

ST. SWITHHUN'S DAY, THE 15th JULY.

THE commonly received story of St. Swithun's Day is that he was Bishop of Winchester from 845-891, one thousand years ago, and a great benefactor to the once royal city where Edward the Confessor was crowned; that he desired no shrine in the chancel, no chapel in the diocese, but desired to be buried in the churchyard where the rain might fall upon his tomb, and the steps of wayfarers might be frequent. His successor, Ethelnoth, or Athelwood, had wrought for him a shrine of the purest gold, richly carved. When the Saint's body was to be removed into the Cathedral, there were *forty* days of incessant rain, a protest from the sky against his too magnificent funeral. Hence, the incident brought forth the superstition embodied in the old adage:

"St. Swithun's Day, if thou dost rain
For forty days it will remain;
St. Swithun's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days it will rain na mair."

Such is the current belief. But let us search who or what was St. Swithun, that *his* day should be connected with forty days uninterrupted rain. It is evident, in the first place, that he was no *Christian* Saint, though an Archbishop of Canterbury (or Bishop of Winchester) in the tenth century, is said to have been called by his name.

The Patron Saint of the forty days' rain, was simply Tammuz or Odin, who was worshipped among our ancestors as the incarnation of Noah, in whose time it rained forty days and nights without intermission. Tammuz and St. Swithun, then, must have been one and the same. But as in Egypt and Rome and Greece, and almost everywhere else, long before the Christian Era, Tammuz had become to be recognised as an incarnation of the devil, we need not be surprised to find that St. Swithun is no other than St. Satan: one of the current forms of the grand adversary's name among the Pagans was Sytan or Sythan. This name, as applied to the Evil Being, is found as far to the east as the kingdom of Siam. It was evidently known to the Druids, and that in connexion with the flood; for they say that it was the son of Seithin who, under the influence of drink, let in the sea over the country, so as to overwhelm a large and populous district. (See "Davies's Druids," p. 198). Now, the Anglo-Saxons, when they received that name, in the very same way as they made Odin into *Woden*, would naturally change Sythan into Saythan; and thus, in St. Swithun's Day, and the superstition connected therewith, we have at once a striking proof of the wide extent of devil worship in the heathen world, and of the thorough acquaintance of our pagan ancestors with the great Scriptural fact of the forty days' incessant rain at the Deluge.

If anyone thinks it incredible that Satan should be thus canonised by the Papacy in the Dark Ages, let me call attention to the fact that even in comparatively recent times the Dragon—the Devil's universally recognised symbol—was worshipped by the Romanists of Poitiers under the name of the good St. Vermine. (See notes of the Society of Antiquarians of France, vol. I., page 464; apud "Salverte," page 475.) The mystic Tau or sign of the cross, was at first the emblem of Tammuz; at last it became the emblem of Taitan or Satan himself.

EDWARD DUMERGUE

SONNET—"IN THE STUDIO."

MASTERS have sought to paint a face as fair
As thine, which ne'er shall need a frame of gold;
Great though the conquests of those hands of old,
Greater thy triumph is. Fond Nature there
In love's own labour—(such as no man dare,
E'en Raffaele, though of him we hold
Madonnas priceless)—did with truth unfold
In thy bewitching charms her beauty rare.
The fine, firm touch of Angelo did ne'er
Capture such sweetness, and his Sibyls bold
Had, by life's picture, seem'd but crude and cold,
Eclips'd by Nature's own uncopied air.
Life hath three secrets that perfection give,
Love, Truth, and Beauty! all with thee do live.

E. G. GARTHWAITE.

THE ART GALLERY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.*

AT certain intervals, which are rarer than they might be in the annals of the Press, there appears on the literary horizon a book which we all instinctively recognize as a craft whose sails are steadily filled by breezes that have often crossed our path before, but wandering and aimless. Nobody expects it, nobody predicts it, but its advent predisposes everybody to congratulation that these vagrant winds of heaven have at last been coerced into practical service. Mr. Morrison's book is of this sort. The Art Gallery of English has had a disintegrate existence, if the term be permissible, for many of us for a long time. Visions of its marvels have danced before us, echoes of its harmonies have floated among our weary commonplaces, and all the sodden mart and dusty town has uplifted itself in the glory caught from its radiant canvasses. Critical literature has long abounded in the ideas

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of convertibility which Mr. Morrison dwells upon; but it has remained for him to give them a central thought, a connected form, and a noble continuity. We have been tolerably well aware of the existence of this gallery, we have even had glimpses through its windows; but Mr. Morrison has unlocked the door and bidden us enter.

