

A Day in the Hills

The time that Dr. Henry Meade Bland spent on the faculty of the San José State Normal School and later, the San José State Teachers College, was one rich with poetry – primarily due to his efforts and dedication. Dr. Bland encouraged and helped students to study the works of great poets, most notably Robert Browning. In 1899, he helped students form the Browning Society “to study Browning’s literature, and to further social life in the school.” The group had at least 60 members and met on Thursday afternoons. Dr. Bland also encouraged students to write and publish their own creative works, most notably through *The Quill*, a student publication launched in 1925. Dr. Bland also introduced students to his literary friends including Joaquin Miller and 1872 California State Normal School alum Edwin Markham. He also obtained funding and other

support for students’ creative works and arts competitions from his friend Senator James D. Phelan.

On September 18, 1926, there was a gathering of lovers of the arts at Villa Montalvo – the home of Senator James D. Phelan. The group included students, faculty and other poets, as well as supporters of the arts. A booklet was published about the event, edited by Professor Bland and copyrighted by Senator Phelan. It includes prize poems of students, other poems read that day, as well as poems some famous writers were invited to contribute.

Excerpts of this book are provided below to help illustrate SJSU’s *Legacy of Poetry* and to provide a sense of the importance and prevalence of poetry at SJSU in the early 1900’s, as well as the number of poets connected to the school.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE Edwin Markham Chapter of the English Poetry Society of the Teachers' College, San Jose, Santa Clara County, California, held its second annual out-of-door meeting at Mr. James D. Phelan's Country Estate, Villa Montalvo, Saratoga, on September 18, 1926, when the prize poems were read and book prizes were handed to the winners (previously determined) by Gertrude Atherton, and laurel wreaths were conferred by Helen Wills.

The Club Members and other invited guests were entertained at luncheon on the terraces by Senator Phelan, and afterward the company adjourned to the open-air theater for the literary exercises.

The following program was rendered: *Selections*, Hawaiian band; *A Pilgrimage*, Edith Ellery Patton; *Harmony*, Mrs. Faylor; *Beauty*, Mrs. Margaret Hale Chappell; *Vocal Solo*, Miss Alma Williams; *Evolution*, Miss Leland Moore; selected lines from the *Peace Ode*, Mary Lichthardt; from *Nocturnes*, Miss Williams; *Vocal Solo*, Miss Yvonne Anderson; from *Confetti in the Wind*, Willard Maas; from *Early Dusks*, Elwyn Bell; from *Moods and Homilies*, Mrs. Sibyl Croly Hanchett; *Piano Solo*, Hazel Golden.

The announcement of Prizes was made by the Honorable Chairman, James D. Phelan.

Professor Henry Meade Bland presided.

The Judges of the Competition were: Dr. Lionel Stevenson, English Department, University of California, and Dr. Raymond W. Barry, English Department, San Jose Teachers' College.

It was decided to invite a few well-known California writers to contribute to the Souvenir Volume, and their generous response is hereby acknowledged with thanks and an expression of deep obligation by the English Poetry Society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPETITIVE POEMS

SIBYL CROLY HANCHETT. *Home-Coming; An Insult; Forbidden Fruit; The Teacher*

ELWYN BELL. *Dusk; The Symphony of Stars*

EDITH E. PATTON. *A Pilgrimage*

FLOY FAYLOR. *Harmony; Content*

MARGARET HALE CHAPPELL. *Beauty*

ALMA L. WILLIAMS. *The Guiding Star; Ships*

LELAND MOORE. *Evolution*

MARY LICHTHARDT. *Tenth Stanza of "Ode on Peace"*

WILLARD MAAS. *Admiration; Dirt; Acacia Bloom*

ANTHOLOGY

INA D. COOLBRITH. *Portola Speaks*

EDWIN MARKHAM. *Paid*

VIRGIL MARKHAM. *The Feel of the Game*

KATE B. PALMER. *Villa Montalvo*

EDITH DALEY. *A Ballade of California*

AURELIA HENRY REINHARDT. *A Garden Is the City's Heart*

DOROTHE BENDON. *Love of Life; Futility; The Genius of Shakespeare*

HENRY MEADE BLAND. *Dream Island, off Santa Crua; Under the Redwoods; Elmarosa; Bells at Mills College*

