that
ought to be offset in another verse or two. The use of the
word "Masters" dates the poem or the poet as of the
pessimistic school, and I'd feel, if anything, embarrassed
to present it as a working class poem. So while I like the
rhyme for its simplicity and the metre for its sympathy to
the poem as a lullaby, I have no word for the content at all.

10. + 3. Very good. I like it very much. Once again clear
and poignant: reaching out, teaching reality in its own way.
Here is a comparison between the appearance and the essence
of things. The metre and rhyme scheme lend themselves to the
words of the speaking visionary, whilst the abruptness of
the two line first verse adds greatly by blocking the mono­
tony of continuance of the four line construction.

I think the supreme quality shows up in the last
verse where a multitude of things have to be listed. In
four lines this seems impossible, but after mentioning four
representative evils as required the totality of all others
is embraced in the last line, for this last line is
symbolic of a host of wrongs, and altho' I am myself a
disbeliever in religion, the symbol holds as well for me
as for the faithful.

11. + 2. Satirical of course. Showing that a cat can be
skinned in more ways than one, and that we are all aware of
this. This is a lesson too for poetry like writing, does
teach, in the end. Almost an intermediate step between
rhyme and no rhyme and very readable. The poem is one of
growing realisation and a hopeful poem therefore. From it
some will learn what prose could never teach to them. It
brings new ideas, and interpretations together in one brief
conclave, and the combined note strikes its impression and
goes. The raciness of the delivery adds to the air of
denunciation and bitterness necessary to carry the purport.
All this is done in the chosen rhyme structure.

12. + 1. Good poetry, methinks! A little hard to pin down,
but it stimulates the mind to contemplation of a variety of
scenes, made up intrinsically of the same element. Thru'
it all runs the prayer to Heaven's Royalty, which I can
ignore, and like, instead, the gleams of tinting, of warmth and of soft light in the rest.

13. + 1. Not altogether a work of art to my mind. Seems crowded somehow, but not without merit. I think maybe it is a bit over-stated and thereby out of date, without real interest. Like turning a stone with your toe and moving on.

14. - 2. Easy poetry, good words and arrangement, but, as of yore, it is a "suffer on" poem. Strictly for clergy and teachers within the bounds prescribed by the society that feeds them. They perform their task of diverting the eyes of the masses to momentary baubles, and, in one way or another curb the energies for shaking down the honeycomb in which they and their masters revel; the tottering honeycomb of a society rent thru' and thru' with changes for which it was never built, but could not resist and which are wrecking it yet.

15. 0. A poem with a sentiment. Reads well, but there are too many like it. Somehow its ineffective.

16. + 1. Very workman-like poetry. Weighty words set in place: rhyme and metre hewn out of heavy thoughts. A fortress of a style, showing that profounder thoughts can be spelled in poetry. Its ideas are vivid and tangible, but I feel there is a complication in the mode of expression though I can't say how to avoid it. It is a sort of lament and the grief is unrelieved by any hope. It makes an analysis and is convinced only of the knottedness of the social organism.

I read through all this end wonder at the end if I have said what I wanted to say. It's hard sometimes to catch one's own impressions and to circumscribe them with a pen. I have tried, I hope not futilely, to do this, and know that it must be clumsy. I trust you will find some reward for your patience in awaiting my reply.


9. + 3. This poem proved provocative [provocative] - my thoughts went along these lines - Mother and Child two of the paramount reasons for peace on this earth, and the right to live unmolested. Any action Detrimental to the safety of mankind either directly or indirectly should be shunned, named and labeled in no uncertain fashion as the greatest crime on earth - The Poem is a Masterpiece of "life and truth". The Middle verse last two lines seem more like a progressive "Banner Slogan".
"Tis I who should cry". This I would like to think is the realization that Mothers have not in the past carried out their duty in the fight against "Master Planning the way you should die". Wishful thinking, "Oh stay as a baby, stay just as you are!". I am using this poem or should say reading, tonight at our local "Peace Committee Meeting!"

15. + 3. This masterpiece, I feel could have been written by someone about to die, condemned by the followers of "Hate and greed". My thoughts and feelings are moved when I think of all the "unsung heroes" in the past and of the present, who's last thoughts must have been along these same lines as the one's in the poem. "Where man must kill and children, stricken cry". "The Cowards - Slave they pass him by" "He dare be poor for a' that" (Burns).

3. + 3. There is a definite [definite] final tone in this poem, a new era. Mutiny, Revolution, the axe smashing open the Barrel of wine. Go reckon our Dead by the forg's Red. This line shows terrific courage the first command of the People to the oppressor. Terrific contrast between "And you lie on crimson wool" "There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now But we are its ghastly crew We have fed you all for a thousand years You ha' eaten our lives and our babies an wives.
The legal Dragon lives and demands that he lives purely because of his so called lawful wealth. A terrific left wing poem to the last word I feel like getting a few million copies printed and handing them out all over town. The use of small effective words has been very well exploited - Dead, unfed, wealth, buried, alive, wreck, drifts, ghastly crew, "Go Reckon" forg's Red, cursed, doom, babies, wives.

4. + 3. The first line, to students of mining areas, does conjure up a very true picture. A progressive poem, bringing out the truth in mining areas - bitterness and sadness is obvious very prominent here, with use of such words Dispair, dusty weed drowses, gaunt tumble and climb, dust, Born for the mines. I thought of the picture how "Green was my valley" (Film). The long rows of miners houses dark and dreary. The miner sitting in his washing tub having his bath at home with his wife scrubbing his back.

5. + 3. I must say that I eyed this poem with a certain amount of suspicion. I at once thought of that line Onward Christian soldiers - "Bash on Regardless". While the poem has a large common sense theme it could be interpreted wrongly, such as take stock of our blessings and be thankful. A strong defeatist note also. There would be no rainbows.
If skies were never gray. Don't look for easy paths.
I could imagine this poem being sung at some religious
service or other. The reason why I noted that I liked
very much this poem is that - My thoughts at that moment
had drifted in the future epoch where man had learned to
live in peace, and the struggle were Man versus Nature.

11. + 3. The voice obviously of the coward's slave.
Watching and waiting when not struggling against weight of
his master's sword. The Patient Russian peasant is patient
no more. Brave word against cowardly leaders.

6. + 3. I like very much the lines But man has made his
life a twisted tower, Where indirectly he wanders proudly
and vainly, or cowards afraid — also — but ingeniously we
constructed a maze forgetting to keep the plan. This of
course shows clearly the so called way of life which man
is being led today. In Autumn the leaves fall, I love you,
We shall die a simple action. Where do we go from here?

7. + 2. The poem of the future truly what every man should
be struggling for the happiness of mankind.
But our here and now to them will look like a dream sad
furious and fatal.
This line makes me think of the children at future schools
who will look back at us through history and wonder why
mankind was so stupid and easily led to tolerate the
victimised sacking etc. War. Misery.

13. + 2. Workers write — Tree four chains — choose your
destiny Pick of the leeches — my thoughts run along these
lines when I read this poem — simple and clear.

10. + 2. Men only see what they want to see. The last verse
is very good, but many men do not care to look upon such an
ugly view as true as it is.

