



OPEN LETTERS

The Menippus by Velasquez

(SEE FRONTALPIECE)

THIS painting hangs in the Salon de Velasquez of the Prado Museum in Madrid, and measures five feet ten inches high by about three feet wide. It is life-size and painted on canvas. The figure is clad in a black cloak, and the painting has a warm brownish and grayish background. It is in the third or latest style of the artist.

The form of the figure beneath the cloak is well expressed. The boots are of a soft, deep-buff color, harmonizing well with the general scheme. The standing of the brown water-jar on the board, which is poised on two round stones, is said to have been a favorite feat of the philos-

opher—a vainglorious formula of his sobriety and abstinence. He lived on beans, despite the fact that Pythagoras proscribed them.

At his feet lie an open folio on the left and a roll of parchment with an octavo volume on the right. He has the cheery, optimistic air of the true philosopher, though there is mingled somewhat of the Cynic in his expression. Note here what Lucian, the Greek poet and satirist, gives in his picture of Menippus, and how Velasquez takes the license of a poet in departing from him. The parchment and books at the feet may have been intended by Velasquez to symbolize the disregard and contempt in which he held the would-be philosophers of his time.

Timothy Cole.



IN LIGHTER VEIN

To a Little Swedish Girl

WHEN Ragnhild brings the washing,
If she 's got some time to spare,
She takes her hat and yacket off,
And sits down on a chair;
And then she starts to yabber,
Till we laugh and laugh and laugh,
And beg her yus' to yabber on—
We 've not enough by half.

She tells about Yorge Washington,
And how he yumped for you
When his father did n't punish him,
But called him noble boy;
And 'bout the yigs she dances
With Yohnson Yackson's Yim,
And all the yolly yokes he tells,
And what she says to him.

Ah, Ragnhild, little Ragnhild,
With the winsome flower face,
We love to hear your chatter
As it echoes through the place;
We love to feed you dainties
That we 've brought from near and far;
To hear you asking if it 's yam
Or yelly in the yar.

We 'd like to see all little maids
So patient, brave, and sweet;
With hands so deft at tiresome yobs,
Such ever-willing feet.
May you, with yest upon your lips,
Yus' yog your way through life,
Till comes some lucky yentleman
To claim you for his wife.

Augusta Kortrecht.

It 's a Careless Age, is Twenty-five

IT 's a careless age, is twenty-five,
And all of the world is fair.
There 's a rondeau then for Molly's lips
And a sonnet for Helen's hair.
One easily sings of so many things,
And rhyme is quite within reach;
But one's figures when one is—well, no mat-
ter what,
Are hardly figures of speech.

And at forty—why, one is n't quite passé;
It is chilly, perhaps, not cold;
And sweet sixteen, be she kind as she may,
You know that she thinks you old.

The frost just touches the maple-tree,
And the forest is all aglow;
But when one reaches—well, no matter what,
There is only the white of the snow.

Oh, I have not turned my back on the muse,
But I fear she 's a sad coquette,
And she still is smiling, and still beguiling
Some younger wooer; and yet,
Though she stayed but a minute, and there
was n't much in it,
And light were the songs that I sung,
It is pleasant to think at—well, no matter
what,
That somebody thinks you are young.

Walter Learned.

The Wanderings of a Bewildered Soul

IN THE MAZES OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

SINCE God is Good and God is All,
And All is God and All is Good,
It follows, then, whate'er befall
Must fall to my Beatitude.

Since God in All is God Entire,
And I 'm in All and All in Me,
It follows that I may aspire
To be considered Deity.

Since God is I and I am God,
And God is Power and Power is I,
Methinks it would be rather odd
If any Force could Me defy.

There is no matter, say the Wise;
In man and nature Spirit reigns.
I only Think that I have eyes;
I only Think that I have brains.

There is no sin. It lingers in
The Concepts of untutored thought;
And therefore to believe in sin
Is deadly sin, as I am taught.

There is no pain, and I am glad;
For God is All, and Good, and so
No pain *could* be, since pain is Bad,—
Yes, very bad! I ought to know!

Belief in Pain is Very Wrong.
Who thought of it, I wonder, first?
And did it take him very long
To furbish up the Myth accurst?

*[In the midst of her philosophizing the
Christian Scientist is suddenly seized
by a severe Imaginary Toothache.]*

Ouch!—Fie! I mean. How weak I am,
Thus to debase my sovereign Me
Beneath an incorporeal qualm,
An out-of-date nonentity!

[Another twist of the illusory screws.]

Oh, my! My tooth! Ouch!—U-u-m! I
mean.
Alas, alas, my feeble faith!

[Speaking rapidly, as an exorcism.]

No—tooth—no—ache—no—felt—no—seen,
All—God—Good—Mrs.—Eddy—saith!

*[The Illogical Unreality gets in some
more of its fine work.]*

Ouch!—Oh, those Drops I used to use
Before I learned the Truth of Things!
But no! the Higher Way I 'll choose.
Rise, Soul, on Faith's triumphant wings!

*[Further Imaginary Qualms, attended
by rapid cogitation.]*

Behold, how flexible is Truth:
I 'll stuff some paregoric in;
It can't do harm, as there 's no Tooth;
It can't be wrong, as there 's no Sin!

Amos R. Wells.

Plantation Hoe Song

HEAH wid my hoe I go—
Row on row, row on row—
Hoein' my corn:
Five stalks for every hill—
One for de rust to kill,
One for de cutworm's bill,
Three for de barn.

Red-waistcoat robin sings
Up 'mong's de greenin' things,
Mate on de nest;
My pardner's nestin' too,
Nestin' like humans do—
Got lonesome, jest us two,
Same as de rest.

So wid my hoe I go—
Row on row, row on row—
Proud as a king.
Dry-rot an' gray mildew
Mus' share in all I do;
But Gord 's my pardner, too—
Dat 's why I sing.

Robin, he "knows it all,"
'Ca'se he can sing an' call—
Dat 's only half;
Maybe a bird can shirk
Singin' like any clerk,
But only men dat work
Knows how to laugh.