

IDYLL

BY WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY

Far, far from here,
Above Andritsæna,
In the naked hills that paling darkness covers,
A sandalled goatherd climbs the path
Behind his flock.
Vacant the sleeping pastures,
For the bees too still are sleeping,
Vacant and thick with dew and flower-strown,
Tempting to bearded goats.
Slowly he follows them,
Thongs criss-cross to his knees,
With short Arcadian skirt,
A stripling, brown and roughened by the sun.
Limpid breezes,
Running slim fingers through his burnt black hair,
Have touselled it to elf-locks;
Slender and straight,
His thighs are hardened to the upward pull.
Companionless he goes, half insolent,
His crook behind his shoulders,
A smile behind his lips,
A tuft of golden crocus buds
In one cold hand.
His arrogant, unamorous eyes, brook-brown,
Scorn to laugh, though flickering with laughter.

The pasture ground is reached,
A rocky hillside, rank with asphodel,
Beneath the temple-ruin shepherds know—
Bassæ, the healing god's gray windy house.
The flock apprise the field with yellow eyes,
Shallow and cold,
Then scatter, some
On hind legs reaching for the wet cool buds
Of stunted trees,

Some browsing where the scentless heliotrope
Patterns the ground with white and lilac bloom.
Below,
The brook sends up a breezy sound
From clustered laurel trees
That gad its mirrowy lengths along
To watch the crimson fillets of their buds
That smell and open to the passionate sun.
He stops, lays down his crook,
Then, catching up the world in one sure glance,
Draws from his leathern belt
The uncouth shepherd's flute,
Perches him on a ledge of seeded grasses
And, knees drawn up,
Fills it with steady breath.
His cheeks swell out;
His neck strains into chords,
Crimsons beneath the tan;
His mischievous eyes tilt upward in delight,
And raucous happy sounds insult the dawn.

Shadows whisk in the temple portico,
Advance on shaggy feet,
Drop down, again advance,
Scurry from bush to bush,
And crowd at last
The crest of hills that half encircle him
Noisy below.
But he pipes on and only hears his piping,
And never sees for all his laughing glances
Flat in the dew, with chin on hand and ears pricked up,
Biting a wisp of feathered grass,
The little wood-gods
Listening.

SOME ENGLISH WOMEN NOVELISTS

BY ALICE A. SMITH

HAZLITT, writing of Fanny Burney, said: "She is a quick, lively and accurate observer of persons and things; but she always looks at them with the consciousness of her sex, and in that point of view in which it is the particular business and interest of women to observe them." The modern reader who delights in the artless feminities of *Evelina* will not agree with Hazlitt in regarding this as a limitation, for it is the artist's aim to give expression to her personal experience of life. When Jane Austen was urged to write "an historical romance," she refused to forsake first-hand observation for second-hand learning. "No," she said, "I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way. . . . I am convinced I should totally fail in any other."

As the sphere of women's activities has expanded, so the range of the woman novelist has widened. Mrs. Aphra Behn gave ballast to the extravagance of the heroic romance by introducing real incidents from her early life in the Colonies. Learned contemporaries sat up all night, absorbed in Miss Burney's "plain tale of the everyday life of a delicate girl," burdened, it is true, with a somewhat fantastic bunch of relatives. In Jane Austen's work the analytic novel reached a perfection of workmanship that suggests miniature painting on ivory. In Charlotte Brontë's day the professional life of middle-class women was still limited to that of the governess. George Eliot's women look further afield, and reflect her interest in those economic and class questions that exercised the liberal minds of her day.

In the conduct of life, argues Socrates in the *Phædo*, folk may choose between two ways. They may seek the truth for themselves, or they may accept the best of human laws, "and embarking on these as on a raft, risk the voyage of life." One is prepared to find that the bulk of women writers accept the social order, and cast round it a romantic halo calculated to induce a