8. + 1. A very clever poem, and although I understand and
could well imagine the part played by the music, and the
stone in the first two verses. The third verse falls into
different instance seeing the object is the guarded mind,
which unlike the stone and music, pool and the room, cannot
remain unchanged when a word end look a sign falls upon the
guarded mind.

14. + 1. Men are no gods, we tread the city dirt. Except
for this line this poem is a roundabout way in saying not
to [too] clearly war is no good, best to forget.

6. + 1. Except for the line, All our knowledge brings us
nearer our ignorance, which I think is quite true — I just
cannot form any thought except that this poem should be kept
well in the background of poetic field.
2. - 1. Strictly a poem of the past or future, as I can't see any place for it in the present as it has no urging values.

1. - 2. I don't think it funny, and I don't want more money. All I need is a view of earthy goods. This poem reminds me of the type printed in the 2d. Horribles - $2/6 for the most popular. Some Mr. Money Bags could have written this to show the poor people - taxed to the limit - are weighed down by cares (some hope).

12. - 3. This could have been written by a person who has not seen a fellow human ever since possibly being banished some lonely spot. Of all the lights mentioned I remain in the dark and cold.


Abbreviations:- V.B.=Very Beautiful; V.G.=Very Good; P.G.= Poetically Good; I= Inaccurate; T= Truthful; A.U.= Assumption Unwarranted; no proof exists.

1. 0. 6 lines bracketed; I and A.U.

2. + 2. P.G. - Philosophy of 8 bracketed lines I. - A.U.

3. + 3. Slight knowledge of this poem; P.G. and T.

4. + 2. Very T. -

5. 0. Entirely disagree with sentiments expressed. I. and A.U.

6. + 3. V.G. Cannot grasp its meaning, in its entirety, pro. tem; as, owing to various causes, I am unable to concentrate upon it.

7. + 3. Hope prognostications will prove correct - nothing is certain in the here and now.

8. + 3. V.B.

9. + 3. V.B.

10. + 3. V.B. Object (on principle) to last line; bracketed.

11. + 2. A.U. of existence of a Deity; therefore (to me) bracketed lines I. Remainder V.G. and T.

12. + 3. V.B. Sincere and truthful.

13. + 2. T.
14. + 3. In a short poem by Dorothy Neville Lees, the same sentiments (or philosophy, if you like) are portrayed. I quote the first 4 lines.

"What care I for the bitter things men say,
The idle treacherous deeds; the cruel words,
Whilst I can listen to the song of birds;
The stars, the sky, the sea, are still the same" etc.

15. + 2. Good and to the point; but — to me — bracketed line ambiguous.

16. 0. May be V.G.; but too complex for me to grasp pro tem.


1. + 1. This poem seems to me to be only true of a capitalist country where they use the power of money to enslave the minds and body of the worker. I do not think it would ring true in a Socialist country or society, where money as such holds no power. The ability to produce is the only power that can bring real pleasure and leisure.

2. + 2. This poem when viewed from a material standpoint is very true. But, when viewed from spiritual understanding it stands out as a very deep illusion. As when the earth becomes truly polarised and spiritualised the illusion will disappear. There will be no night, no snow, no evil, and no disease. All things will be perfected.

3. + 3. From whatever angle I view life this poem stirs my imagination. It makes me feel very bitter, I must do my best to remove this terrible curse. "Blood to me means life". This terrible toll of life for profit must stop.

4. + 2. This poem stirs within me all the hatred I hold toward mining which to me is soul-destroying. There is no need at all for men to go down the mine. And believe me if everyone felt the same way as I do about it, things would very soon be put right.

5. + 2. My views on number 2 poem would also apply to this one.

6. + 3. Here it comes again, that fight within me between the material and the spiritual. When I seek a material answer I am lost, I am as nothing, as it lead me away from "God". I must break through the illusion of the senses and the planetary mind I must do something new, by gaining true knowledge from the intuitive mind which leads me back to "God".
7. + 1. I believe like the poem that the desired change is rapidly coming on the earth, I am doing my best to help it forward. I think it visualises communism.

8. + 2. This poem tells me I think, that we are not always [always] aware what influences our thoughts, and actions, I believe that everything leaves its impression and mark, which can be recalled, if we know how.

9. + 3. This poem is for people who have seen the light. I hate industry because of what it teaches me. My future mortgaged, God speed the day when this poem will not hold such a sinister meaning for me. Anyhow I think people are very silly to have babies until the terror is past.

10. + 1. I seem to get the impression from this poem that it is very wrong for me to enjoy life, and to ignore the suffering and agony around me. I must work to free my brother from bondage.

11. + 2. This poem gives me a vision of the future and of things to come. The God-damned English gentleman has certainly done his little bit to bring ruin and destruction to this world. However his end is near.

12. - 1. I cannot hope to appreciate the teaching of this poem until I break the fetters of industry that binds me. I crave more leisure time. The only light I can see at present is "Darkness".

13. + 3. In my opinion, the honest workman is a big fool. He is a slave and is unaware of it. He makes my task very hard. He cannot appreciate how terrible I feel. I am always [always] trying to break out of this prison and slavery.

14. - 1. I have studied this poem but get no reaction. It seem obscure and complicated. Perhaps "Moral Rearmament" or a vision of the next world.

15. + 1. If the author of this poem had visited the 'Soviet Union' instead of dreaming he would have seen in action things that are not transient but real and permanent. Perhaps then his call to action would inspire men to fight to change all the things he hates, "War" and "Hell let loose".

16. + 3. We have certainly come a long way from the simple things of life. However it is a lovely thought, I dread the fight ahead. I am well aware of the terror we have yet to face. Before we return to simple truth, I often wish I was a "Simpleton". I would then at least enjoy the illusion of happiness.
Elem. F.O.S. 130.

1. + 1. Fairly true and

2. 0. I cannot give any impression on this.

3. + 2. Touches the spot.

4. + 3. Industrial logic.

5. 0. Part good but I cannot understand it all.

6. 0. No opinion.

7. + 2. There is part logic in that.

8. + 1. No opinion.

9. + 2. Very consistent.

10. + 1. No opinion.

11. + 2. Touches on the system.

12. - 1. No opinion.

13. + 3. Very good touches of logic.

14. + 1. No opinion.

15. + 1. Very true and consistent.


16. + 3. I like this one, possibly because it savours of  
"straight to the point attitudes" and certainly because  
there is a great deal of truth in its lines. In particular 
I feel the third verse moves me.

2. + 3. This poem says in effect: "Rub your eyes, look a 
little further than the end of your nose, and go out and 
take what is yours by right".

3. + 3. An excellent set of verses this; truth in every 
line. An ideal poem to use in attempts to educate people 
politically.

7. + 3. Same reactions as No. 3.
8. + 3. Very good, very cleverly put together. A poem that makes you think, and for that reason is excellent material to educate those who appear not to want education. I like the last verse very much.

9. + 3. Very true, very true, but it rhymes so easily that some may just sing their way through it without assimilating its real meaning.

11. + 3. A statement of fact; good, because its true, every word of it.

