

A PAGE OF VERSE

CHINESE DRINKING SONG

BY HERBERT TRENCH

[*New Statesman*]

THE old Bards leapt into the fiery Mountain
And your wizard Herb-seller was caught away —
The old Seers drank at the Immortal Fountain
And took their flight. But where are such to-day?

Life like a violet flash of lightning blinds us
And before our eyes recover is gone past,
The Earth and Sky grow giddy, Winter finds us —
Our childish faces wrinkled — far too fast.

Come, friend, whose shaky fist is on the wine here,
Why hesitate to drink? For whom do you wait?
What dancing girls do you expect to dine here
Or halt their chariot-wheels before our gate?

A SONG OF WANDERING

BY LORD DUNSANY

[*London Mercury*]

SOME crumpled-rose-leaf mountains, from forty miles away,
Are luring me towards them through all the blazing day.
Some crumpled-rose-leaf mountains, flecked here and there with blue.
They call to me and beckon as elfin hands might do.

And deeper pink beyond them a double summit towers,
Like Chronos grave and weary above the younger Powers.
Behind me the Sahara, before — those barren crags.
And with me the old hunter, illustrious in his rags.

When I am back in London, among the hoardings' blaze,
And pictures of bad food and salt that men are paid to praise,
When, bright with lights that dim the stars, the foolish words are writ,
To Crumpled-rose-leaf Mountain my thoughts will fly from it.

LIFE, LETTERS, AND THE ARTS

FORAIN AN IMMORTAL

THE election of Forain, the famous cartoonist, to the French Academy has caused widespread satisfaction in Paris and elsewhere. M. J. Pistor, the sprightly writer of *L'Opinion*, speaks sympathetically of the event in the February 16 number of that weekly:—

'The Académie des Beaux-Arts has preferred Forain to M. Friant. For once we record our congratulations. The result was never doubtful. Nevertheless, there were no fewer than ten academicians who would have welcomed the success of M. Friant, since they voted for him on the first ballot. It was not until the third ballot that the Institute came to a decision, and not unanimously even then. Does this surprise you?

'To be sure, the green coat will confer no supplementary fame upon Forain; and people are asking, why did he consent to accept it? This is because people forget how sincerely and profoundly he is devoted to tradition. For him it will be a joy to belong to such a venerable institution as the Académie des Beaux-Arts. You may be sure that he does not consider his new dignity in any manner a consecration; he will regard it as a pleasure of a purely literary character.

'Forain is not alone the admirable draughtsman known to all the world — and notably to the readers of *L'Opinion*, who will recall that it published a cartoon of his every week during the war; he is also a delicate and delightful painter whose first canvases recalled Manet and also Stevens, rather more than Degas, before he began to specialize, as one might say, in subjects from the theatre and the police court.

'Finally — good judges say "espe-

cially" — he is an incomparable etcher, whose plates depicting the crowds at Lourdes and other religious scenes express an emotion devoid of irony, a sentiment of sorrow and sympathy that touches us profoundly.

'We know too that Forain is a man of *esprit*. At least as many *mots* and *histoires charmantes* have been attributed to him as in their days to Chamfort, Rivarol, and Talleyrand, or to-day to Tristan Bernard, Alfred Capus, and the actor Guitry. It is not easy to record such trifles. They were not invented to be written down, and the inimitable accent of the faubourgs cannot be reproduced, nor the mocking eye that flashed a cruel glance to accompany the pleasantries that the delicate, mobile mouth gave voice to so captivatingly.

'To-day, at seventy years and past, the great artist has preserved every bit of his verve. Physically he has changed but little. He has just finished a series of etchings of war subjects that are among the most admirable that he has ever done.

'Forain may enter the Institute without fear.'



EXCAVATING DAVID'S TOMB

NEWS that the Palestine Government has authorized excavation of the site of ancient Zion and what is generally regarded as the tomb of David, is received with mingled feelings in clerical circles in Rome.

The exact site of the tomb is in dispute. Signor C. A. Nallino published a book in 1919, *Sull' Infondata Leggenda della Tomba di David*, in which he discusses the whole subject and reaches the conclusion that the real tomb is not situated at the tradi-