Lest it should be for an instant supposed that this author's citation of the artistic beauties of the English language partakes, even remotely, of the nature of a catalogue, it may as well be stated at the outset that this description of our "gallery" is in itself a work of art thrice worthy to hang there. After one's first astonished dip into the translucent depths of this externally unpretending little green book, one takes plunge after plunge with all the zest of a new and delightful literary sensation, new at least in Canadian literature and delightful in any. Mr. Morrison seems to have undertaken his work in a spirit that is almost devotional; his pages read like the dictation of an exalted passion. His English is irreproachable, his thought pure and high, his fancy delicate and agile. There is an Addisonian quality in his philosophy, and one encounters passages of exquisite word-painting that worthily parallel Ruskin's famous picture of the Falls of Schaffhausen.

"I have heard the wind rise on a soft June day in even such gentle whisperings, as though fearing rebuke, wooing the leaves. By-and-bye, grown bolder with the dalliance and unchecked caress, it lifts its voice in little laughs and gurglings and harmonious trills of hilarity; while the green masses of the woodland shake their jolly sides in sympathy with the happy fellow. There follows a lull-surfeit of satisfaction, the tender interlude all hushed, only the sun-glint on the sail and the odour of summer in the air; then the first soloist sailing on ebony wing above the tree tops gives vent to his lusty "caw, caw, caw"—recitative to ox-eyed daisy and red-tinged sorrel, and nodding grass plume, and then, again—silence—followed by a little burst of tremulous applause—clap of leaf-hand and tinkling approval of ripple-lip." When have we had such dainty strokes as these among Canadian artists of the pen? But this extract might be indefinitely multiplied without conveying to the reader any sense of the complete art of the book. To borrow one of its own figures, to present any single passage is to take a mosaic from the walls of a temple, and hold it up for the sun to shine upon, a pleasant but a fruitless task. To know this temple of Mr. Morrison's building, to the glory and honour of the informing spirit of beauty in the English language, one must be familiar with every part of it. Of course it is not flawless, this beautiful erection. We are disposed to accuse its builder of self-consciousness, constant and evident; we would ask him if he expects us to believe that the author of Ossian's elemental verses coexisted with the quarrying of the monoliths of Stonehenge. It is a poetic conceit; but will the prose-writing incredulity of the nineteenth century accept it? Then of course we are disposed to quarrel with him occasionally as to the hanging of his masterpieces, notably in the prominence he gives to the word "charlatany" of Southey about Iodora; and to tell him that his opinions of the "modern analytic school of fiction" must be the product of a long and debilitating course of romance most exclusive of modern fiction. To call Howell's people, for instance, "highly rectified spirits," is to get a long and grotesque distance from the mark. The modern school of fiction, if it is fairly subject to any reproach, may bear the blame of dealing too exclusively in the corporealities of human life, to the utter and scornful neglect of its idealities. Indeed, instead of devoting an appreciable space to the wanton destruction of the unhappy novelist of the "analytic" school, as Mr. Morrison does in his chapter on "Sculpture," this author might profitably have searched the pages of the Howells-James fraternity for wonderful examples of the chisel in literature. There is an occasional fleck in the word-painting too, which gives one an impatient suspicion of carelessness in the artist. When he spoils a magnificent description of the marine phenomenon of a waterspout, for instance, with an allusion to "the clouds bending to kiss its lowering brow," the incongruity of this is evident, and the culpability of—"the lips, like over-ripe cherries, are ever-ready to burst open and show the milk-white seeds within," need not be pointed out. In what far clime did Mr. Morrison find seeds in cherries? But these are very small spots on a sun of tranquil brilliance, the centre, we venture to hope, of a whole solar system for which Mr. Morrison's creative powers will be directly responsible.

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN.

THE edition of Nuttall's Standard Dictionary, published by Frederick Warne and Company, and "noticed" by us last week, is for sale by Hart and Company, Toronto.

At a time when public affairs were in a very unsettled state in France, M. de G—, who squinted terribly, asked Talleyrand how things were going on. "Mais, comme vous voyez, monsieur."