15. + 3. When I read this one I seem to be looking into a mirror, particularly the second verse.

14. + 2. Good advice well phrased.

10. + 2. A clever conundrum this, and deeper, much deeper than appears at first or second reading.

6. + 2. I like very much the two lines I have marked in ink (14th and 15th lines).

5. + 2. I like this poem, and yet the more I read it the more I feel something has been left out by its author, but I can't say just what.

13. + 1. I like this a little, but it's not what I should term a sensible poem after passing the first verse.

4. + 1. A good poem, and probably attracts me because I used to work in the mines! though there's little beauty in the verses, there's lots in the wording.

1. 0. I really can't see any real point in this one at all. Sounds to me like propaganda used by wealthy rulers to smooth the ruffled feelings of their workers!

12. - 1. I don't like this one. It rather like a prayer, but unlike most prayers it lacks real feeling. It is cleverly worded.


1. 0. The poem is lilting but rather hackneyed and insincere.

2. + 2. Is simply written, the comparisons extremely apt.

3. + 2. Again is written with sincerity, and has a striking, lilting theme.
4. + 2. Associations clear and crisp, with good descriptive stanzas.

5. + 1. Is written in clear and simple style, but reads like an old music hall tune.

6. + 3. Has, in 18 lines presented a magnificent picture of the age old problem - life after death - without being morbid or preaching.

7. + 1. Very peaceful, and has a soothing confident appeal, with a promise of man's understanding being assured.

8. + 3. Is aesthetic and flowing; progresses from line to line, with ease and has a nostalgic vein, which I found was quite strong.

9. + 2. Rather brutal, but crisp and stimulating; has the slightly bitter appeal of a longstanding wrong which has suffered undue delay in righting.

10. + 3. Gives a feeling of sadness for the individuality of mankind, and presents a comparison of what we see and what we feel. Frustration was uppermost in my mind when I had read the poem, but lingering in the back of my mind was a sensation of hope.

11. + 2. The poem marches like a horde of soldiers strong and invincible. In fact the poem suggests the mass of ordinary people striving for recognition and satisfaction in no uncertain terms.

12. + 2. Captures the atmosphere of a huge silent cathedral and likens it to the vastness of an underwater cavern. Like poem No. 6 it deals with the obscurity surrounding life, but does not, I think possess the majesty and motion of No.6.

13. + 1. Gives, I think, a clear cut factual representation of working conditions today rather than a deep penetrating picture which would stick in the mind.

14. + 1. I found disjointed although it did affect me with its representation of the strength inherent in man, his ability to shrug off the superficial deterents to progress.

15. + 3. The promise of future happiness mentioned in the beginning of the first verse and quelled in the latter part, was rather defeatist, but justified when in the second verse is recounted the stark truth about the modern system in which we live. The phrase "The truth hurts" leapt to my mind when I read the poem.
16. "Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements", as is so beautifully put in the poem prompts me to write simply. I found the poem extremely touching; I liked it very much.


1. O. Definitely consolation. The sort of poem that makes one smile a little and then forget about it. An unimportant poem.

2. + 1. The first section a neat build up of words - we await the poet's final message which is at once both discontented and philosophical - or are the last three lines a hint, however slight, at revolution? One doesn't really know and therefore it is a little obscure. A "dated" poem, I think.

3. + 1. The poem, whilst savouring of the 19 century, early 20th century period speaks out bluntly against social injustices and attempts, I think at rousing the emotions to revolution. And yet it is also passive insofar as it does not in any way give the answer to the injustices of which it speaks. It accepts the situation with a loud grievance, nothing else. I like it whilst tending to disagree with the more lurid expositions as applied to the present time. With workers more or less united, the days of old bad mill-owner or pit-owner have been rectified somewhat. Industry today is not the ruthless element it was. Factory welfare, medical care, and factory rest homes (a few are in existence!) trade unions are operative today, making the whole thing less unjust.

4. O. A discontented poem and again, let us be honest, a 'dated' poem. Since 'Nationalisation' the lot of the miner has improved. Definite employment, good pit-head baths, excellent equipment, canteens, training, better inspection of working conditions, holiday with pay and a host of smaller things. The poem is certainly true of miners in the not-so-distant past. It is a negative poem and demands no positive action to relieve the situation. I tried to reject the last line but after thinking about it, it contained a great deal of truth. And beauty does visit mining places, you know, and there is a certain beauty in the lives of mining families.

5. - 2. Consolation. Things don't go as we would like them so don't take the easy paths (why not?) it's a hell of a road but get your boots on and stick it out - Brother, you can keep this poem! If the poet received payment for this trash, I give up - It seems as if he is taking the easy
path if he extracts our money for these worthless lines.

the moaning, so what? What does he want us to do? He has
brought us to the Dust and he is leaving us there. Does
the poem end there? I can't remember. But if he develops
it it will take us along in a wave of mysticism and pretty
phrases unto some wondrous white light. If he has had some
personal revelation, good luck to him, that is his concern.
I don't like the poem but the writing is good. Incidentally,
I like his early poems very much.

7. + 1. Unimportant poem. Hints vaguely at revolution by
letting us have a glimpse at things as they might be. But
mostly, I think, he is living in some quiet corner of his
imagination. But I like it a little.

8. + 3. I like this poem. The poet has captured some
almost indefinable phenomena in these verses. Because he
has nothing definite to say I do not condemn the poem.
I am quite prepared to accept art of this nature and be glad
of it.

9. + 2. A good effort and wether [whether] we accept it
or not - how true when the many are controlled by so few.

10. + 1. A difficult specimen to analyse. The poet is
discontented although things appear bright to him on the
surface - but he is a humanist above all things and is honest
with himself. It is not a religious poem. The implication
of Jesus hanging on the cross, I think, is an image of the
goodness of mankind being crucified by some forces which
he does not define. I like the poem because I think it is
honest, sincere, if not effective. It carries more weight
than the Eliot poem No. 6.

11. + 1. A 'dated' poem which hasn't turned out as the poet
expected. The English Gentlemen are still there and are
the people referred to as 'we' in the last line. But the
poet is not to blame. Perhaps it is 'we', or perhaps the
power of the English Gentleman who also own the press and
who to a very large extent, control the thinking of 'me'.
There is truth in the poem. I like it a little.

12. - 3. As Shakespeare put it, "Much ado about nothing".
Why all this about light? I do not like the poem - another
Eliot one I see. Why all the praise for light on towers
and above all things, light on stagnant pools? and glorying
light on a grass blade savours of the ridiculous! Our gaze
is 'submarine' makes me think of us as fishes with unblinking
eyes, mouths wide open and glorifying, above all things,
a light that is 'invisible'. Maybe I am too down to earth,
but at least I keep my perspective down here. A worthless
poem.
13. 0. Another dated one. I neither condemn or praise it. But sooner or later the waters of injustice will find a level that will be less inhuman, either by storm or quiet flowing. Why didn't the poet add another verse, giving us the answer to it all?

14. - 1. By Masefield. Not a poem of high standard. Negative, without a message even. There are no gods sums up past history only. The poet only suggests "forget". I can't say I like it.

