THE NEW WORLD, PP. 5-61

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The New World, pp. 5-61 by Witter Bynner

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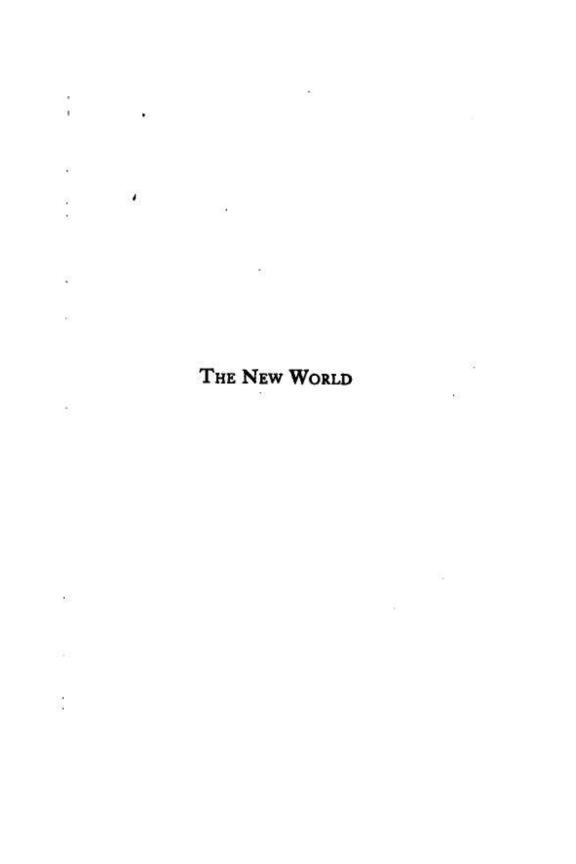
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WITTER BYNNER

THE NEW WORLD, PP. 5-61





BY WITTER BYNNER
AN ODE TO HARVARD
AND OTHER FORMS
TIGER
THE LITTLE KING
THE NEW WORLD
IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

The New World

by WITTER BYNNER



ERRATA

Page 13, ninth line from the top, for "earthly" read "earthy."

Page 45, fourth line from the top, for "love" read "loved."

NEW YORK
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1916

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The greater part of this poem was delivered before the Harvard Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in June, 1911; several passages from it have appeared in Poetry, and others in The Bellman, the Boston Evening Transcript and the American Magazine.

Printed in America

To Celia

The New World

1

Celia was laughing. Hopefully I said:

"How shall this beauty that we share,
This love, remain aware
Beyond our happy breathing of the air?
How shall it be fulfilled and perfected? . . .

If you were dead,
How then should I be comforted?"
But Celia knew instead:

"He who finds beauty here, shall find it there."
A halo gathered round her hair.
I looked and saw her wisdom bare
The living bosom of the countless dead.
. . . And there
I laid my head.

Again when Celia laughed, I doubted her and said:

" Life must be led

5

In many ways more difficult to see

Than this immediate way

For you and me.

We stand together on our lake's edge, and the mystery

Of love has made us one, as day is made of night and night of day.

Aware of one identity

Within each other, we can say:

'I shall be everything you are.' . . .

We are uplifted till we touch a star.

We know that overhead

Is nothing more austere, more starry, or more deep to understand

Than is our union, human hand in hand.

. . . . But over our lake come strangers—a crowded launch, a lonely sailing boy.

A mile away a train bends by. In every car Strangers are travelling, each with particular And unkind preference like ours, with privacy Of understanding, with especial joy Like ours. Celia, Celia, why should there be Distrust between ourselves and them, disunity?

. . . . How careful we have been To trim this little circle that we tread. To set a bar

To strangers and forbid them! - Are they not as we,

Our very likeness and our nearest kin?

How can we shut them out and let stars in?"

She looked along the lake. And when I heard her speak,

The sun fell on the boy's white sail and her white cheek.

"I touch them all through you," she said. "I cannot know them now

Deeply and truly as my very own, except through you,

Except through one or two

Interpreters.

But not a moment stirs

Here between us, binding and interweaving us, That does not bind these others to our care."

The sunlight fell in glory on her hair. . . . And then said Celia, radiant, when I held her near:

"They who find beauty there, shall find it here." And on her brow,

When I heard Celia speak,

Cities were populous