

Then all your face grew light, and seemed  
To hold the shadow of the sun ;  
The evening faltered, and I deemed  
That time was ripe, and years had done  
Their wheeling underneath the sun.

So all desire and all regret,  
And fear and memory, were naught ;  
One to remember or forget  
The keen delight our hearts had caught ;  
Morrow and yesterday were naught !

The night has fallen, and the tide . . .  
Now and again comes drifting home,  
Across these aching barrens wide,  
A sigh like driven wind or foam ;  
In grief the flood is bursting home !

A pronounced success, too, is "Carnations in Winter"—also an *Atlantic* poem—and belonging to the romantic class. The subject is most delicately treated, the spirit of the idyl being remarkably well sustained. "Shelley"—a series of graceful lines—originally found publication in the *Boston Literary World*, and later in the proceedings of the Shelley Society. The stanzas are dated from Frye's Island, New Brunswick, the scenery of which seems to have inspired the poet with some very beautiful and striking similes. We have not room for the whole poem, but these excerpts from it will show the scope and aim of the work, and they will exhibit, also, Carman's happy blending of fact and fancy, and charming imagery :—

More soft, I deem, from spring to spring,  
Thy sleep would be,  
Where this far western headland lies  
Beneath these matchless azure skies,  
Under thee hearing beat and swing  
The eternal sea.

A bay so beauteous islanded—  
A sea so stilled—  
You well might dream the world were new ;  
And some fair day's Italian blue,  
Unsoiled of all the ages dead,  
Should be fulfilled.

Where all the livelong day and night  
A music stirs,  
The summer wind should find thy home,  
And fall in lulls and cease to roam :  
A covert resting, warm and bright,  
Among the firs.

An ageless forest dell, which knows  
No grief nor fear,  
Across whose green red-berried floor  
Fresh spring shall come and winter hoar,  
With keen delight and rapt repose  
Each year by year.

And there the thrushes, calm, supreme,  
Forever reign,  
Whose glorious kingly golden throats  
Hold but a few remembered notes ;  
Yet in their song is blent no dream  
Or tinge of pain !

"First Croak" is an experiment which is only partly successful, but "In Apple Time," "In Lyric Season," and "A Rift" are excellent in conception and in execution. Passages of "In Apple Time," particularly, are very dainty in measure and delightful in word-painting. "The Wraith of the Red Swan," Carman's longest piece, is full of dramatic energy and fire. It tells the story of an exciting episode with thrilling effect, and reveals the poet in a mood in which his readers will be glad to see him often. To our mind, it is his strongest work in the way of brilliant and striking description. Many of the passages appear to have been written at white heat. They are irresistible in their swing and flow, and the images drawn are powerful and bold. The trick of introducing a couplet, or refrain, here and there, is skilfully managed, and adds greatly to the interest of the tale. The treatment altogether, however, is exceedingly broad. These lines, magnificent in their sweep and fancy, are fair examples of the poem as a whole :—

But the wind is the voice of a dirge.  
What wonder allures him, what care,  
So far on the world's bleak verge ?  
Why lingers he there,  
By the sea and the desolate surge,  
In the sound of the moan of the surge ?

Last midnight the thunder rode  
With the lightning astride of the storm,  
Low down in the east, where glowed  
The fright of his form  
On the ocean-wild rack he bestrode.

The hills were his ocean wan,  
And the white tree-tops foamed high,  
Lashed out of the night, whereon  
In a gust fled by  
A wraith of the long Red Swan,  
A wraith of the long Red Swan.

Her crimson bell,ing sail  
Was flecked with urine and spume ;  
Its taut wet clew, through the veil  
Of the driving fume,  
Was sheeted home on the gale.

The shoal of the fury of night  
Was a bank in the fog, wherethrough  
Hissed the Red Swan in her flight ;  
She shrilled as she flew,  
A shriek from the seething white,  
In the face of the world grown white.

She laboured not in the sea,  
Careened but a handbreadth over,  
And, the gleam of her side laid free  
For the drift to cover,  
Sped on to the dark in her lee.

Through crests of the hoarse tide swing  
Clove sheer the sweep of her bow ;  
There was loosed the ice-roaring of spring  
From the jaws of her prow,—  
Of the long Red Swan full-wing,  
The long Red Swan full wing.