15. + 3. Good. I like it. It is true, poignant, and the message is plain.

16. + 3. I like this one. Again the poet has set out to trap the undefinable and he has done it. This personal experience he has trapped must have been shared by thousands of us. To me it is important because he has captured an experience that is unexplainable almost in normal talk. The sense of beauty, love and decay of the flesh is caught in a fleeting moment with three simple statements and he has broadened the poem by his weaving into the theme the world of men as he sees it.


1. 0. I neither liked nor disliked this poem because it speaks in rather general terms, applying to all men who differ vastly insofar as to their craving for money, the subject of the poem.

2. + 1. In this case, my indication of preference is derived from the fact that in some ways I believe we all go where we are pushed.

3. + 3. I like the tone of this one because I am a worker in the sense of being a son of toil, giving of my blood and sweat in order to live to die.

4. + 2. The preference in this case derives from the fact that I have seen the mining villages and the "gorgeous palaces", too; and no power on earth will convince me that the right of one class to have what the other has not got is a genuine one.

5. + 3. Most of us like struggling, because it keeps us going and provides us with something fresh to do.

6. + 1. Can only like this a little, because I am an agnostic.
7. + 3. "These things shall be,
A loftier race than ever the world hath known,
Shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of knowledge in their eyes."
A race drawn from the majority (something new).

8. + 1. Very true to life. "All the world is a stage,
And we are the players".

9. + 3. Most of us like babies and wish we could stay
like them, so peaceful, trustful and oh, so unaware of
what the future has in store for us.

10. + 2. I am right in assuming, am I not, that this refers
to someone looking from the outside to those within,
pityingly, for the knowledge that sooner or later, that
privilege will pass to other hands.

11. + 2. Gentlemen don't grab, they earn the right to
possess what is there for them. For "gentlemen" substitute
"rogues". How soon?

12. + 1. Once more, a mirror of life as we know it, on
earth, whether there is a heaven or not.

13. + 3. Don't we all wish to see an end to the exploitation
of man by man?

14. + 2. The power that lies in our hands is immensurable,
did we but realise it. I realise that knowledge is power
so I seek the knowledge.

15. + 3. I like this because this is the world I am waiting
for and would give my life, if by that means it could be
obtained.

16. + 2. My preference in this case is given because I
subscribe to the view that the little things in life are
what matter.

The reference to Dust in poem 6 seems to be a
little obscure.


1. - 2. Fairly strong dislike mainly because of what is
said, from my own experience I feel that cares do not
decrease with decrease in money, or that happiness is con-
sistent with lack of money. Of the feelings of the rich I
cannot say! Therefore the poem feels false to me.
2. + 1. Like a little, more because of the language of the poem rather than its content.

3. + 2. Like a good deal, particularly because I sympathise with what the poet says.

4. + 3. Like very much. Living on the South Wales coal-field, and having seen mining villages I think I know what the poet feels.

5. - 1. Dislike a little because of what the writer seems to mean — that this is after all the best of all worlds — and I couldn't agree less!

6. 0. Neither like nor dislike possibly because I cannot find much enthusiasm for bewailing the increase of scientific knowledge.

7. + 1. Like a little because I want to see people like those in the future, the form of the poem does not particularly appeal to me.

8. + 2. Like a good deal, both because of the way the poet uses the words, and because I know that what he says does happen.

9. + 2. Like a good deal. I like children and have felt as the poet says especially these days with the horrors of war looming around.

10. + 1. Like a little because of the way the writer has written contrasting the beauty outside to the worries and doubts he has within.

11. + 2. Like a good deal because I wish to add a hearty "hear hear" to his final stanza.

12. 0. Neither like nor dislike — mainly because it is more difficult to understand than say Poem 11, although his wording is very colourful.

13. + 1. Like a little because of what is said. Also I like the rhythm of the lines.

14. 0. Neither like nor dislike, probably because I have not the poet's intensity to love beauty.

15. - 1. Dislike a little because I cannot agree with the writer who seems to me to be saying that his dream would be true were it not for love of self, that the world cannot be changed till each man himself is changed.
16. 0. Neither like nor dislike because I feel the poet is merely playing with words, and I cannot feel moved by the poem.

General Comments. None of the poems were familiar; and I read and reread them before putting down by first choice. Then I reread them to put down the 2nd order of choice. Finally when making the above remarks I read them again—and found in one or two cases that I read more into them. However I kept to my original scheme of choice. As regards the poems which might be obscure—none were entirely out of reach, but they tended to go near the "neither like nor dislike" column. As a general summing up I find that I am more concerned with WHAT is said rather than how it is said especially in the case of your selection of poems.


1. + 1. I only derived slight enjoyment from this mainly because the theme is so unoriginal.

2. 0. Indifferent to this collection of contrasts.

3. + 3. Forthright, honest, well-written and so true to life.

4. - 2. This attitude would perpetuate by despair.

5. + 2. Very satisfying to all who have to struggle.

6. + 3. I really liked this, to my mind it points the necessity of a marriage between religion and science.

7. + 1. Pleasent outlook, but the clarity of vision shown here can fog the picture of the present. This tendency is shown also in present day political thinking.

8. + 2. I may be seeing more than was intended but the implication is a stern warning to the bigoted.

9. + 3. Very good indeed if we overlook the fact that the baby is born with the capacity for planning the way he shall live, and that this is becoming more apparent every day.

10. - 3. No, not good. The writer surely can see further than the sore on his nose. The crucifixion and man's agonies do not mean the end.

11. + 3. Very good, the gentlemen referred to are finding out now, and reacting accordingly. I do however, strongly dislike the blame being placed on God.
12. - 3. I thought such forms of mysticism went out with Hitler.

13. + 1. Not bad, but poetry spasmodic.

14. - 1. I feel the writer had a message to convey but found, too late, how inarticulate he really was.

15. + 2. Now this tells the story and holds out hope for anyone prepared to fight the good fight.

16. - 2. I think, to be fair, my description would be just complicated simplicity.

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<tr>
<td>1. + 3. This seems familiar [familiar] to me, but I have never seen same before, but must be popular with everyone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. + 1. Seems to me to have a moral theme, and points out an obvious yet hardly realised truth.</td>
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<td>3. + 2. How true!</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. + 3. Makes me feel very sad and unhappy.</td>
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<td>5. + 3. Very true, I always regard life as an adventure. We cannot have smug security all the time, we must keep striving and learning.</td>
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<td>6. + 2. Regard this poem with feeling of liking, but observe that perhaps the full meaning escapes me.</td>
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<td>7. + 3. Very clear to me, yet poem makes me angry when I know other people cannot see and understand what is to me very obvious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. + 1. Like a little, yet not clear to me full meaning.</td>
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<td>9. + 1. A feeling of hopelessness, and inaction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. + 3. Rather complicated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. + 2. How true, and like it very much.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. 0. Complicated, not very clear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. + 3. Very clear, like it very much, how true.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. + 1. Makes no very strong impression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. + 3. Makes me feel sad and ill at ease.</td>
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</table>
16. + 1. Rather obscure.


