

A PAGE OF VERSE

SONG OF THE DAY'S END

BY FRANCIS WILLIAMS

[*Westminster Gazette*]

THE wise man and the foolish,
They met at Heaven's gate;
The fool he danced a caper,
But the wise man came in state.

'God help you and God keep you,'
Said the foolish to the wise.
But the wise man only eyed him
With dignified surprise.

Then God came through the wicket
And the wise man bowed him low;
But the fool he danced still higher
To see God standing so.

They went them in together,
God walking in between,
Along the flower garden,
And through the meadow green.

And the wise man went as honored
guest
To the fairest room of all.
But the fool he went as friend of God
And lover of them all.

A SERMON

BY MARGARET SACKVILLE

[*The Observer*]

THERE'S room for most things: Tropic
seas,
Poll-parrots, beer, the Vicar's teas,
June nights, transparent Winter dawns,
Tulips ablaze on Summer lawns,
Queer jungle fruits of mammoth size,
And gay Brazilian butterflies;
Chalk cliffs built up of tiny shells,
Delicate mist and faint bluebells,
The sparrow's brown, the peacock's
tail;
Cathedrals; Florence Nightingale;
Gaby Deslys; Paris; the small
Village tucked snugly round the Hall.
Yes, room for all, if only each
Will live content, nor strive to preach

Its own perfection as the end
Toward which the Universe should tend.
As long as daisies don't complain.
The whole world's not a daisy-chain,
Or flaunting tropic birds condemn
To ridicule the sober hen;
As long as each with its own shape
Is satisfied — nor tries to ape
Another's. When the crow puts on
The peacock's plumes, his charm is
gone!

Will-o'-the-Wisp, though shining bright,
Wont keep your kitchen fires alight;
Tamed wolves are not domestic cats,
Nor Fauns less Fauns for bowler hats.
Let neither Faun nor Saint reprove
Others for different ways of love,
Life and delight. There's room for
wings

And feet — for wine and water-springs;
For things that walk and things that
dance,

For Iceland and the South of France,
For lake and village-pump and sea,
For You — but also room for Me.

CROOKED CORNER

[*Punch*]

WHEN I pass Crooked Corner,
I hardly make a sound,
Because I know the fairies
Have there a dancing-ground;
And I've been shown the pixy throne
On which their queen is crowned.

And once by Crooked Corner
I saw a russet cloak
Just slipping through the hedgerow
Beside the haunted oak;
Nurse told me then it was a wren —
I'm sure it was 'the folk.'

Someday by Crooked Corner,
If I am very good,
Maybe I'll see the goblins
Come trooping from the wood;
I may myself become an elf —
I wonder if I could?

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

MASCAGNI'S NEW OPERA

MASCAGNI'S new opera, *Il Piccolo Marat*, has aroused in Italy a furore of enthusiasm which is shared by many critics elsewhere in Europe. It has been presented practically every evening for the past few weeks at the Teatro Costanzi, at Rome, to houses sold out long in advance. In fact, such is the press to get tickets that people literally fight for them at the box office. As much as a thousand lire are paid for box seats and one-hundred and eighty lire for ordinary seats, and even for standing-room where the stage cannot be seen and the auditor can only hear the music. The whole company has been called before the curtain as many as thirty times in the course of an evening. No such operatic success has been seen in Europe since the first presentation of Verdi's *Falstaff*.

It is thirty-one years since Mascagni suddenly leaped into prominence with his first great success, *Cavalleria Rusticana*. There seems little doubt that the new opera is destined to remain one of the most popular in the Italian repertoire.

The theme of what some critics call this 'musical drama' is taken from the period of the French Revolution. However, the opera does not feature either the great characters or the great episodes of the Revolution. In fact, the libretto, which was written by a certain Forzano, is considered by some of the critics hardly worthy of the music. The hero is an aristocrat who joins the revolution and becomes a little Marat in order to rescue his mother from imprisonment and certain death. He succeeds in his object, but is detected and exe-

cuted by the Revolutionary Committee. The plot is said to lack unity and originality.

A severe critic of the new school also fails to find originality in the music. 'The choruses are the traditional opera choruses of soldiers, students, smugglers, angels, and demons. His solo arias and duets are the familiar arias and duets of good old Ponchielli or of Mascagni himself thirty years ago. The opera has nothing new and interesting in the construction of its harmonies and instrumentation. Neither is there anything novel or really inspired in its melodies. None the less, although it is almost archaic in certain features as compared with many modern operas, which are really nothing more than scholastic exercises in composition and instrumentation, and though it does not mark the slightest progress in opera composition, it has come just at the psychological moment when all Italy dreams longingly of the good old times. It is the music of the fathers of the present generation. It is abundantly melodious and catchy. After a second hearing, practically every Italian, gifted as he is with a natural ear for music, can sing the airs and every one in Rome is doing so.'

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CONTEMPORARY SWISS WRITERS

AN interesting exposition of the state of literature in Switzerland at present and during the past fifteen years is contained in a collection of essays by leading Swiss writers, which has just appeared under the editorship of M. Eduard Kurrodi. The volume contains evidence of protest against the domi-