

## *Blackfriars*

LYRICAL POEMS. By James Steel. (London : Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 5/-.)

Here, surely, is an authentic poet who can write a lyric in the old style. Mr. Steel is a master of his craft. He is not a maker of verses, but a singer whose every note rings true. I have read his book at a sitting because I wanted to know if he could keep his form to the end. He does. The same delicacy of touch, the same sureness of word endure throughout. His approach is always fresh. That is his secret. He is direct, and that is his charm. He says the simplest things simply and makes plain statements of fact with an assurance that insists they could not have been expressed differently or better. And that certainly is the fine art of poetry.

The old forms content him mostly and he manages them with so deft a turn and twist that they carry not one superfluous word. His manner can be shy or penetrating at will; never morbid, yet obviously observant. He sings well within himself, with here and there a hint of restraint that becomes a man who praises the intimacy of love.

His work is all of a piece, compact in one mood. It satisfies. If this is Mr. Steel's first book of poems his duty is to give us others. But, as a lyrical poet, he has already arrived—we hope for good.

E. E.