1. + 1. Though I agree with most of the sentiments expressed in this poem, I don't much care for the style. It's a bit doggerel. And, being a "poor folk" myself, and living as I do on a council estate where the rents are very high in proportion to incomes, I can't help noticing that the laughter in my neighbours gets a bit strained about Wednesday. And "taxed to the limit"?

2. + 2. Though perhaps the gist of this is not very uplifting I enjoyed the poetry, the fine words.

3. + 1. This was difficult to classify; I didn't find it moving as the author intended. It was too brazen somehow—it doesn't take a poem to make me feel badly above the substance of this one.

4. + 2. This was much better, just as vivid as No. 3 without being so trite. I liked the "dusty weed drowsing" particularly. I wonder if the writer has any children? The only line that rang false to me was the "sweet human flowers" one.

5. - 1. I once had a calendar with a very similar "poem" inscribed on it in poker-work, and I disliked it's sugary sentiments just as much at the age of fourteen as I do now, at thirty.

6. - 3. As a poem it is spoiled for me by the somewhat forced repetitions and muddled mysticism and of course, it's sentiments are abominable. I bet the poet who wrote it used a dictionary.

7. + 2. This is good, specially "Love is no more an antidote to terror".

8. 0. Unremarkable though pleasant enough. It doesn't say much, does it?

9. + 1. Once again I think, not very good poetry, but it touched me because I've the same thoughts over my babies. I would have liked it more if the writer had offered us some hope.

10. 0. This didn't make much impression. Perhaps I haven't understood it.

11. + 1. A bit rum-bustions, but I quite agree.
12. 0. Here again I feel a bit vague. I've read it six times but don't know what I feel. Perhaps it's the faint flavour of churchyards I don't like.

13. + 1. This poem seems faintly familiar, and I find it rather a sensible sort of poem. No appeal to the emotions for me.

14. - 2. Perhaps I have no eye for beauty. Not sufficient to be able to advocate staring miserably in rapt contemplation, anyway, though I can understand the appeal this attitude might have for anyone whose social conscience is worrying.

15. + 1. This isn't bad but also isn't original; "master of my fate", "feeble cry", "count the cost". All rather trite.

16. + 2. This is good poetry. I find it rather satisfying and have copied it out to keep. The words are well chosen and it is clearly written, the idea set forth with the minimum of embroidery.


3. + 3. I like it because it is direct and clear as the utterance of the oppressed class, speaking its blunt language of denunciation in good rythm.

11. + 3. I like this for the same reasons as above - and especially for its effective international message.

9. + 3. I like it because it struck me as being so topical at this moment - with the military potential of every individual being treated as supreme. It deals, of course with only one side of the picture.

13. + 3. Am well familiar with this and have always thought it a fine poem calculated to stir people to fight for "freedom from want", in concrete terms. The merit of Poems 3, 11 and 13 are they contain the positive - active element suggesting that action can mean achievement and progress. They are stirring.

4. + 2. I like this one because it is a vivid picture similar to what I have seen in reality and describes my thoughts at the time. Good rythm.

15. + 2. I like this one, too, because having seen some horrible movie pictures of desolation and death in Korea, the second verse hit me as so true. The third, verse, too, does call for action, however vaguely.
2. Seeks rather sterile in content— with suggestion of enduring ills complacently as all for own good. This is true only with a positive approach; evils should not be endured, but challenged—in this sense evils are a "good" thing because they provoke a struggle of a better life. Therefore, I do not like what this poem seems to say although it says it very nicely indeed.

8. Suggests a world of stagnation—that all is ultimately absorbed by it—yet it impressed me a little by its comparison of the Pool and stone, room and music—and the mind receiving impressions—rather clever.

5. Gives the impression of sermonising by one whose path is probably not so hard.

7. Excellent in ideas, well expressed. Lack of familiarity with this style perhaps decreases its appeal to me.

10. I like it somewhat because of its vivid picture contrast of what should be universal (verse 1) and what too largely is the true situation—suffering of innocents (verse II).

12. Too many lights. Too mystical.

16. Too pessimistic.

1. I do not agree with its theme, "Money is the root of all evil." The craving for money—(Littlewoods winners etc.) is the craving for something better from a life that seems meaningless and fearful. The poem is contradictory, "Prosperous—yet weighed down with taxes"—the rich—though it is true their life lacks something (considered as a whole class) that "makes for real pleasure".

6. A clever expression of the idea that all effort is purposeless and worse—the Grave is the one reality. Obscure.

14. An outright appeal to the selfish cultivation of one's own soul in complacent disregard of disturbing tugs at conscience.

I have not deliberately permitted my definite political views to determine my choice, but to a degree this has seemed inevitable. An interesting selection.

1. + 1. Amusing, suitable form.
2. + 1. Pretentious, inclined to be hackneyed.
3. + 2. Good rhythm and full of feeling.
4. + 1. A deep subject treated to [too] lightly, requires "punch".
5. - 2. Reactionary, why be pleased because life is harsh. Poor rhythm and metre.
6. - 1. Defeatist and obscure, e.g. "all our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance".
7. + 2. Slight but purposeful. Metre suitable to mood.
8. + 2. Pleasing and good poetical form.
9. + 2. Strong feeling, personal and to the point.
11. + 3. Clear, straightforward and witty (after Chesterton)
12. + 1. Some good lines and nice ideas but for what object?
15. + 1. Good but ending obscure.

WHOSE POLITICAL OPINION OR AFFILIATION IS NOT KNOWN.


7. + 3. Poem implies no poor no rich, everybody the same. That means no war, as it should be.
15. + 3. Implies the same, but to prevent war by acting now before it is too late.
9. + 2. Refers to war. War for the few (in control).
1. + 2. Points out that money is not everything. Those who have too much, take it away and give to the poor for their betterment.

5. + 1. Means if you want anything, work for it, then you appreciate the objective more.

13. + 1. Working for peace is better than working for war or war-mongers. Control wealth, then you can control war. Control war, you have health.

16. + 1. The same as No. 13, but if we are to do anything do it properly, and do it now.

8. - 1.
10. - 1. No comment.
12. - 1.
3. 0.
2. 0.
4. 0. No comment.
6. 0.
11. 0.
14. 0.

I have not read any poems of this description before. I might add that I am not keen on poetry of any kind.

M. 51. F. (40) Cloakroom Attendant.

1. + 2. Like a good deal: Reason: All the verses from the beginning to the end, are true to life. But with one exception. It is not every "rich folk looked bored".

2. + 1. It is simple enough to be understood by every reader. The poem deals simply with the good and bad things in the world which everybody knows of.

3. + 3. The rhythm is excellent.

4. + 1. There is a grain of truth in it.

5. + 3. Because what the Poem portrays is true to life. How very true to life it sounds to be told "There's always something missing - some new thing that we desire!"

6. - 1. It is too classical. Not many people will understand it.

7. + 1. It is simple and straightforward, but it is too short. The poem should have been longer.
8. + 1. The meaning of the poem is not easily understandable. The meaning is deep-rooted, and it takes time to comprehend. It is again, classical.

9. + 1. It is a poem with a purpose behind it. Its meaning is not easily discernible. It is equivocal.

