

THE SINGING SHEPHERD.

THE shepherd climbed the hill through dark and light,
And on and on he went,
Higher and higher still,
Seeking a pasture hidden in the height,
He followed by the rill,
He followed past the rocks,
And as he went, singing, he shepherded his flocks.

How wide those upland pastures none e'er knew ;
But over the wild hills
A stretch of watered grass,
Outspreading, though half hidden from the view,
Invites that all may pass.
He sees the weary way,
Yet while the shepherd sings, how brief the toilsome day !

Stand thou with me and watch his eager feet.
He stays not for the drought,
Nor lingers in the shade,
Save where the clover and the streamlet meet ;
There, quiet, unafraid,
The tender lambs may feed
While the calm noon gives rest to those who are in need.

Again I see his figure cut the sky,
Then sink, and reappear
Upon a loftier plain,
Where far beneath his feet the eagles cry.
I cannot hear his strain,
But in a moving drift.
I see the snow-white sheep follow the music's lift.

The climbing shepherd long ago has passed,
Yet in the morning air,
For those who listen well,
His song still lingers where his feet made haste ;
And where his music fell
The happy shepherds know
His song allures them yet beyond the fields of snow.

O climbing shepherd, I would follow thee.
Over the dizzy heights,
Beyond the lonely pass,
Thy piping leads ; the path I always see !
I see not, alas !
Because of death's rude shock,
Yet thou, dear shepherd, still art shepherding thy flock.

—Annie Fields, in *Harper's Magazine* for December.

REALISM IN LITERATURE AND ART.

AN argument made recently in this city in extenuation of the weaknesses, the lack of moral balance and the want of literary and ethical propriety of many plays upon the modern stage, that certain portions of the public demanded this sort of drama, was an argument often applied to the worst in literature and art in charitable excuse. It may be granted that some natures find their chief pleasure in the lowest forms of realism ; others have a morbid satisfaction in viewing life from the standpoint of the physician and prefer to study the diseases of the social body, but it is a question whether this taste in the drama, literature and art should be satisfied, if indeed an unwholesome craving ever can receive satisfaction, but is not rendered more voracious by the food upon which it is fed. Mr. Tuiller-Couch, who has added a few more vigorous and truthful words to his former attack on realism, says frankly : "The taste for brutality and ugliness will always appeal to the average man. They are the cheapest means of producing an effect, and the effect they produce will be, for the moment, more startling than that produced by beauty. But, for all that, they are despicable ; and the call for them is a call to be delivered from the divine difficulties of good work." The present generation of theatre-goers, of readers of new literature and of patrons of art is called upon to give its opinion whether the cheap and startling shall be encouraged or whether a high and uplifting beauty shall be the standard of the play-writer, the novelist and the artist. The present tendency of effort in this country is toward the levels of satisfying the average man. The dramatist introduces horse play and unreal situations in order to please the average man ; the writer, in a hearty contempt of the average man, and the artist, in discouraged appeal to the average man, both misuse their talents and bring art and literature into merely commercial relations with the world. More courage for leadership is needed among the dramatists, writers and artists, for the soul of man is not yet dead to the beautiful and the true, even if his taste has been perverted by their sordidness in modern existence.—*Boston Journal*.

CURIOUS TREES.

THERE are many vegetable wonders in this world of ours. Certain tropical trees furnish clothes as well as food, and the inner bark of others is smooth and flexible enough to serve as writing paper. The bread tree has a solid fruit, a little larger than a cocoanut, which, when cut in slices and cooked, can scarcely be distinguished from excellent bread. The weeping tree of the Canary Islands is wet, even in a drought, constantly distilling water from its leaves, and the wine tree of Mauritius

Island furnishes good wine instead of water. A kind of ash in Sicily has a sap which hardens into crude sugar, and is used as such by the natives, without any refining. The product of the wax tree of the Andes resembles bees' wax very closely. Then there is the butter tree of Africa, which produces as much as a hundred pounds at once, only to be renewed in a few months. This secretion, when hardened and salted, is difficult to distinguish from fresh, sweet butter. Closely rivalling this is the milk tree of South America, the sap of which resembles rich cow's milk, and is used as such by the natives. China can boast of a sap tree, the seeds of which, when used as soap, produce a strong suds and remove dirt and grease readily. In direct opposition to these useful trees is the man-eating plant of the tropics, which resembles Venus' fly-trap in its nature. It has a short, thick trunk, armed with narrow, flexible barbed spines.—*Goldthwaite's Geographical Magazine* for November.

GOLDSMITH'S VERSE.

"GOLDSMITH has been strangely underrated, but his time will come. The verse of the 'Deserted Village' and of the 'Traveller' is not quite like that of any other master in that great metre. It is not the rhythm of Pope, nor Dryden, nor Crabbe, nor Cowper. It sounds unique, and haunts the ear :—

The slow canal, the yellow blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail.

There is a couplet of which the curious felicity in balanced words, harmonious vowels, and alliterative consonants, can hardly be beaten. Or take a stronger passage :—

Those blazing suns, that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ;
Those poisonous fields, with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around.

Is not that full of a rare and romantic power? 'Where birds forget to sing' reminds us of that line in Keats' 'La belle Dame sans Merci,' so often praised for its tragic, romantic beauty :—

The sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Perhaps there is an accent of conventional diction in the 'forget,' if so, it shows once more, what is so often ignored, that the conventional diction was not always unreal and formal. Were one to write an essay upon the romantic elements in eighteenth-century poetry, he might begin with Thomson's wonderful lines :—

As when a fisher of the Hebrid Isles,
Placed far amid the melancholy main.

And Goldsmith's verse is not merely gentle, simple, musical ; it abounds in rich and artistic beauty.—*Anti-Jacobin*.

WHAT INCENSE IS MADE OF.

THE incense ordered for the service of the tabernacle, to be burned in a censer and on the altar, consisted of stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense in equal parts. Stacte, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word nataph, signifies a liquid exudation, or something fluid. Pliny describes it as the natural exudation of the myrrh tree, flowing without the tree being punctured, and more esteemed than the myrrh itself. Theophrastus also mentions two sorts of myrrh, one liquid and one solid. Onycha is the Hebrew Schecheleth, "odiferous shell." It is the operculum of a species of strombus, formerly well known in Europe under the name of blatta byzantina, found in the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea, from which latter the Israelites no doubt procured it. It is occasionally to be seen at the Custom House of Bombay, where it is imported to burn with incense in the temples, not so much on account of any pleasing odour of its own as to bring out the odour of other perfumes. It is a white, transparent shell, resembling in shape the human finger-nail ; hence its Greek name onyx, a finger-nail. It is generally believed that the fish inhabiting this shell acquires its peculiar odour by feeding on a species of Indian hard. The word Galbanum signifies something unctuous, and evidently applies to a balsam. According to some authorities it is a fine sort of galbanum found on Mount Amanus in Syria, differing entirely from the ordinary galbanum now used in medicine, of which the odour is anything but sweet. But the fashions of this world change, and if we, in our day, find no sweetness in galbanum, saffron and spikenard, it is no reason why the ancients did not, and no reason why Orientals should not even now. At the present day the Persians call asafetida "the food of the gods," the Russians delight in caviare, and the Esquimaux in train oil.

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