We have left ourselves space only to merely recall by name Mr. Carman's other pieces. They are "A Woman's Exile"—which is tenderly beautiful—"Through the Twilight," and "Illicit." Our new poet is an artist who does not slight his work. What he has given us is full of promise. What he may give us will command readers. Seldom has the first fruit of a young singer been so well received as these lines of Bliss Carman. The audience, however, was not disappointed. It is not every day that "The Wraith of the Red Swan," "Shelley," "Low Tide on Grand Prè," and "Carnations in Winter" are written by a Canadian poet.

Quebec.

GEORGE STEWART, JR.

## READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

## DO SNAKES FASCINATE THEIR VICTIMS ?

IN a paper published in the last journal of the *Natural History of Trenton, New Jersey*, Mr. F. Lucas discusses the alleged power of snakes to fascinate their victims, and hold them spellbound by some natural inherent quality. He denies altogether the existence of this faculty, and attributes the general belief in it to the abhorrence, not of mankind only, but of most of the lower animals, for snakes. The most absurd stories of this fascination are accepted and cherished as evidences of the potency of the snake's power over man and beast ; but when these are capable of examination and analysis, it usually turns out that where they are not wholly imaginary the victim was paralysed with fear rather than rendered powerless by mesmeric influence. It is to the intense nervous perturbation produced in strong men as well as delicate sensitive women by contact with even the smallest of snakes that Mr. Lucas looks for the secret of the prevalent error regarding the snake's influence. "Man and the lower creatures entertain such fear of the despised ophidian that, when unexpectedly meeting one of these horrid animals, they are in the proper condition to be peculiarly affected by the fascinating gracefulness and the general appearance of satanic cruelty so natural to the snake. The degree of stupefying influence thus exerted by the snake depends largely on the nervous sensitiveness or the natural timidity of the subject." There certainly are cases where animals have been so terror-stricken by snakes as to be helpless, and where even human beings have been so overcome as to require assistance ; but in all such instances the explanation lies in the excessive fear or horror of the victim, and not in an inherent power of the snake to fascinate. Mr. Lucas concludes "that it must be accepted as a scientific verity that the power to fascinate so universally granted to the snake does not exist ; but rather, in accordance with the heaven-pronounced curse on the snake, animated nature, in its highest and most sensitive forms, entertains such strong feelings of fear and repulsion towards this animal as to suffer temporary paralysis when meeting it."

JEAN-FRANCOIS MILLET.

BUT of this life of ceaseless effort and struggle, of long failure and despair, what then remains to us? Some eighty or ninety pictures and about twice as many drawings. A great deal of toil and suffering, it would seem, for the sake of a very little art. Millet himself felt conscious of this when he was dying. He said one day that his life was ending all too soon, that now he had just begun to see clearly into nature and art. The feeling was a natural one for the great soul near its term and conscious of far heights which it might never scale. But his work was well done, and his message had been delivered in all its fulness. First among painters he had opened men's eyes to the unregarded loveliness of common things, to the glory of toil and the eternal mystery of that cry of the ground which haunted his whole life. He had painted man, not as a separate being, but as part of the great and changeless order of the universe, and had shown more clearly than ever the closeness of the tie that binds the joys and sorrows, the labour and emotions of man with the changes of the seasons and the beauty of the natural world. On a sheet covered with sketches this sentence was found in his own handwriting : "Il faut pouvoir faire servir le trivial à l'expression du sublime, c'est là la vraie force." No words could better express the aim and purpose of his art. Chief among realists, he lifts the vivid record of actual fact into the loftiest ideal realms by the passion and poetry of his imagination. And somewhere else he has said : "Il faut apercevoir l'infini." Not for nothing was he born within sound of the everlasting sea, within sight of those vast spaces which filled his soul with immortal longings. The infinite is always present in his pictures. He breaks up the forest shades to let in a glimpse of the blue above, and reminds us by the slender thread of up curling smoke, by the flight of wild birds across the sky, of the far-spreading horizons, the boundless issues of human life. And this message he delivered, in no hasty inconsidered spirit, but with consummate knowledge and mastery of hand, in obedience to eternal and unalterable laws. The very slowness