10. + 2. The meaning or the purpose of the poem is easily understandable. Its meaning is true to life.

11. + 1. I like it for its composition only. It is rhythmical. But it is sarcastic throughout.

12. + 1. It reads more or less like a Psalm. It will be better read in a religious circle or religious study group.

13. + 1. The rhythm is not appealing. It is too elementary.

14. 0. I find some truth in it even though it does not appeal to me.

15. + 3. It is touching! It is appealing!! It appeals both to sentiments as well as reasons.

16. + 1. It tells me all that I have known in life. It is the "Nature's Law" that seasons follow each other in their order of creation.

G 52. M. (23) Builder.

1. - 2. The sentiments expressed in this poem appear to be false when closely examined. For example, is it true that, "When we have money we're troubled about it?" Or again it is open to question whether poor folk are happy with the little they have got and further, whether prosperous folk are weighed down by cares. The last stanza treats the destruction and death caused by the pursuit of money as something over which we should smile wryly. This is the wrong effect, for we should be angered and saddened. The rhythm of this poem also suggests that we adopt a gay attitude to the expressed ideas.

2. + 1. The attempt to show the contradictions, which are inherent in man and nature, by poetic imagery, is quite successful. Correctly, I think, the poet has given numerous examples in the first stanza and then drawn together neatly the main idea in the last by suggesting that this knowledge may not only be a comfort to us at present, but also a guide for the future. The rhyming is fairly good except for the habit of placing some consonant before the rhyme vowels, e.g. Bright - right, snow - know. The iambic pentameter metre is kept very well.
3. + 2. A very neat and fluid poem, with fairly good rhyming and excellent descriptions of hardships borne by the mass of the people.

4. + 1. No comment.

5. - 2. I feel that the first three stanzas read like poems from "Patience Strong" with all their sickly sentimental images, whereas the last stanza has a certain 'iron' quality which suggests we must cultivate strong determination to combat our obstacles and problems.

6. - 1. Rather confused concerning the exact meaning although the words and phrases used sound poetical enough.

7. + 1.
8. - 1.
9. - 1.
10. + 1. No comments.
11. + 2.
12. 0.
13. - 1.
14. 0.
15. + 2.
16. + 3.

53. M. (?) Industrial Worker - Trade Unionist.

1. - 2. This poem fosters the idea that the present economic system is unchangeable and that it doesn't matter much if someone does accumulate wealth because the wealthy inevitably lose the 'happiness' that comes of being poor. The rhythm is simple and fairly agreeable but I disliked it for its false philosophy. This outlook on life did have, at one time, quite a number of adherents, among the working people and it has been the class conscious workers past and present who have and still are demolishing this outlook.

2. - 2. An obscure poem, based on the idea that everything has an opposite, the poet seems to console himself that if the present system is bad then its opposite, a good system, will turn up sometime or another but he saves himself in the second stanza when he shows some understanding of how the present system is necessary before the new system comes into being. I disliked it for its lack of militancy.

3. + 1. A poem that could be readily appreciated by the class conscious worker but its main failing among others is that it shows no way forward nor does it give any encouragement in the fight against the conditions it exposes.
4. - 1. A depressing poem and also an untrue picture of
a mining community, the poet seems to be obsessed with des-
pair and ugliness and apparently thinks ever yone else is.

5. - 2. A similar theme to No. 1 poem, here the poet
portrays a false realism which does contain some truth,
but basically the poem implies that its only weaklings
dreamers and Utopians who can't face the facts that want
to change the way of life.

6. - 3. The age old argument, God versus Matter, here the
poet makes it clear who is winning, to his disappointmen t.

7. + 1. The poet is aware of what's wrong with society at
present but gives the impression that rather than fight
bad conditions he prefers to dream about good conditions
in which love plays far to [too] big a part.

8. - 3. A very obscure poem this, the poet could be
absorbed in contemplating life but his poem gives the
impression that he is absorbed in contemplating nothing.

9. + 1. Although this poem is full of resentment against
the present system it shows no way out but at the same time
it arouses hostility against the system.

10. - 2. This poem seems to be pointless unless the poet is
comparing the spiritual aspect to the material aspect in
which case it seems he'd be happier being a materialist.

11. + 1. A revolutionary poem but its main failure is in
the poets obvious lack of knowledge of historical materialism.

12. - 2. The poet would have been better using his energies
to write Church Hymns.

13. + 1. Again a somewhat revolutionary poem but again
there is no explanation of what's wrong with society and no
way forward is shown.

14. - 3. The poet seems to know that there's something
wrong with society but implies that as long as there is
nothing wrong with your soul then society doesn't matter.

15. + 1. Same as 13.

16. - 3. I have a feeling that the poet resents progress
and won't admit that the world is progressing. I have heard
his ideas from spiritualist mediums who maintain that because
of the increasing accent on materialism man can no longer
attune his mind to the 'other' world, at least that is the
impression created by the last two stanzas, the first two
seem to be concerned with basic facts if the poet is trying to prove something he is unsuccessful. I could not put this poem in a specific category.


1. - 1. I dislike this "poem" because I think it lacks the kind of rhythm I like to see in poetry. As for its content, I consider this kind of philosophising over money extremely trite.

2. + 1. Although this sonnet has music I consider its thought content pretentious.

3. + 1. I like the vigorous expression of thought in this poem and the interchange of stress beats in the various lines.

4. + 2. I like the alliteration lines in this poem very much and the thought content of beauty stifled in mining villages appeals to me.

5. - 1. As poetry this poem is very weak although the idea I think is good but a quotation from Marlowe expressing very much the same kind of thing would have obtained a first class mark. I might point out that I think your study will fail here because you have not sufficiently mixed extremely well written poems with poorly written poems, also broken down into poems with good thought content and poems with poor, and finally further subdivided into poems expressing conservative and radical philosophy.

6. + 3. I like the way this poem is written - in particular the repetitive aspects. In terms of content I like the strong assertion of antithesis and a certain air of mysticism.

7. + 3. I like the contrast of long and short lines and the picture of a future Utopia here.

8. + 3. I like the expressiveness and use of certain word picture in this poem - "the mirror of a pool", "the frail tendrils of the heart" - I am not sure I fully understand what the poet is driving at as the last verse suggests things not in the first two.

9. + 1. I think the thought content of this poem is trite but then I do not care for absolutely transparent satire but I like the way in which the thing is written. (The problem is more subtle than the author thinks.)

10. + 2. I like the contradiction of this poem - the question and answer framework. The thought content is not very deep but well expressed - expressions like "the agonies of all
mankind" leave me cold intellectually but I think they have a certain power to move.

11. + 3. I like the rhythmic construction of this poem and the repetition of "something, something gentlemen" in the middle. I like the thought content of the middle verse.

12. - 1. I think this poem pretentious and the repetition of the word "light" jars.

13. + 1. I like the thought content of this poem but I do not consider it very well written.

14. + 2. Again I like the exhortation to forget all the unpleasant social facts and turn to beauty - but I do not think it as well expressed as it might be.

15. - 1. The last verse in this poem is little more than doggerel - although its thought is good - of George Barker "When shall we again ...." etc.