HELEN WILLS. *The Awakening; The Narrow Street*

EDWARD DeWITT TAYLOR. *On a Picture of the Monterey Coast*

MARIE De L. WELCH. *Reaction*

HARRY S. HOWLAND. *The Book of Life*

CHARLES CALDWELL DOBIE. *Cremation of Care*

FRANCES MOYES DAFT. *Youth*

M.H.C. *Two Friends (To H.M.B. and J.D.P.)*

ANNA ROZILLA CREVER. *Offerings*

CHARLES K. FIELD. *Resurgam*

EDNAH AIKEN. *Tides and Flotsam; The Masterpiece*

SIBYL CROLY HANCHETT. *To a Greek Head*

GEORGE STERLING. *Abraham Lincoln; To Charles Warren Stoddard; Sorrow*

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD. *To George Sterling*

JAMES D. PHELAN. *Sonnet on a Greek Head; The Poet; To Helen Wills; San Anselmo, August, 1926; Conquistador*

MRS. FREMONT OLDER. *L'Amitie; Dawn*

DAVID STARR JORDAN. *A Darkening Sky To Barbara; To Arms; The Author Addresses His Lady Love*

CLARK ASHTON SMITH. *Autumn Orchards*

SARA BARD FIELD. *Herb-Gatherer*

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD. *Good To Be Born*

KATHLEEN NORRIS. *Montalvo*

LIONEL STEVENSON. *Gods in a California Garden*

EVELYN PODESTA. *Ianthe; For Our Host*

ALBERTA JOHNSTON DENIS. *Esplandian*

VIRGINIA SANDERSON. *Avon*

RUTH COMFORT MITCHELL. *Memorandum*

ELSIE JANIS. *My Prayer*

CLAY M. GREENE. *A Redwood (Sempervirens)*

ROBERT LOUIS BRUGESS. *Terra Nostalgia*

MINNIE FRANKLIN BURGESS. *Marcus Auerlius*

ROBINSON JEFFERS. *Woodrow Wilson*
APPENDIX

DAVID STARR JORDAN. *On Santa Clara Valley*

GREETING FROM EDWIN MARKHAM

West New Brighton, N.Y., September 2, 1926

Dear Professor Henry Meade Bland,

President of the Edwin Markham Chapter of the English Poetry Society

Your good letter, dear friend, asking for a word of greeting to the members of your new Chapter soon to meet at "Montalvo," has reached my happy hand; and I hasten to sound my most cheerful bugle of victory and joy. ... So when you all feel a strange unaccountable vibration in your hearts on the tenth at "Montalvo," it will be caused by the impact of my flying halloos, with my high joy in the heart of them.

I hope that you will feel this vibration—you who for long years have done so much to waken young hearts in California to the noble cause of Song.

*I am happy to know that you are to have in your lyric circle the distinguished George Sterling, Ruth Comfort Mitchell, Dr. Derrick Lehmer, and other bearers of the luminous torch of letters in the Far West. While Ina Coolbrith will not be with you, I am sure that you all will think of her with admiration and tender affection. Her recent poem, *With the Caravan*, is a fine creation. And while Joaquin Miller, the master-poet of our earlier epoch, will seem to be absent, still his crag-like face will be looking graciously upon you from the Next Frontier of the Mystery.*

Of course, you will have among you that good friend and comrade of all poets, James D. Phelan, him who is ever ready to lend a helping hand to all causes poetical and progressive. May the immortal Muses let the light of their faces shine upon him!

Across the Continental spaces I send my greetings to all the radiant spirits who will assemble at "Montalvo" for a new Eisteddfod in my Hesperian motherland.

Joy attend them—Love defend them!

EDWIN MARKHAM