16. - 1. Again the thought is rather trite - and badly expressed. The first verse begins well and just manages to bring it up - but a change of rhythm was needed and the abcb rhyme I thought clashes, against what the poet is trying to say.

General Comment: To my mind a really good poem blends thought and expression and I feel that for one kind of thought there is only one kind of expression. For a different thought there is a different expression and so on. For this reason I do not think your collection is a good one.

C 56. F. (40) Wife of a Building Worker.

1. + 3. Liked very much, very well put and placed.

2. 0. Disliked.

3. + 2.

4. + 1.

5. + 3.

6. + 1.

7. 0. No comments.

8. + 3.

9. + 3.

10. + 2.

11. 0.

12. 0.

13. + 1.

14. 0.

15. + 2.

16. + 1.
C_57. M. (40) Building Worker.

4. + 3. The two poems have quite a lot of human feeling and very well put together.

1. + 2. These poems show a marked interest in the everyday life of the working class people.

5. + 2.

15. + 2.

3. + 1.

16. + 1.

11. + 1.

10. + 1. For the rest of the Poems I have no comments.

13. + 1. Some are lousy and some have a very marked tendency towards Communist especially number 11, very bad form I think.

2. + 1.

12. 0.

7. 0.

6. 0.

8. 0.

14. 0.

C_58. F. (30) Domestic Worker.

9. + 3. The first two lines of the second verse seem to describe my idea of children. I dont agree with the intention of the poem. The rhythm is very good.

15. + 3. I like this poem very much because it is very easy to understand. Appeals to my sense of tragedy.

4. + 3. A very tragic poem, rather over emphasised.

1. + 3. Rather true to life. It is simple and easy to understand.

10. + 2. Expresses the suffering inside ourselves which is always there in spite of surface happiness.

6. + 2. I like this poem but many of the words could have been more simple. Rather a religious poem.

3. + 2. This poem is very similar to Number One. It is very realistic.

16. + 1. I am not very sure about this poem. I do not like the modern way of using a small letter at the begging [beginning] of a line. I like the simplicity of it.

12. + 1. It is rather a religious poem. I like the sixth line.

8. + 1. Not very easy to understand.
11. + 1. I react against this poem. The ideas are not my ideas. Rather communist.

2. + 1. It is very true. It is better to compare one thing with another to arrive at a true perspective.

7. 0. I neither like nor dislike this poem. I have no further comments.

13. - 1. It is the Communist influence I dislike.


14. - 3. Do not understand this poem.

C 59. M. (?) (Works in a glass factory).

3. + 3. Because it is so very true, and expressed in clear forceful, everyday terms.

7. + 3. Again, because it is true, and is a reflection of some of my own ideals.

9. + 3. A very clear and simple expression of any normal parents feeling.

13. + 3. Cannot give any special reason why I like it, I just do.

15. + 3. I like the two contrasting paragraphs and the last one for the advice, or way out, that it gives.

1. + 2. Why I like this one is because one can see these different reactions every day, with one's friends.

11. + 2. Cannot give very much reasoning about this, the poems I like because they express what I think is truthful, and what I hope will come.

4. + 1. I feel that there is so much despair and grief, I am sure that it does not apply at the present age (1952).

5. 0. I personally disagree with this poem inasmuch as it is possible to be worn out mentally and physically in trying to attain what we want in life. A constant battle for every pleasure is enjoyable only to the strong-willed.
8. 0. To me, obscure, and not at all clear.
14. - 1. Meaningless jumble of words, pointless.
16. - 1. Not very clear, and a little miserable; fatalistic.
2. - 2. Obscure, meaningless (to me).
10. - 2. Dislike the religion in it.
12. - 2. Another obscure one.
6. - 3. Obscure, and I again dislike the religion brought into it.

Not familiar with any of the poems.

C 60. M. (58) Lift Attendant.

1. + 2. I quite like this because it is laughing at ourselves and there seems to be some rhythm to it.

2. - 1. My dislike of this is chiefly because of the philosophy that the evils of the world are good for us and must be accepted patiently.

3. + 3. I like the bitter sincerity of this, like a man controlling a justified anger which nevertheless is revealed in the cutting phrases.

4. + 3. Again this seems sincere, only this time like quiet reflection on something which hurts. The last verse especially I like, but cannot understand the line "Despair grave lines.....".

5. - 2. It's true that you've got to struggle and keep trying, but this type of poem seems patronising. I feel that its written by someone who doesn't know what hardship is. Its superficial.

6. 0. I feel I can't be bothered with this. There is something in what he is trying to say, but there is no rhythm and too much high-flying repetition.

7. + 1. This is simple and fine, but a little too easy, and it doesn't flow easily or naturally.

8. + 1. The last verse is true, but it seems to be incomplete and the 'wrapping' of the first two verses seems either unnecessary or inadequate.
9. 0. It's the sort of thing you say in moments of weakness and hasn't any outstanding artistic merit to compensate.

10. - 1. I quite like the idea of a contrast, but I don't think it's terribly well done, and the last two lines put me off completely because of priorities and superficiality.

11. - 1. I dislike this because it is plainly vindictive, bloody, threatening and completely destructive. You can never build anything useful on this basis of hate, victimisation and revenge.

12. 0. I don't get the point of this, though I do like the rhythm of some lines in it.

13. 0. The rhythm seems to be lacking and the definition - or description - not unduly good. It just makes no impression.

14. + 1. The rhythm is better in this, though the 'O's' keep worrying. And the point is true, that we do all seek refuge and escape and are most miserable when this is taken from us. The last two lines I like very much.

15. + 3. I like this. There is hope and a sort of determination even though the last lines show a sort of despairing cry. But you get the feeling that there is something there. And again, though quieter it is sincere.

16. + 1. I like this because of its simplicity and truth - though it doesn't seem to get us very far. The first verse especially I like.
It's certainly true that we can't do without it;
And yet when we've got it, we're troubled about it....

Poor folk seem happy — they laugh quite a lot —
Making the most of the little they've got.
But rich folk look bored — for a life that's all leisure —
Lacks that odd something that makes for real pleasure;
Prosperous folk with their stocks and their shares —
Taxed to the limit, are weighed down by cares.

Men risk their lives for this thing we call Money,
Steal for it — Kill for it. Isn't it funny?
No matter how much we've got in our store
Everyone wants just that little bit more!

All things by contraries their nature show,
As darkness' virtue is revealed by light;
Day is made vivid by contrasted night,
And swiftness proved and measured by the slow.
It is remembrance of the winter snow
That makes the summer petals burn more bright;
Were there no wrong, how should we judge of right;
Or stillness without stress and tempest know?

So in Time's eye the evils we endure
May, in their true proportion, emphasize
Those present blessings which we cannot see,
And when of our disease we find the cure
It may be patent to our opened eyes
That both were servants of our destiny.

We have fed you all for a thousand years,
And you hail us still unfed,
Tho' there's never a dollar of all your wealth
But marks the workers' dead.
We have yielded our best to give you rest,
And you lie on crimson wool;
For if blood be the price of all your wealth
Good God, we ha' paid in full!

There's never a mine blown skyward now
But we're buried alive for you;
There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now
But we are its ghastly crew;

Go reckon our dead by the forges red,
And our factories where we spin;
If blood be the price of your cursed wealth,
Good God, we ha' paid it in!

We have fed you all for a thousand years
For that was our doom, you know,
From the days when you chained us in your fields
To the strike of a week ago.

You ha' eaten our lives and our babies and wives,
And we're told it's your legal share;
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth,
Good God, we ha' bought it fair!

Beauty never visits mining places,
For the yellow smoke taints the summer air.
Despair graves lines on the dwellers' faces,
My fellows' faces, for my fellows live there.

There by the wayside dusty weed drowses,
The darnel and dock and starwort run rife;
Gaunt folk stare from the doors of houses,
Folk with no share in the beauty of life.

There on slag heaps, where no bird poises,
My fellows' wan children tumble and climb,
Playing in the dust, making shrill noises,
Sweet human flowers that will fall ere their time.

Playing in the slag with their white faces,
Where headstocks loom by the railway lines -
Round-eyed children cheated of life's graces -
My fellows' children, born for the mines.
We don't get all we want in Life —
But it is better so,
Because we have to strive and strain and struggle as we go.

There's always something missing —
Some new thing that we desire,
A distant pinnacle of dreams to which are hearts aspire.

How weary we should grow if it were sunshine all the way.
There would be no rainbows if the skies were never gray.
Light and shadow; storm and shine; the pleasures and the pains.
Disappointment and success; the losses and the gains.

Do not look for easy paths — but see your shoes are strong,
So that when the road is stony you can get along.
Always there'll be awkward bends, rough ruts and hills to climb
For this is Life — you have got to keep on trying all the time.

The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.
0 perpetual revolution of configured stars,
0 perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,
0 world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!
The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycle of Heaven in twenty centuries
Brings us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.
I see the houses of the future, and men upstanding,
men not fearing the sack.
Women work with men and love is voluntary,
love is delightful.

Hate is no more against those who withhold bread;
those people have gone.
Love is no more the antidote for terror,
but is recreation.

What is happening will be clear to the men of the future;
for deceit will not be needed.
But our here and now to them will look like a dream
sad, furious, fatal.

Into the mirror of a pool,
Static in Autumn, deep and black,
A stone falls, cracks the glass and sinks
To a forgotten resting-place;
The mirror forms again; the ripples die.

And music often, like a flower in space,
Fading into an empty room,
Leaves unseen shadows everywhere
Before the deaf walls crush the bloom,
Assert their permanence, absorb the sound.

Sometimes a word, a look, a sign,
Falling upon the guarded mind,
Echoes like music or a stone,
Ruffling the troubled consciousness
And twisting the frail tendrils of the heart.

Oh hush thee, my baby, and sleep while you can,
The days that are flying will make you a man.
Sleep deeply my beauty, 'tis I who should cry,
The Masters are planning the way you should die.
The mining and blasting, the coal that we hew,
The steel we are casting, are, baby, for you.
To mortgage your future, the brain, blood and bone;
Your life an investment to cover their own.

Oh, stay as a baby, stay just as you are,
So tiny and helpless, yet bright as a star:
But buds break to blossom as brief moments fly,
And Masters are planning the way you shall die.

Tell me what you see, my friend,
From the windows of your house;

I see green meadows flecked with flowers,
And silver trees in forest bowers.
I see bright birds; the sky's wide dome,
And happy children running home.

Tell me what you see, my friend,
From the window of your soul;

I see tired creatures dumb and blind,
The agonies of all mankind,
The stranger's need, my brother's loss,
And Jesus hanging on a Cross.

God placed the Russian peasant
Under the Great White Czar.
God put the Prussian worker
Beneath the Lord of War,
But he sent the English gentleman
To make us what we are.

Our fathers once were freemen,
And as freemen went to toil,
To reap the fruitful harvest,
And to gather golden spoil.
But the greedy, grasping gentlemen,
The land engrossing gentlemen,
The honest English gentlemen,
They stole away the soil.
They drove us from our villages
By force and fraud and stealth,
They drove us into factories,
They robbed us of our health.
But the cotton-spinning gentlemen,
The coal mine, shipyard gentlemen,
Stockbroking, banking gentlemen
They gathered wondrouswealth.

The patient Russian peasant
Has turned and smashed his Czar;
Some day the Prussian worker
Will break his Lord of War.
And soon—oh! soon, our gentlemen
Our proud, all powerful gentlemen,
Our God-damned English gentlemen,
Shall find out what we are.

0 Light Invisible, we praise Thee!
Too bright for mortal vision.
0 Greater Light, we praise Thee for the less;
The eastern light our spires touch at morning,
The light that slants upon our western doors at evening,
The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight,
Moon light and star light, owl and moth light,
Glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade.
0 Light Invisible, we worship Thee!

We thank Thee for the lights that we have kindled,
The light of altar and of sanctuary;
Small lights of those who meditate at midnight
And lights directed through the coloured panes of windows
And light reflected from the polished stone,
And gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco.
Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward
And see the light that fractures through unquiet water.
We see the light but see not whence it comes.
0 Light Invisible, we glorify Thee!
What is freedom? - ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well -
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

'Tis to work and have such pay
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell,
For the tyrant's use to dwell,

So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade,
With or without your own will bent
To their defence and nourishment.

'Tis to be a slave in soul
And to hold no strong control
Over your own wills, but be
All that others make of ye.

Forget all these, the barren fool in power,
The madman in command, the jealous 0,
The bitter world biting its bitter hour,
The cruel now, the happy long ago.

Forget all these, for, though they truly hurt,
Even to the soul, they are not lasting things;
Men are no gods; we tread the city dirt,
But in our souls we can be queens and kings.

And I, O Beauty, O divine white wonder,
On whom my dull eyes, blind to all else, peer,
Have you for peace, that not the whole war's thunder,
Nor the world's wreck, can threat or take from here.
So you remain, though all men's passionate seas
Roar their blind tides, I can forget all these.

In dreams I see a world that's gay and fair,
And love and peace and happiness reign there,
Where man, content, works on while children play;
But dreams are transient and fade away.
And I awake and in this world I see
But hate and greed, a modern calvary.
Where man must kill - and children, stricken, cry
As hell is loosed and death goes riding by.

Dreams can come true. Before it is too late
O man rise; be master of your fate!
Is it in vain - my feeble cry but lost?
You strive for self - but do you count the cost?

Ultimately there is truth only in simple statements,
in Autumn the leaves fall; I love you; we shall die.
Ultimately there is comfort only in simple actions,
the impulsive caress, laughter, the urge to cry.

Really we long to give one gift, and only
hope for a simple exchange; but man has made
his life a twisted tower, where indirectly
he wanders proudly and vainly, or cowers afraid.

There was a road to joy once, but ingeniously
we constructed a maze, forgetting to keep the plan.
Heard voices cannot be traced now. inevitably
we have established the loneliness of man.

Can you not hear, laughter to which I listen,
how in my deathly corridor I cry,
asking for simple action by simple statement,
"In Autumn the leaves fall. I love you. We shall die"?